

Report of the Internationalization Laboratory

Central Connecticut State University

New Britain, CT

January 2010

Table of Contents

CCSU in General – Introduction and Background	3
Central’s Internationalization Laboratory	5
Current Projects and Accomplishments of the Laboratory	6
International/Intercultural Competencies for CCSU Students	7
Faculty Survey on Internationalization at CCSU	8
Departmental Study Abroad Advising Sheets	9
Partnerships Committee	9
Future Projects and Initiatives of the Laboratory.....	10
Challenges.....	11
Recommendations for the Internationalization Laboratory	12

CCSU in General – Introduction and Background

Central Connecticut State University, located in the city of New Britain and founded in 1849, is the oldest public institution of higher education in Connecticut. A regional, comprehensive university, CCSU is the largest of the four universities in the Connecticut State University System. The Doctorate/terminal degree is held by 85% of Central’s faculty of which 435 are full-time and 465 are part-time. In fall 2009, overall enrollment totaled nearly 12,500 students, representing 68% full-time enrollments and almost 2,500 graduate students. CCSU’s curriculum is divided into four schools: Arts and Sciences, Business, Education and Professional Studies, and Engineering and Technology.

International education is a defining characteristic of CCSU. It is firmly embedded in Central’s mission statement, strategic plan, degree requirements, and fundamental educational expectations. A summary of the attributes that comprise CCSU’s institutional commitment to international education is provided below and detailed in the *Appendix A*. It should be noted that this level of institutional commitment enabled the Lab to move quite quickly to the projects summarized in the latter section of this report.

Distinctive Elements – “International Education” heads the list of CCSU’s four distinctive elements.

Mission and Vision – In its statement of Mission and Vision, CCSU strives to “be global in perspective and outreach.”

Institutional Goals – The Strategic Plan designates seven primary goals, one of which aims “to promote global awareness and respect for diversity.”

Strategic Plan – On the list of the Strategic Plan’s goals is a commitment to “Global Awareness and Diversity,” summarized by the following elements and defined further at <http://www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=365>

1. Diversity of faculty, staff, students
2. Courses integrating international components
3. Faculty and student international experiences
4. Staff development on cultural differences

The George R. Muirhead Center for International Education (CIE) – An introduction to the Strategic Plan states that “CCSU exemplifies its distinctive international mission through programs administered by the George Muirhead Center for International Education, which has been identified by the Board of Trustees for the Connecticut State University System as a Center of Excellence.” The CIE administers the University’s 20 international partnerships (*Appendix B*) and some 40 faculty-led Courses Abroad (*Appendix C*) each year. The Center also coordinates all visa and immigration requirements for international students, visiting scholars, and international tenure-track faculty, and houses the Intensive English Language Program (IELP).

Presidential support: CCSU President John Miller has demonstrated support for international education by initiating several programs. In a press release in fall 2008, it was noted that “President Miller has championed the University’s international education programs by initiating Passport to Global Citizenship, a non-credit seminar offered only to first-year students. This program affords 70 freshmen the opportunity to spend a week in January 2009 in England studying its history and culture and perhaps acquiring an appetite for further international study.” It should be noted that the program is continuing in 2010 and is expected to become a recurring winter session offering.

A second Presidential initiative is the *International Education Resources for Connecticut* website that shares information regarding study abroad, international students, the global expertise of faculty, and on campus international events with 11 institutions of the Connecticut State University System and the Hartford Consortium. They are Capital Community College, CCSU, Eastern Connecticut State University, Hartford Seminary, Rensselaer Hartford, Saint Joseph College, Southern Connecticut State University, Trinity College, University of Connecticut, University of Hartford, and Western Connecticut State University. A preview of the draft website, which is coordinated, implemented, and maintained by CCSU, can be found at <http://web.ccsu.edu/IERConn>. The site is scheduled to “go live” in spring 2010.

International and Area Studies Program – The University offers an interdisciplinary program that promotes global understanding through the International Studies major at both the Master’s and Bachelor’s level. The program is overseen by a committee of area representative faculty who, under the aegis of the Faculty Senate and the Curriculum Committee, are also responsible for the International component of Central’s General Education requirement (see below).

