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Empowering Culture Change: Internationalization in the Academic Department

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ABSTRACT

Internationalization of higher education has widespread benefit to society and has become the expected norm. The literature offers many calls for and models of comprehensive internationalization. Society expects higher education graduates to be global ready when they graduate. Responsible citizenship and professional life require that people be inclusive and sensitive to the worldviews of others. Those calls for change raise an opportunity: a model for culture change to be followed by others. University programming is centered at the department, which is the center of faculty life (e.g., teaching, curricular change, interaction with peers, promotion and tenure). The academic department is the center of institutional change. We used a three-year, inclusive process, to develop a strategic, international, intercultural plan for a department in a comprehensive US university. Our plan includes four themes, complemented by 12 goals. Each goal has actions with time frames (i.e., 1-3 years, 5-7 years, 10-12 years). There are 49 total actions. Among those, 28 are in the 1-3 year time frame, and each of those has a responsible actor (e.g., individual or committee). The plan is adaptive, and includes assessment to advance accountability and transparency. We began implementation coincident with the pandemic, and with significant social unrest in our community and nation. The year of experience provided both affirmation and redirection. Our model guides departmental change, empowering necessary growth and offering a model for others wishing to advance internationalization.

1. Introduction

Society is an increasingly interconnected network of experiences, perspectives, and worldviews. Functioning in that network requires intercultural understanding (de Hei *et al.* 2020^[10]). Several authors have called for internationalizing higher education (e.g., Kaowiwattanakul, 2016;^[27] de Wit *et al.* 2015;^[13] da Wan 2018).^[9] Internationalized higher education incorporates knowledge of the relationship between values and societal patterns (e.g., poverty, economic disparity, individual vs. collective values) (Bourn, 2014;^[6] Poort *et al.*, 2019),^[40]

as well as vulnerable social groups (Perry *et al.*, 2018).^[39] Students, professionals and citizens who develop a broader social understanding are more analytical about cultural perspectives and more interested in attempting a broader understanding (Bourn, 2014).^[6] This broader approach recognizes that we are global citizens, sharing a single, complex environment and a common future (Schultz, 2007).^[46] Weaving international and intercultural views into educational practice can be transformative, encouraging emerging professionals and future citizens to be more inclusive (Baily and Holmarsdottir, 2019)^[4] and

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helping universities make a greater contribution to society (Hou and Jacob, 2017).^[22]

Academic institutions have reported many benefits from internationalization, including global readiness among students, attractiveness in recruiting students and faculty, diversity of views on campus, and revenue generation (American Council on Education, 2017,^[3] Niehaus and Wegner, 2018).^[35] Institutions that are more international and intercultural in their perspective contain more dynamic communities, and members of those communities are more effective in developing new skills and knowledge (Rahman and Alwi, 2018).^[41] Students graduating from such institutions have increased intercultural appreciation (Mok, 2018).^[33] They also have increased capacity to live, work and learn effectively with others (Green, 2019)^[18] and an expanded worldview about the importance of intercultural understanding (Witkowsky and Mendez, 2018).^[50] Students who have international experience like study abroad report being more reflective about their role in our interconnected world (Dolby, 2007)^[15] and more open-minded and resilient (Ruth *et al.*, 2019;^[43] Shaftel *et al.* 2007).^[45]

