

Building Connections, Crossing Boundaries:
Instilling Global and Intercultural Understanding
In a Liberal Arts Education

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One of the core purposes of a liberal arts education is to equip students with a broad foundation of knowledge across several domains, providing enhanced perspective to the more detailed learning that occurs within the academic major. To be sure, study in the major is central to any liberal arts degree program, providing a grounding in the data and methods of a particular field, preparing students for graduate or professional school and the pursuit of a specific career. But it is breadth of knowledge, as conveyed through a college's general education curriculum as well as its residence and campus life programs, that imparts a richer context for understanding new information and experience. The combination of depth and breadth in a liberal arts education fosters an increased capacity for thoughtful observation, critical reflection, and responsible judgment, providing students with tools to lead responsible and effective lives as workers and citizens.

As the economic, political, and social relationships among nations become more complex and interrelated, there is a need for educated citizens who bring a range of perspectives and thinking to bear on the interactions that occur among different cultures and nations. No single academic discipline in itself can provide the full capacity for understanding such differences that a student can attain through a thoughtfully constructed program that draws from the insights and discoveries of several academic fields. Accordingly, one of the greatest challenges that liberal arts colleges face in the years ahead is to ensure that significant global and intercultural dimensions infuse student learning, not just in the major, but also in the programs of general education students pursue in the course of their undergraduate careers. Providing students with this kind of perspective is necessarily a shared effort, and to be certain, substantial progress has been made. In the past quarter-century, higher education institutions of all kinds have taken

important steps to strengthen international and intercultural dimensions of an undergraduate education. Students from a much wider array of academic majors now include study abroad as one component of their undergraduate careers, and the curricula of many institutions have evolved to include more substantial measures of global and intercultural content. But progress is intermittent, more focused among some students and some areas of the curriculum than others.

One of the greatest challenges that liberal arts colleges face in the years ahead is to ensure that significant global and intercultural dimensions infuse student learning, not just in the major, but also in the programs of general education students pursue in the course of their undergraduate careers.

Fostering students' ability to reflect on national and cultural difference, "to see themselves as others see them," is a central challenge confronting liberal arts education, and liberal arts colleges in particular. An important part of this challenge is to educate citizens and workers who perceive the impact of changes occurring in the economic and cultural circumstance of the U.S. in relation to other cultures, nations, and peoples. For example, even though American society increasingly includes immigrant communities from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, colleges and universities have rarely taken the initiative to help their students learn about or engage with these communities. In addition, profound changes in world trade are occurring as China, India, and other nations become major contributors to the global economy. Some have argued that in the years ahead, if the U.S. does not succeed in becoming more internationally sophisticated, it faces the prospect of becoming irrelevant. The challenge to liberal arts colleges collectively is to assert leadership in educating students for a changing world – to reconcile the traditions of Western civilization with the way the world will be in the twenty-first century.

The third roundtable of the Strategic Briefing series addressed the question of extending the benefits of global education to the full campus community. How can the potentially transformative experience of global and intercultural learning be made more integral to a liberal arts education? What steps can help institutions, their faculty and

students, attain a truly global perspective and understanding as a core element of a liberal arts education? What actions can help ensure that the graduates of these liberal arts colleges become what the Association of American Colleges and Universities' *Greater Expectations* identifies as "intentional learners," – those who "draw on difference and commonality to produce a deeper experience of community"?

The responsibility to educate students for lives of global awareness and understanding falls on every member of an academic community.

A fundamental step in addressing this challenge is to create the conditions that allow the strengthening of global and intercultural education to become a shared responsibility among every department and unit of a liberal arts college. Collaboration offers an important advantage in meeting this challenge. For liberal arts colleges in particular, collaboration offers a way to overcome the limitations that sometimes result from their smaller size and limited resources. In the same way that the forging of partnerships among those with common interests can enhance the quality of education provided to students on a single campus, collaboration among institutions can help increase the quality of global and intercultural education across campuses while at the same time offering the prospect of heightened efficiency and cost containment.