International Requirement – In view of the increasing relevance of the global context to the future of our students, and their need for greater understanding of the world around them, each CCSU undergraduate student must complete 6 credits in courses designated as “International” (I) prior to graduation. The “I” designation applies to courses that substantially contribute to the understanding of the cultural expressions or social, political, and economic conditions of a particular region or country other than the United States. It also applies to courses that systematically offer a comparative international perspective and/or explore contemporary global issues.

Foreign Language Proficiency Requirement – Central undergraduates who have not completed level 3 of one foreign language at the high school level, must demonstrate proficiency by either taking a proficiency language test, or completing two semesters of University courses at the elementary level.

Cultural Centers – CCSU is home to several centers that foster the understanding and appreciation of the historical, social, and cultural life of important regions of the world, including the Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Center; the East Asian Studies Center; the Italian Resource Center; and the Center for Africana Studies. Since 1974, the University has also been home to a Polish Studies Program and offers the Stanislaus A. Blejwas Endowed Chair in Polish and Polish American Studies, one of only two universities in the country to do so (the other is housed at Harvard). The program offers courses in history, politics, culture, literature, language,

and on the Polish American ethnic community, and is supported by the 21,000 books and periodicals of the Polish Heritage Collection in the University Library.

Central's Internationalization Laboratory

In summer 2008, CCSU joined the 6th cohort of the American Council on Education's (ACE) Internationalization Laboratory initiative at the request of President Miller. In a letter that included a list of the group's charge, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Carl Lovitt invited a diverse group of faculty to participate in the CCSU Internationalization Laboratory initiative under the direction of co-chairs Lilian Uribe (Professor and Chair of the Department of Modern Languages) and Nancy Birch Wagner (Director of the George R. Muirhead Center for International Education). Here is the excerpt from the Provost's letter:

The charge of the CCSU Internationalization Laboratory is to:

- review and assess Central's current internationalization efforts;
- develop a plan for increasing study abroad participation, rigor, faculty engagement, and oversight;
- develop a plan for the integration of global education into the curriculum;
- recommend ways to integrate global education and community engagement, as well as global education and diversity;
- investigate funding sources for programming and course development;
- serve as the leadership team for the ACE Internationalization Laboratory.

A committee of more than 20 faculty members who represent 16 disciplines and all Schools (including Graduate Studies), the Laboratory has met fortnightly since September 2008 to fulfill its charge to continue to internationalize the CCSU campus and curriculum in meaningful, collaborative ways ([Appendix D](#)). Shortly after its inception, the Lab created a Blackboard Vista site to share its agendas, proposals, reports, and statistics with its membership and other interested parties, including the Deans of the Schools and ACE's Senior Associate for International Initiatives.

From the beginning, the internationalization initiative has received ongoing media coverage, including a front page article replete with photographs for the March 2009 edition of *Courier*, published for the CCSU community by the Office of Marketing and Communications, and several issues of *Accent*, the CIE newsletter ([Appendices E, F, and G](#)). By the end of 2010, an article is planned for the Connecticut State University System magazine, *Universe*.

On an ongoing basis, the Lab as a whole, individual Lab representatives, or its co-chairs have met with faculty chairs and appropriate groups and committees to collaborate on proposals and discuss planned initiatives. These groups and internationalization topics include:

President of the Faculty Senate	I (International)-designated courses
Chair of the Curriculum Committee	I-designated courses
Chair of the General Education Subcommittee	I-designated courses
International and Area Studies Committee	I-designated courses
Director of Institutional Research and Assessment	Draft international competencies for students, the faculty survey on internationalization, and the integration of international components into departmental annual reports
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	General overview and advice for the Lab
Department Chairs and faculty	Faculty survey, international competencies for students, and Study Abroad Advising Sheets
Deans of the Schools	Faculty survey, international competencies for students, and Study Abroad Advising Sheets

During its first year, the initiative was also formally announced at an opening meeting of the full Faculty Senate where information regarding the Lab’s membership and its official charge were shared and comment from the Senators was encouraged.