In spite of the benefits, progress on internationalization is fragmentary. Academic departments need systemic change, advancing a culture that values international teaching, learning and research. Hudzik (2011)^[23] proposed Comprehensive Internationalization (CI), suggesting that effective change must be institutional. CI is a goal we have yet to achieve very broadly. For example, Hawawini (2011)^[20] and Spencer-Oatey and Dauber (2019)^[48] among others, hold that academic departments are not achieving significant cultural growth in spite of repeated attempts at institutional change. Although there is widespread attention to programming such as Study Abroad (e.g., Robinson 2012;^[42] Wonson *et al.*, 2020)^[51] and Internationalization at Home (IAH, Mittelmeier *et al.*, 2020),^[32] cultural change is slow and difficult (Bovill *et al.*, 2020).^[7] Most academic institutions implement teaching and learning following values that have evolved over decades. Infusing new values (e.g., systemic internationalization) requires incremental change at the margin. Such changes are slower in academia than in some subsets of society (e.g., business) (Nilemar and Brown, 2019;^[37] Paige and Mestenhuser, 1999).^[38] Choosing to invest institutional energy and resources toward global citizenship is controversial in cultures that are nationalistic and/or are increasingly influenced by capitalistic societal mores (Clifford and Montgomery, 2014).^[8] For example, in the decade 2005-2014, there was a 2-3% increase in outgoing US students and a 40% increase in students coming to the US (Nguyen-Voges,

2015).^[34] The US sends less than 3% of its students abroad in any given year, far fewer than most other western countries (Nguyen-Voges, 2015).^[34] Many institutions struggle with the contrast between national, protectionist values and international, global values (Mok, 2018).^[33]

Culture change (e.g., internationalization) occurs at three levels: institutional, personal, and disciplinary (Gregersen-Hermans, 2014).^[19] If departmental programming is to become international and intercultural, there must be institutional support for the individuals involved. That support will be influenced by the institution (the university), as well as the beliefs of each individual. Similarly, internationalization is influenced by personal circumstances (e.g., financial status, family responsibilities, mental and physical health). Specific actions that empower international and intercultural behavior focus in the academic department. The department is most often a collection of 10-50 faculty, teaching several hundred students, conducting research and overseeing graduate programs, and faculty life. Leadership of and by the faculty is a central influence over the success of internationalization (Egekvist *et al.* 2017).^[16] The faculty are empowered or constrained by institutional philosophy, and associated money and power. If members embrace a culture that values internationalization, opportunities for placing cultural values into practice will increase and constraints will decrease. An academic unit with effective leadership and a vision of internationalization advances “conscientious intent”, which includes being aware, reflective, concerned, and critical (Ledger and Kawalilak, 2020).^[28] This paper offers a strategic plan for achieving that momentum.

2. Institutional Context

The changes reported in this paper were undertaken at a large, comprehensive university with a tradition of international scholarship, a tradition that is highly variable among units. It has the Xth largest number of US students studying abroad annually (2017/18 data) (<https://opendoorsdata.org/data/us-study-abroad/leading-institutions-by-institutional-type/>). The university has 12 colleges and 150 academic majors (Link removed for peer review). Our department is typical within the University (i.e., 21 faculty, ~225 undergraduates and 50 graduate students) (actual numbers vary widely across the institution). Our departmental mission is “... to foster a high-quality natural environment by contributing to the management, protection, and sustainable use of fisheries and wildlife resources through teaching, research, and outreach” (Link removed for peer review). Approximately 25% of our students participate in study abroad, several

of which are taught by our faculty. Several faculty have research programs in countries beyond the US.

3. Purpose and Methods

Our department has functioned in its current configuration for 40 years. During that time, our faculty have conducted research in, and taught students from hundreds of locations around the world. We are part of a large university in an urban setting. As expected, we feel that our graduates must to some degree, be intercultural upon graduation. We have adopted the term *global ready* (da Wan, 2018)^[9] as a description of our goal. In pursuit of that goal, we have embraced long-term internationalization of education and research.

At project initiation, our goal was culture change: to increase the value and practice of internationalization. We believed that our students, faculty and staff were supportive of internationalization, as defined by de Wit (2009,^[11] 2020)^[12]: "... integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society." We believed our community was interested in global readiness, and desired to be inclusive, intercultural and international. However, we historically had not identified or committed to systematic actions to cause us to behave in those ways. Therefore, we designed and implemented a planning process to advance internationalization goals.

