

Executive Summary of Comprehensive Internationalization Self-study
Southeast Missouri State University
October 26, 2017

Introduction

Since August 2016, Southeast Missouri State University has been participating the **American Council on Education's (ACE) Internationalization Laboratory Program**. The program is guiding Southeast through ACE's premier planning process toward comprehensive internationalization. Ultimately, the laboratory will help Southeast review its goals and develop a strategic plan for its international education efforts that aligns and integrates policies, programs, and initiatives, to position the University as a more globally-oriented and internationally-connected institution. An important part of the laboratory is a "self-study" of the institution's historic and current engagement in comprehensive internationalization. This self-study can then be used as a basis for understanding what we need to do, in order to achieve our internationalization goals. The following is the *Executive Summary* of that self-study.

Context

The self-study was conducted using the ACE's six pillars of comprehensive internationalization as a guide. The six topics of examination for each of the sub-committees, along with a brief description of each, were:

1. Articulated institutional commitment & administrative structures and staffing

Strategic planning involving key stakeholders articulates an institution's commitment to internationalization and provides a roadmap for implementation. Formal assessment mechanisms reinforce this commitment by framing explicit goals and holding the institution accountable for accomplishing them. The involvement of top leaders, and appropriate administrative and reporting structures form an essential framework for implementing internationalization.¹

2. Curriculum, co-curriculum, and learning outcomes

As a core purpose of higher education, student learning is a critical element of internationalization. An internationalized curriculum and co-curriculum ensure that all students are exposed to international perspectives and build global competence. Globally-focused student learning outcomes articulate specific knowledge and skills to be addressed in courses and programs.¹

3. Faculty policies and practices

As the primary drivers of teaching and research, faculty play a pivotal role in campus internationalization. Institutional policies and support mechanisms ensure that faculty have opportunities to develop international competence and are able to maximize the impact of these experiences on student learning.¹

4. Outgoing student mobility (i.e., study/education abroad)

Student mobility, as it pertains to the **outward flow of domestic students to other countries to engage in an education abroad experience**, is often a focus of internationalization efforts. Orientations, re-entry programs and other support structures and activities help facilitate student adjustment and maximize learning.¹

¹Source - <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/CIGE-Model-for-Comprehensive-Internationalization.aspx>

5. Incoming student mobility (i.e., international students)

Student mobility, as it pertains to the **inward flow of international students to study at U.S. campuses**, is often a focus of internationalization efforts. Orientations, re-entry programs and other support structures and activities help facilitate student adjustment and maximize learning.¹

6. Collaborations and partnerships

Establishing and managing successful collaborations and partnerships abroad is a key aspect of internationalization for many institutions. Such relationships can provide international experiences for students and faculty, enhance the curriculum, generate revenue, and raise the visibility of institutions at home and around the world.¹

Methodology

To conduct this study, individuals from the Comprehensive Internationalization Leadership Team were divided into six sub-committees, allowing for one sub-committee for each of the comprehensive internationalization pillars. Each sub-committee had the task of conducting their own research into the current state of international engagement at Southeast in regard to their pillar. Each sub-committee developed a series of questions they wanted to answer to guide their research. In presenting their findings, each sub-committee provided answers to their guiding questions, followed by a SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) analysis of their topic.

Preliminary findings

Below is a list of *preliminary* conclusions from the sub-committee and then the committee as a whole. However, the results of this self-study will be shared publicly and additional thoughts and feedback will be sought from the campus community and beyond. As the additional feedback is processed, the list of findings will continue to grow and will be included in the final report that will be produced in the Spring Semester of 2018.

- There is a strong leadership commitment from the upper-levels of the administration for all forms of international education.
- The university community as a whole is found to be supportive of the idea of “comprehensive internationalization.”
- The university tends to engage in international endeavors in a decentralized manner, with rules and policies that vary by department, that are inconsistently communicated and enforced, and that are sometimes contradictory to the practices of other departments.
- There is a lack of clearly defined processes for creating internationally-focused programs. For those interested in engagement, there is no clear direction for them on “what to do” or “where to go” to get this information.
- The dissemination of information to students, as it pertains to internationally-related programs and/or processes could be more centralized, in order to develop consistency, create familiarity, and reflect common-sense.
- In the Faculty (and staff) area, there are disparate levels of knowledge and expertise in

¹Source - <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/CIGE-Model-for-Comprehensive-Internationalization.aspx>

the study abroad areas. Some have amassed knowledge through many years of activity, while some are enthusiastic to be more engaged, but they lack the requisite experience in the area. There is a great potential to leverage the institutional expertise that we have and to create opportunities for others, through training, workshops and collaboration.

- There could perhaps be more institutional flexibility in providing solutions and removing obstacles for Southeast students who elect to study abroad. We have many excellent rules and deadlines that work quite well for on-campus students. However, we could perhaps think “outside of that box” as we try to provide opportunities for Southeast students to study abroad.
- There are certainly external threats on the “university/internationalization” horizon, as attitudes towards international and diverse populations are becoming decreasingly positive in some circles. Likewise the resources (both state funding and tuition dollars) that the university has to address such issues have become scarcer, thus creating additional challenges.
- Nevertheless, there are many opportunities that have been identified, which can counter these challenges. Some of these opportunities include the aforementioned centralization of information and the coordinated dissemination of knowledge. Likewise, better incentives can be provided to all, students, staff and faculty to encourage activity in this area. As it was noted, there is a willingness and commitment on many levels to improve our Southeast “internationalization” experience. Identifying “where we are” as we have done in this self-study, can certainly be the first step, in leading us in that direction.

Next steps

Members of the Comprehensive Internationalization Leadership Team are seeking feedback on the current state of internationalization at Southeast, and they will use that feedback as they move into the recommendation phase of the project. There are two primary ways in which stakeholders can provide the team with feedback. They are:

- Email your feedback to cifedback@semo.edu
- A public forum will be held on Wednesday, November 1 at 12 pm in the University Center Ballroom B.