Current Projects and Accomplishments of the Laboratory

Confident that the CCSU community did not need to debate the importance of international education – as noted above, it was already embraced in the strategic plan and academic expectations of the University – the Internationalization Laboratory determined that meaningful initiatives were more necessary than information gathering, “stock taking,” or the surveying of opinions. Indeed, such assessments had already occurred (*Appendix H*). Instead, the Lab decided early to focus its attention on testing the level of actual integration of international education into the CCSU curriculum and on formulating meaningful learning outcomes for students. To that end, the Lab made the drafting of student competencies and the generation of a course-specific survey its priorities in the first year. Department-specific Advising Sheets and the creation of a subcommittee to review the educational value of all extant and new international partnerships are the ongoing work of the Lab’s second year. Collectively, these projects have enabled the Lab to promote, even fulfill, several stipulations of its original charge.

“International/Intercultural Competencies for CCSU Students”

Targeting knowledge, attitudes, and skills, the Lab drafted a set of competencies for CCSU graduate and undergraduate students in fall 2008. The text of that project follows:

International/Intercultural Competencies for CCSU Students (DRAFT)

KNOWLEDGE

Students will be able to explain the complexity and interdependency of global events and issues by demonstrating:

- 1.1 knowledge of world geography;
- 1.2 knowledge of world history;
- 1.3 an understanding of diversity of values, beliefs, ideas, and world views;
- 1.4 an understanding of one's own culture and its relationship to the rest of the world;
- 1.5 knowledge of a foreign language.

ATTITUDES

Students will value and respect intercultural and global diversity by exhibiting:

- 2.1 curiosity and openness toward new opportunities, ideas and ways of thinking;
- 2.2 an awareness of ethnic and cultural differences;
- 2.3 the ability to examine issues objectively and without prejudice;
- 2.4 appreciation for multiple perspectives;
- 2.5 an awareness of one's own identity and culture.

SKILLS

Students will act as global citizens by:

- 3.1 thinking critically and creatively and integrating knowledge of the world;
- 3.2 communicating effectively, including using a foreign language, and interacting with people from other cultures;
- 3.3 coping with unfamiliar and challenging settings with resiliency;
- 3.4 locating information and investigating issues about international topics.

Rather than work to add these competencies immediately into the learning outcomes required of all CCSU graduates, the Lab implemented them administratively and with a measure of success. First, the text of the “International Competencies for All CCSU Students” was recast as page 3 of the 4-page faculty survey (see below) that was distributed to all departments in spring 2009 (*Appendix I*). By including the student competencies in the faculty survey, the Lab was able to learn both how faculty viewed the initiative generally and how they rated specific components.

The draft competencies were put to other practical uses as well. The Center for International Education, which routinely requires students to evaluate their short- and long-term study abroad programs, decided to eliminate its previous assessment tools. In their stead, the CIE created new evaluation forms, using the international competencies created by the faculty of the Internationalization Laboratory as their basis (*Appendices J and K*). At the same time, the CIE completely revised the three documents that pertain to faculty-led Courses Abroad (the guidelines, faculty proposal form, and program evaluation) and integrated the student

international competencies into those documents as well (*Appendices L, M, and N*). These administrative changes now provide a consistency of standards and a baseline for review – from both a faculty and a student perspective. Even at this early stage, the outcome of these changes has been positive.

“Faculty Survey on Internationalization at CCSU”

As its second action item, the Lab created the *Faculty Survey on Internationalization at CCSU*. Already suffering from “survey fatigue,” the faculty composed an instrument that was both succinct and pragmatic. Requiring only minutes to complete, the survey focuses on a heretofore neglected topic: the extent to which faculty/departments offer courses with international content. Page one of the survey is devoted to gathering course information, while the two subsequent pages ask for an assessment of the student competencies and a “wish list” of international resources (*Appendix I*). Rather than distribute the survey electronically, the Lab decided to present it personally and in paper form at some 40 departmental meetings in spring 2009. These meetings were prefaced by the Provost’s announcement of the initiative to all faculty. The survey yielded a solid baseline of 549 internationally-based courses. The results, tallied by University, School, and Department, were sent electronically to each Department Chair and School Dean (*Appendices O, P, Q, R, and S*).

The impact of the Survey did not end there. During spring 2009, when the Provost initiated revisions to the annual reports that are required of all academic Departments, the Lab was able to include a specific reference to the Internationalization Survey in a key section of the report – and to ensure that the survey played a dynamic role in departmental replies. Beginning in 2009, each academic department is required to use its survey responses to address the second element of the report. The Annual Report specifically asks each Department to address the following:

International Education -- Examples include a tally of department courses that include one or more international elements (*per the results of your department’s Spring 2009 Internationalization Survey*), faculty-led study abroad opportunities and/or sponsorship of CCSU-affiliated universities abroad in 2008-09, and engagement in international/faculty exchange programs, or other related activities.