Our three-year planning began early in 2017. Much of 2020 and 2021 were strongly influenced by the coronavirus pandemic and social unrest. The latter was particularly influential in our community, where three people of color were killed by police in separate incidents during those 18 months. The pandemic delayed some actions and caused us to change some priorities. For example, international travel was unavailable for a year and half, which affected teaching, research and collaboration. Both the pandemic and the social unrest caused us to revisit the plan to build new actions to advance diversity and inclusion. Those actions are making us a stronger community and are redirecting some energy more broadly from internationalization to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

In this paper, we describe our methods in sufficient detail that users could adapt them for their use. Our planning began with internal discussions among faculty and with colleagues from the Internationalizing Teaching and Learning program (a partnership of the Global Programs and Strategies Alliance [GPS] and

the Center for Educational Innovation ([CEI]). We then developed a plan framework, which provided a tool for four focus groups: undergraduate students, graduate students, teaching faculty and post-docs, and research and engagement faculty and post docs. Participation was voluntary. Participants joined because they had an interest in internationalization. Questions were relatively similar among groups (Table 1). Our general goal was learning about participants' positive and negative experiences with international and intercultural work, gaining ideas for improving those experiences, and identifying resources to make improvements. We synthesized results of the focus groups and used that synthesis to build a draft plan. We discussed that draft at length with members of the department, and college and university colleagues (e.g., Learning Abroad Center [LAC], GPS Alliance, CEI).

Table 1 about here

We took extensive notes during focus groups, but did not record sessions. We analyzed focus group notes to develop four syntheses representing views expressed by participants. We used those syntheses to develop a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. That analysis allowed us to examine our history, our stakeholders and our present community. We offer exemplary SWOT results here; findings of a similar approach will be relatively specific to any department that follows this process.

4. Findings

Results include our SWOT analysis, which identifies directions upon which to capitalize, and our focus group results frame community interests, allowing us to capture ongoing momentum. Those results were woven into our action plan, described below.

4.1. Strengths and Weaknesses:

Strengths: Our greatest asset is our community and its interest in global engagement. Some faculty members have international research programs, others have collaborations with tribal communities or other cultural groups. Most of our graduate students are reflective, aware of the responsibilities and privileges that come with a graduate degree. We have a vibrant study abroad program, taught by committed and experienced faculty.

Weaknesses: Our faculty and student bodies have low diversity, making it a challenge to attract people from different backgrounds. That weakness is common to the natural resources field (Bonata *et al*, 2015).^[5] International efforts are demanding and can place high demand on faculty energy (Jiang and Carpenter, 2014).^[25] Intercultural

and international teaching and research require significant investments of time and energy. They depend on sustained relationships in host communities. Post-doctoral associates and graduate students have constrained timeframes, and their activities are bounded by the funding that supports their positions.

4.2. Opportunities and Threats:

Opportunities: Our university offers a wide range of programs and support for international study. We have access to resources within and beyond the university that help students and faculty be globally engaged. Our state has a strong network of tribal communities and our metropolitan area is highly multicultural. Our college supports a Diversity Scholars' Fellowship program, a development office, and a range of intercultural communities. Our university supports an Institute for Diversity, Equity and Advocacy (Link removed for peer review) that deepens opportunities.

Threats: Internationalization requires time to develop trusting, respectful relationships. Such time demands often conflict with professional and personal lives, and may be seen as risky investments. Other cultures often are unfamiliar, making it difficult for some to begin discussions. Although financial support is available, study abroad remains an expensive experience, often limited to those with means. International students who are not fluent in English start slowly, impeding progress on funded work.

Limitations: Our plan faces two significant limitations. First, participants in our focus groups represent people who already have an interest in internationalization. We do not have cross-sectional representation. Second, implementation of our plan coincided with a global pandemic and with significant social unrest, the latter of which was pronounced in our community. Those influences have delayed actions and re-directed energies.

Advancing accountability: Our draft plan, containing goals, actions, outcomes and reporting structure was adopted by the departmental faculty and staff, resulting in commitments to action. The plan has four themes, representing our community's international and intercultural aspirations. Each theme has goals; each goal has time-bound actions: "3 years", "5-7 years" and "10-12 years". Thirty three of the 49 actions are "within 3 years". Leadership for implementing and reporting each of those is designated (i.e., person or committee).