A Shared Responsibility

In some sense, the responsibility to educate students for lives of global awareness and understanding falls on every member of an academic community. A liberal arts college that seeks to instill global education as a core value might well embark on a campaign of heightened awareness among its faculty and staff, asking everyone in effect: "What action have you taken today to strengthen global and intercultural learning on this campus?" To ask the question in this way is to underscore the fact that every dimension of a campus environment – from the food service counter, to the playing field, to the classroom and laboratory – can actively contribute to the achievement of this educational goal.

Even within a small college community, however, the complexity and all-pervasiveness of this goal increases the difficulty of making substantial progress in a short time. The agenda of internationalization takes its place in the context of several other institutional goals, each one important in its own right, each consistent with the aims of a liberal arts education, and each deserving of sustained attention and energy. In time, however, a goal of this kind may be deferred by the fact that it often draws people beyond the boundaries of their expertise and comfort.

Very often the emphasis that given departments and their faculty members place on international themes has substantial bearing on the interests that students develop and pursue. Students may encounter strong feelings from their faculty mentors that global and intercultural considerations fall outside the scope of study in that field. It is often assumed that certain disciplines, notably the physical sciences, are inherently resistant to the infusion of such perspectives, though the determining factor may ultimately be the particular faculty member more than the academic discipline per se. There are stories of remarkable changes occurring in teaching and curricula in virtually every discipline as a result of a faculty member's travel and study in another country.

Even on a smaller campus, the mere fact of bringing students of different nations and cultures together does not necessarily bring about a transformation in perspective and understanding.

For faculty members as for students, it is often the direct experience of international travel and study that brings about a transformation, yielding a substantially increased understanding of the rich variety among cultures, and of the possibilities for infusing such understanding more completely into a liberal arts education. Because many off-campus study programs emphasize the out-of-class, experiential dimensions of learning in another setting, however, some faculty members may consider such experience to be deficient in academic rigor and difficult to assess in any case. It is easy to overlook the fact that the experiential dimension of learning is central to a liberal arts college. The commitment of these colleges to residential and campus learning is in fact a

commitment to experiential learning, as is the commitment to hands-on learning in the classroom, or to internships. Even though experiential learning has an established place on campus, it often comes under some suspicion in off-campus study.

To make genuine headway in strengthening global and intercultural dimensions of a liberal arts education requires the building of partnerships among all departments and organizational units of an institution. There are links to be forged among different departments and divisions of a single institution. More broadly, there are important benefits that can result from developing partnerships among institutions that seek the benefits of collaboration in strengthening global and intercultural education. In each case the fundamental question becomes: What steps can we take to create a set of learning activities that provide genuine enhancement to our students' global and intercultural understanding?

Building Intercultural Community on Campus

As small residential learning communities, liberal arts colleges are ideally configured to foster meaningful exchanges among students of different backgrounds and national origins. Most of these institutions work hard to foster such exchange by attracting students from other nations to study and become part of their campus communities. Even on a smaller campus, however, the mere fact of bringing students of different nations and cultures together does not necessarily bring about a transformation in perspective and understanding. It might seem natural to think that such students on a small campus would serve as ambassadors of their own nations for U.S. students. In most cases, however, international students do not conceive themselves as ambassadors of their own cultures. They are young people suddenly transported to a setting very different from their own. Disconnected from familiar bearings and confronted with the experience of being a minority, their impulse may well be to seek out and prefer the company of others like themselves. Indeed, the same principle often applies to U.S. students who study abroad and cluster predominantly with other Americans.

If one were to ask what learning outcome a liberal arts college seeks to achieve through the presence of international students on campus, the answers would likely stress the theme of fostering an appreciation and understanding of cultural differences, helping prepare students for life in an increasingly global, multicultural society. Many of the opportunities for achieving this goal are those that occur outside the classroom. For international students, as for virtually any student initially enrolling in a residential college or university, an important factor in a student's decision to persist and attain a degree is the ability to find a smaller support group within the campus community. A college's athletic programs often provide such an opportunity. Team sports often create a basis for shared interaction and camaraderie among students; it is a realm that minimizes differences of language and culture, and a team's performance can become a source of group identity and pride. International clubs and other co-curricular programming can achieve similar purposes through somewhat different means. A college can take a variety of steps to facilitate interaction, engagement, and learning enhancement among students of different nationalities and cultures. Even the most concerted attempts to foster such learning are likely to reach a subset of the full campus community, however. There are some students who will and others who will not respond to such attempts to heighten international understanding through the co-curriculum.