“Laundry lists” of faculty travel, international conferences, and publications will not suffice; instead, faculty are asked the extent to which their courses contain international components. By integrating the Internationalization Survey into each Departmental Annual Report, CCSU will be able to assess how often faculty are educating internationally-minded students. The results of this baseline survey were tallied by School and are attached (*Appendix T*).

Following last year’s experience with the Internationalization Survey, which yielded baseline information, the Lab decided to alter its survey protocol for future years. Subsequent Internationalization Surveys will not be given to individual faculty, but will be sent to Department Chairs who will be asked to edit and update the prior year’s listing of internationally-based courses. Once available from the Chairs, that information will continue to be integrated into the Annual Reports that are submitted to the Provost.

Another outcome of the survey is data that can be compared to the University's International degree requirement. The attached report shows the misalignment between those courses that are currently approved as fulfilling the International requirement and Departmental offerings that have international content but do not bear an international designation ([Appendix U](#)). Such information has helped to motivate the I-designation initiative summarized below.

Departmental Study Abroad Advising Sheets

This year, the Lab is promoting the review and discussion of more than 40 department-specific Advising Sheets for Study Abroad ([Appendix V](#)). The Sheets, which were drafted by the CIE, contain basic information for students who intend to study abroad, as well as highly specific advice about CCSU-sponsored programs abroad that support departmental majors and minors. By the end of the fall 2009 semester, Lab members had met with all schools and departments to review how the sheets can be used to integrate international study into CCSU majors and become part of the departmental advising process. To facilitate these face-to-face meetings at which hard-copies of the Sheets were distributed, the Lab presenters were equipped with standardized "talking points" that had been drafted during a Lab meeting. The "talking points" enabled each reviewer to present the same facts whether meeting with faculty from theater, engineering, accounting, or social work. Following the presentations, each Department was given a deadline and asked to edit its Advising Sheet by adding a list of Department-specific prerequisites, caveats, conditions, and incentives. In addition, Departments were requested to name a faculty liaison who will serve as the key international education advisor/point person.

Once completed, the Advising Sheets will be broadly distributed and posted to the Departmental website, referenced in the Department's catalog copy, and made widely available at CCSU's Center for Advising and Career Exploration (CACE). In addition to providing accurate programmatic information, the Sheets are also expected to convey that study abroad is not an escape from major, minor, or degree expectations, but integral to it.

Partnerships Committee

The Partnerships Committee, a subcommittee of the Internationalization Laboratory, was constituted in fall 2009 to 1) assess and oversee the academic quality of overseas affiliations and 2) ensure that the international partnerships that are retained, as well as those that are initiated, receive ongoing faculty support and are well integrated into CCSU majors, minors, and General Education requirements. The committee is composed of one faculty representative from each School, the co-chairs of the Lab, and a representative of the CIE.

CCSU currently promotes nearly two dozen Attorney-General-approved partnerships in 14 countries. Although these programs already represent the purging of a much longer list, they do not coincide fully with the curricular needs or interests of CCSU students. A number of the programs are routinely oversubscribed, others show low or zero enrollment ([Appendix W](#)).

In its first semester, the committee drafted a set of criteria for the review of new and existing partnership programs abroad (*Appendix X*). Early in the term, the criteria were presented to the full Lab membership for review and comment, and will be discussed again in final draft at a spring 2010 meeting. Also on the agenda of this newly formed group was the assessment of the 19 new affiliation proposals that had been kept “on hold” pending the arrival of the new CIE Director and the establishment of the committee. Using a variety of standards – among them, location, language of instruction, curriculum, and student life accommodations – the committee denied 9 proposals, requested additional information from 3, and agreed to consider the remainder. The next step for the committee will be the creation of a formal Partnership Proposal form, which faculty (preferably groups of faculty) will submit to the subcommittee, the Lab, and the Provost for review.