5. The Strategic Plan

5.1 Themes, Goals and Actions

Each of our four themes has a series of goals; each goal

has a series of actions. In this section, we describe short term goals in some detail, and longer term (5-7 year or 10-12 year goals) in less depth.

Theme 1 We will become inclusive, intercultural and globally engaged. We will work with communities within and beyond Minnesota to address conservation issues at a range of spatial and temporal scales. We believe international and intercultural competence includes knowledge and appreciation of diversity, social complexity, and comfort working with people from other cultures (Soria and Troisi, 2014).^[47] We demonstrate global engagement through the activities, skills and attitudes of our community members.

Goal 1.1 *Become an inclusive, respectful and reflective community.* Internationalization will advance global readiness of our students, increase the intercultural nature of our classes, and strengthen international aspects of our research. Those changes will in turn, advance inclusivity and internal reflection. We achieve this through a range of actions, including:

Within 3 years

- Establish a departmental International and Intercultural committee. Build ties between that committee and the college Office of DEI.
- Designate a volunteer faculty member as International and Intercultural Coordinator to lead programming and facilitate communication.
- Review and update all goals and actions of this plan biennially. Discuss each biennial progress report and any suggested changes with the faculty.

Goal 1.2 *Build relationships that contribute to public engagement with community partners within and beyond X State.* Relationships are central to global engagement. Relationships must be built on trust, mutual benefit and longevity. Establishing them requires time, financial investment, respectful interactions and a willingness to rethink attitudes. Our actions target faculty because this growth is slow and students are with us for a relatively short time.

Within 3 years

- Provide recognition in faculty annual reviews for investments in developing intercultural and international relationships, including skills for intercultural engagement.
- Invest in connections with XX communities of color, including immigrant communities, through conversations about collaborative research, co-management of resources and shared education.

Such co-curricular learning experiences can be powerful tools for acquiring intercultural knowledge (Soria and Troisi, 2014).^[47]

- Host open houses for under-represented local communities interested in learning about conservation issues, potentially developing ongoing partnerships.
- Identify local, intercultural gathering places at which to host sessions about our programs, and listen to community interests, discovering new opportunities to increase engagement of under-represented groups.

Longer term

- Develop graduate research that directly supports under-represented partner communities in addressing local conservation challenges.

Goal 1.3 *Offer the leading undergraduate and graduate curricula for students motivated to engage with diverse audiences within X State and other parts of the world.* Our plan makes a bold commitment to intercultural and international teaching, research and engagement. We are driven to find innovative approaches to preparing global-ready students and conducting globally engaged research. A central part of effective planning is assessing and reporting results and responding to those results. All assessments will be reflective, helping us change practices and serving as a model for others.

Within 3 years

- Publish a biennial assessment of our achievements, including assessing global readiness of students.
- Foster a culture of collaborative partnerships and participatory research, disseminating findings to stakeholders and explicitly acknowledging the value of partnerships.
- Pursue funding for an endowed faculty position in environmental sociology, strengthening our ability to teach and conduct research in ways that prepare students for cultures different from their traditional base.
- Endow annual, graduate, public engagement fellowships.

Longer term

- Recruit, support and retain diverse faculty, seeking individuals who represent and promote strong international and intercultural diversity.

Theme 2 Provide an engaging undergraduate curriculum that advances intercultural and international learning. Most undergraduate student exposure to intercultural and

international perspectives is through coursework. There is a deep literature on Internationalization at Home (IAH) (e.g., Hofmeyer and Jacob, 2002)^[21] which supports and guides classroom-based change. Learning benefits when faculty share their intercultural and international research. Classroom-based learning opportunities provide introductory global engagement to students who might not participate in study abroad (Ahwireng and Pillay 2020).^[1] Specific learning outcomes leading to global-readiness may lead to creative approaches to integrating intercultural and international perspectives in the classroom.

More immersive opportunities, both study abroad and domestic intercultural study will advance the global readiness of our students. Fostering a departmental culture of globally relevant teaching will have a spill-over effect beyond the curriculum. Graduate students (e.g., teaching assistants) will benefit from the development of instructor capacity for intercultural and international teaching.

Goal 2.1 *Improve accessibility of study abroad courses.* Study abroad benefits students in many ways, helping them develop as professionals and global citizens, yet these courses are not accessible to all (Jones, 2020).^[26] Barriers include financial resources and insufficient understanding of how study abroad advances graduation within four years. It is critical that our undergraduate students have access to resources including financial support and salient information about course planning.

Within 3 years

- Communicate effectively about study-abroad scholarship availability.
- Strengthen mentoring to better support students considering study abroad.
- Establish a fund for students of color to support undergraduate research, travel to professional meetings, and mentoring opportunities.
- Raise funds for means-based, study abroad scholarships, allowing a greater diversity of participation.
- Improve clarity and flexibility regarding the role of study abroad in the curriculum.

Goal 2.2 *Increase opportunities for intercultural learning in the curriculum.* Few undergraduates gain immersive, intercultural experiences. Domestic, intercultural learning will empower students whose budgets, schedules or interests do not align with study abroad, helping these students broaden fieldwork, interpersonal, and professional skills. The department will encourage and support faculty investment in this goal.

Within 3 years

- Host conversations with at least two under-represented communities in the XX Cities Area. Conversations will target undergraduate education, as well as use of, and decision-making about natural resources.

Longer term

- Join collaborators from several cultures in X State to develop a colloquium exploring conservation as seen from different cultural perspectives.
- Nominate scholars with intercultural experience from elsewhere in the University and the state to serve as adjunct faculty.
- Sustain relationships with one or more tribal community colleges, fostering intercultural learning (e.g., co-taught classes, undergraduate seminars).

Goal 2.3 *Encourage increased faculty investment in teaching intercultural and international courses.* Most of our study abroad courses are taught by faculty who are late in their careers. Developing new international courses feels risky, which deters investment by younger faculty.

Within 3 years

- Reduce barriers of uncertainty and risk through a shadow experience, allowing younger faculty to join experienced faculty in a study abroad course.

Longer term

- Develop faculty peer-to-peer networking opportunities to support international and intercultural learning. Our goal is at least one international or intercultural exercise in each class.

Goal 2.4 *Support students from under-represented groups and international students.* We will be a hospitable, supportive home for students from other countries and underrepresented cultures.

Within 3 years

- Build interactions among student groups representing underrepresented people (e.g., share events and experiences, co-host guests). Engaging with international students helps domestic students acquire knowledge about other cultures and enhances their intercultural competence (Soria and Troisi, 2014;^[47] Deardorff, 2006).^[14]
- Host annual visits by people from elsewhere in the university, representing resources and helping faculty become familiar with support and opportunities.

- Facilitate interactions among student groups that have international membership, including shared speakers, hosted guests, and collaborative experiences.
- Explore a peer-to-peer program in which students who are international or from a non-majority culture serve as mentors to incoming and less-experienced students.

Theme 3 Graduate education encourages intercultural engagement and international learning. Graduates embrace international lessons and values, advancing our mission after graduation. These students rely on their advisors for established relationships with intercultural and international communities. We will take steps to ensure that students have consistent exposure to intercultural and international learning opportunities, which will require addressing limitations of our current curriculum, and demonstrating departmental commitment to training global-ready scholars. Every graduate student engages in research, many pursue professional development, and our TA program provides opportunities for graduate teaching and advising.

Goal 3.1 *Build international and intercultural opportunities for graduate students.*

Within 3 years

- Routinely host seminar speakers who share intercultural and international perspectives; devote a semester-long seminar series to that theme.
- Adopt a measure of graduate student global readiness upon graduation, and weave that measure into our international/ intercultural report, advancing transparency.
- Develop a Certificate of International/ Intercultural competence (e.g., scholarship, teaching abroad) for graduate students.