In the past, CCSU faculty have followed a general outline when asking the CIE to initiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a university abroad. That outline focused mainly on the exchange of students, payment agreements, and enrollment quotas. By requiring a Partnership Proposal form, the University will, for the first time, ask faculty to assess academic and student life provisions, as well as student learning expectations. Partnerships will no longer be generated “in the heat of banquet,” but will be the result of a thoughtful evaluation that brings together the educational needs of students, anticipated competencies, and the international expertise of faculty.

Future Projects and Initiatives of the Laboratory

International Requirement – At the November 18, 2009 meeting of Central’s International and Area Studies Committee, it was unanimously agreed that the IASC would work with the Laboratory to draft a motion to address a concern shared by both groups: that students can return from intense or extensive international study and still not fulfill the University’s International requirement for graduation. Since the requirement is wholly course-specific, students who spend a semester or year overseas or who attend a credit-bearing, faculty-led Course Abroad may learn upon their return that they must enroll in an on-campus course to fulfill the requirement. By February 2010, the Lab expects to have a draft motion prepared for review by the IASC, the Curriculum Committee, and the General Education Subcommittee. Once approved by these groups, the Lab will bring the motion to the Faculty Senate. In essence, the motion will request that the successful completion of any credit-bearing, CCSU-sponsored or –affiliated study abroad program shall fulfill the University’s International degree requirement. Such a change would not only render the requirement more meaningful (read: international), it would also allow us to be more innovative in our approach to General Education at CCSU.

Faculty Promotion, Sabbaticals, and Appointment – In the coming year, the Laboratory will work with appropriate standing committees to create meaningful incentives for faculty to promote international education. One incentive that has consistently garnered support from the Lab membership is the integration of international experience in the promotion and tenure process, and its inclusion in proposals for sabbatical leave. Protocols for promotion and tenure should include concise reference to the role of international education experiences (in various forms) in the review process. In the coming year, the Lab will present its recommendation to the

Provost. A concomitant initiative supported by the Lab is the reference to international experience in the initial hiring/appointment process. The Lab anticipates that a reference to the value of such experience in future advertisements of faculty positions will clearly signal University commitment. The text of such a posting could be quite simple and might read “preference will be given to faculty who demonstrate international experience . . .”

International Competencies for All CCSU Students – As noted above, the Competencies have been put to practical administrative use, but have not yet been implemented as a degree requirement *per se*. It is a process that will involve several standing faculty committees and the Faculty Senate and will need to be thoughtfully determined.

New Subcommittee – At its final meeting of the fall 2009 semester, the Lab determined the necessity of a subcommittee to review how Departments can better integrate study abroad into their planning and curriculum (and demonstrate such integration in their Annual Reports). The subcommittee’s membership has been determined and work will begin in spring 2010. Recommendations shall be due one month before the submission of the Departmental Annual Reports.

Challenges

Listed below are the challenges that have been noted by the membership of the Laboratory during the past three semesters. The majority of these issues are expected to become future agenda items for the Lab.

- Additional funding to support study abroad by more CCSU students, who are often first-time, part-time, commuting, degree-seekers
- Funding for faculty program development
- Funding to support increased international student integration and services
- Institutional incentives for faculty to engage more extensively in international education (see future projects above)
- Balancing Attorney General restrictions on external contracts and CCSU’s need for more diverse and affordable program offerings for students
- Academic incentives for CCSU students to enroll in study abroad programs, both long- and short-term (see future projects above)
- Increase study abroad enrollment by students in the currently underrepresented Schools of Business, Education and Professional Studies, and Engineering and Technology
- Connecting with International Alumni/ae – Like many other schools, CCSU recognizes the untapped resources represented by international graduates – the students who return

to their home countries after earning CCSU degrees. Although staffing priorities make implementation challenging, there is unexpended value in promoting a systematic outreach to international alumni/ae. Working with Institutional Advancement, the CIE and the Lab should begin to nurture these connections and share the results bilaterally. Initial steps can be simple, including, for example, the generation of lists of graduates and the resources that they represent, especially as these pertain to career and internship opportunities.

Recommendations for the Internationalization Laboratory

- Continue to meet on a regular basis as the primary committee responsible for planning the future of international education at CCSU;
- Rename the Internationalization Laboratory;
- Recast the committee's membership to include several key administrators;
- Consider petitioning to change from an *ad hoc* to a standing faculty committee