Longer term

- Offer a graduate level course that builds capacity in global engagement skills and attitudes.
- Recruit an adjunct faculty member to offer an international, seven-week, graduate level, problem-solving course.
- Recruit adjunct faculty to teach courses intended to enhance intercultural or international skills.
- Explore shared-scholar agreements with international universities supporting student, scholar and faculty exchanges.

Goal 3.2 *Support graduate students pursuing intercultural or international research and learning opportunities.*

Our focus groups emphasized the difficulty of identifying opportunities and navigating the complexities of international research. We will address this barrier in several ways.

Within 3 years

- Maintain a website describing graduate opportunities and resources (e.g., funding, guidance, contacts).
- Work with campus graduate student associations to develop peer-to-peer networking for graduate students pursuing international and intercultural work.
- Share information (e.g., courses, seminars, resources) with other graduate programs.

Longer term

- Develop funding to support graduate students presenting research at international conferences.

Goal 3.3 *Increase recruiting and retention of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars interested in intercultural and international work.* International and intercultural students and scholars are key to our global engagement. Their participation builds cultural sensitivity and understanding, and creates opportunities for long lasting collaborative relationships. These scholars from other cultures often require additional support to thrive in our department and university. We will provide assistance in helping them learn the norms and expectations of the department and university.

Within 3 years

- Provide assistance to graduate student organizations establishing a peer-mentoring program for new students.
- Recruit and retain underrepresented students in our graduate program.

Longer term

- Encourage our intercultural, adjunct faculty to serve on graduate student committees.
- Partner with tribal colleges to promote graduate school readiness for their students.

Theme 4 Our departmental members conduct research that is interculturally and internationally relevant to informed, inclusive decision-making. Understanding and responding to the needs of others is key to international and intercultural success. If we are to make globally relevant contributions, our faculty, post-doctoral scholars and graduate students must conduct research that is mutually beneficial to the researchers and the local communities. Further, our research will contribute to local capacity to

address conservation threats and opportunities.

Goal 4.1 *Promote globally relevant and intercultural research among our faculty.* Faculty face many demands on their time. Choosing to focus on globally relevant research, particularly research with local partners, comes at a cost. However, globally relevant research is key to our mission. Thus, it is important that we continue to foster a research culture that supports this work.

Longer term

- The mentoring committee for probationary faculty will have at least one member with experience in international research and/or teaching, lowering the threshold for initiating new research in international or intercultural settings.
- Actively promote sabbatical leaves that are explicitly intercultural and international in nature.

Goal 4.2 *Focus on conducting research with, as well as within partner communities.* Conducting research that is relevant to partner communities requires that we understand how they see the problem. To achieve that, we will not only be physically present at an intercultural or international site, but also be actively engaged in seeking local perspectives, receiving those with open minds, and addressing them in research outcomes.

Longer term

- Recruit a tribal natural resource faculty member, with a disciplinary focus tied to our department and an interest in working with X State tribes, integrating western science and traditional ecological knowledge.
- Actively recruit adjunct faculty who can expand our research engagement with indigenous, immigrant, or international communities.

Goal 4.3 *Effectively communicate our commitment to globally relevant research.* Ensuring that our research is globally relevant requires that we share it in ways that are accessible to interested parties. Sharing relevant research with a wide audience of interested individuals demonstrates that we are interested in partnering with communities in addressing conservation challenges.

Within 3 years

- Enhance our web and social media presence to feature intercultural and international work and facilitate interactions with partners.
- Promote participation by our research staff and graduate students in community-based and non-academic conferences and workshops related to their

expertise. This includes recognizing in performance reviews the role of this engagement as central to sustaining collaborative research with cross-cultural and international partners.

- Regularly provide story leads to university communications staff, featuring our intercultural and international research.

6. Moving into Action

Our plan was approved and adopted by the faculty. Timing coincided with the start of the pandemic and our first year of experience coincided with significant social unrest. Those influences caused us to redirect, and provided opportunities. For example, after the social unrest in the summer of 2020, students advocated for more immediate action on some of our 3-year actions like diversity training and greater racial/ethnic diversity of guest lecturers in departmental courses. Those actions were elevated to more immediate, “within one year” timeframes. Further, our college has embarked on a strategic realignment which will provide opportunities for collaboration and opportunities to seek investment.

We began with initial actions that will lead to larger changes (i.e., changing the departmental constitution, establishing a new committee, communicating priorities of the plan to collegiate leadership and development staff). We will sustain our momentum through an annual assessment of progress, adjusting goals as appropriate, and reporting to the faculty after each assessment. Our approach to planning has been to work within existing capability, but prepare ourselves for opportunity. We can achieve our short-term goals by redirecting the energies of faculty and staff. We can meet our longer-term goals (e.g., new faculty directions) through attrition. If however, an opportunity arises (e.g., a new donor or college realignment), our plan positions us to adapt and take advantage.

Results of first year implementation include

- Establishing a departmental International and Intercultural Committee, a 5-person group that includes faculty, staff and graduate students. The committee has advanced transparency through communication with community members.
- That committee has instituted a newsletter and a Slack channel for interaction among graduate students, both of which have been very well received
- A sister department in our college has a new, tenure track faculty member who is Native American and whose teaching and research strengthen our understanding.
- Departmental communications with the outside

world in this time of social unrest and an ongoing pandemic have become much more explicit about our internationalization goals and practices.

- Although international travel was constrained, we developed two new study abroad classes.

We feel that continued success depends on adaptability, transparency and accountability, as well as accepting the fact that change is a slow and variable process.

7. Discussion

This work advances internationalization in three ways, each of which is discussed below: 1) We offer and demonstrate a strategic approach to change at the department level, 2) our plan weaves together international and intercultural change, and 3) the approach is adaptive and centered on transparency and accountability. It is the responsibility of higher education institutions to help students be global ready, capable of succeeding in an ever-changing, increasingly interconnected world, and to help members of the academic community teach and conduct research that is inclusive (Tanhueco-Nepomuceno, 2019).^[49] To be successful, internationalization of higher education must be systemic and strategic, ensuring that students and faculty are supported and encouraged at all levels (Sanderson, 2008).^[44]

Faculty and student life is centered at the department, where the curriculum resides and where research teams function. Our strategic approach at the department level incorporates visioning, community buy-in, and staged goals (following Mitchell and Buckingham, 2020).^[31] We found that the iterative process of tiered focus groups allowed us to be strategic. Planning and implementing curriculum change, as well as changing departmental culture toward greater internationalization advances diversity, enhances global readiness, and deepens the contributions of the faculty. Such changes are difficult and slow, but can be advanced by practices like regular discussions about intercultural and international programming (Niehaus and Williams, 2016)^[36] and engaging all community members in explicit, thoughtful planning (Friesen, 2013).^[17] Our use of focus groups to gather information prior to developing a plan is one of very few that have tried to understand student views of internationalization (Deardorff, 2006).^[14] Our approach of linking teaching with research, and faculty with students, supports development at the scale of the individual, involving cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains (Soria and Troisi, 2014;^[47] Lee *et al.* 2012;^[29] Deardorff, 2006).^[14] This adaptive, strategic plan allows us to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities (e.g., funding for curricular or research efforts) as well as empowering us to

act thoughtfully as needs arise. Such a need arose during the >18 month pandemic in which our practices and communication needed to change to be effective..

Internationalization of the curriculum is an active field of study and practice (American Council on Education, 2017,^[3] Hudzuik, 2011).^[23] However, linking domestic change to intercultural education is less common (de Hei *et al.* 2020,^[10] Lehtomaki *et al.* 2018).^[30] The approach we offer here weaves together growth and change that are both domestic and international. Inclusivity is an explicit goal of many curricular efforts, but is rarely an explicit component of internationalization (Almeida *et al.* 2019).^[2] We identified both need and opportunity in the intercultural aspects of our planning. Our community members expressed interest in, and desire for, engagement with intercultural research and teaching in the metropolitan area surrounding our university as well as with tribal partners within and outside X State. This attention to inclusivity in programming will increase our understanding of needs in our field (Bonata *et al.* 2015)^[5] and will support our goal of graduating global ready students.

The approach we developed is adaptive, transparent and accountable. We are in the first phase of our implementation and have found that all three of those attributes are critical to success. We must be more inclusive, and the injustices that have been part of our society for a long time must be addressed. The inequality that is inherent in many of our practices demands attention and change (Ibrahim and Zore, 2020).^[24] Adaptation has been important as our community has reflected on the social unrest that has gripped much of the US in 2020-21. In response to demands from our community members, we have been able to reflect on our goals, changing both actions and time frames. Development and implementation of our plan has been transparent, involving repeated discussions with faculty and student representatives. Our practice of publishing the plan and publishing annual assessments of our goals and actions demonstrates accountability to our community.

8. Conclusion

We have developed and demonstrated a department-level, strategic planning process for internationalization and intercultural growth. The plan has specified actions that guide our departmental function. We assess those actions and communicate our results through an annual process in which we evaluate the degree to which our students are global ready and our departmental community is internationally and interculturally engaged and inclusive. The curriculum is designed

and implemented by faculty members in a department, and we have chosen to implement change at the level of the academic department. This paper describes and illustrates a process for developing a strategic plan for culture change and provides exemplary results of such planning in a department of a large, comprehensive university. We demonstrate how philosophy is put into action by identifying goals to be met within three years, and longer time frames (i.e., within 10 years). This strategic, action-oriented approach is adaptive and leads to transparency and accountability within our community, and to global ready citizens who participate in their own and in distant communities, resulting in positive change. The accountability and transparency built into the plan provide clarity and strength, but also pose risks. We are investing energy in changing culture, which is necessary but inherently slow and difficult. If we are unsuccessful in achieving our goals, we face the risk of losing the gain we might have achieved from smaller changes. If we are successful, our students will be global ready, we will multiply our positive impact on society and others will adapt this model for their own use.

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- What keeps you interested in teaching study abroad courses?
- What opportunities or resources are available to support or encourage international teaching and learning?
- How do you find out about these resources
- Are those resources adequate?
- Where would you go for information if you wanted to start a new class?
- What are the barriers to developing or maintaining a study abroad course
- Vote on the most significant of those
- In what ways do you incorporate cross-cultural experiences into courses you teach here at home?
- What opportunities or resources are available to support or incentivize domestic cross-cultural teaching and learning?
- How do you find out about these resources?
- What are the barriers to incorporating cross-cultural teaching and learning experiences in domestic courses?
- Vote on results
- Thinking about both international and cross-cultural teaching and learning as contributing to our goal of fostering global engagement for our students, is there anything you think the Department could do to help you and other members of the faculty develop or improve courses that feature global engagement?
- Vote on results
- What could (the College) do to further cross cultural and international teaching and learning?
- What could the University do to further cross cultural and international teaching and learning?
- One thing we learned from the first focus group with undergrad students was that they relied on personal, positive interactions with a few faculty who champion study abroad courses. Those faculty served as sources of information, inspiration and encouragement for students interested in study abroad. We would like to know: what factors might affect your inclination to serve as a study abroad resource or champion for students?
- What are the Pros and cons of an international version of our required, Sophomore-level field session?
- Does personal compensation for teaching internationally matter?
- Why would someone want to be engaged in cross-cultural teaching and learning?
- What are the limits to engaging cross-culturally with others in the Twin Cities?
- Other comments to offer or questions to discuss?

Table 1 We conducted four focus groups for the SWOT analysis. We invited all department members who represented a particular role (e.g., teaching, research). We had 10 participants each in the Research and Public Engagement group, the Graduate Program group and Teaching and Learning group, and 14 in the Undergraduate Student group. Questions were relatively similar among groups but targeted specifically to the role of group members; questions used in the teaching and learning focus group are presented here as examples.