Keys to Curriculum Development

It is in the realm of curriculum, finally, that an institution has most direct control of students' learning experience. Our discussion reaffirmed a principle that has been central to all three Strategic Briefing Roundtables: Of all the resources available to a higher education institution, it is the faculty that has greatest power to infuse a liberal arts education with international and intercultural content. An institutional investment in the professional development of its faculty can be a very effective means of globalizing the curriculum, particularly through the provision of financial support that makes it possible for faculty members to travel and study in other nations. An encounter with a very different setting and mode of life can have a profound effect on faculty members as well as students, resulting in the incorporation of new material and perspectives into existing courses, and even the development of new course offerings.

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The second paper in this Strategic Briefing series has stressed that the period immediately following a time of study abroad represents an important window for students to reflect critically on the themes and issues inherent in the encounter with another place. In providing students with an opportunity to apply the methods of one or more academic disciplines to their study away, a college can help ensure that students come to understand that experience as being integrally related to their on-campus learning. Collaboration offers the prospect of expanding the frame of reference for such reflection and synthesis. A promising means of solidifying students' off-campus learning, for example, is to create inter-campus forums that allow students to deliver papers or other presentations to their peers and faculty mentors.

A similar concept holds the promise of enhancing the impact that travel and study in another country can have on faculty members. Several Global Partners institutions have adopted a seminar approach to travel abroad for members of their faculty. The process begins with a pre-departure meeting among participating faculty members, each of whom will travel to a common country or region. This meeting allows for some basic preparation for travel as well as preliminary statements of each faculty member's interests in the region. The second phase consists of travel to the region itself; faculty members may spend some time together on this trip, though each will spend a substantial period pursuing his or her particular interests. The final and in some ways the most important component of the sequence is the reconvening of these faculty members within a few weeks of the time they have returned to the U.S. The purpose of this session is to allow everyone to reflect on what he or she has learned, and to consider the potential impact those discoveries will have on one's research and teaching. Individual faculty members may speak primarily from the standpoint of their own academic disciplines.

The collective result, however, is a perspective that encompasses several disciplines, suggesting a range of avenues through which the study of a given region can enhance teaching and learning in a liberal arts curriculum. The common experience of travel abroad, combined with these pre- and post-departure sessions, fosters a strengthening of professional ties among colleagues of a given institution. These linkages across academic domains become the basis for influencing curriculum development and teaching both within and across disciplines.

Extending the concept by another degree, this model of faculty development could yield productive results if adopted by groups of institutions within or across consortia. In this as in other areas of international study, a collaborative effort helps expand the scale, momentum, and impact of initiatives being pursued on individual campuses. A multi-college approach to faculty development offers a potentially greater pool of faculty members with an interest in particular regions of the world. The ties of professional interest developed among participating faculty members would extend not just within but also among institutions. The enrichments to curriculum and teaching that one could expect from this model would not be confined to a single academic discipline or a single institution; in time these benefits would extend across several institutions as participants in such faculty seminars sought to apply the approaches that they and their colleagues had explored for infusing the curriculum with global learning.

Closely related to this combined approach to professional development is the prospect of Global Partners institutions collaborating in the provision of shorter off-campus study programs of three to five weeks duration. A combined approach could make it easier for students of one institution to enroll in the short-term programs of another Global Partners college – and indeed for faculty members to participate in shorter-term programs across partnering institutions as well. No one supposes that a short-term program can accomplish what a full semester or year in another setting achieves for either students or faculty. Such a program certainly cannot provide the experience of full immersion in another culture. Programs of this kind are typically led by faculty members of a managing institution, and considerations of liability as well as

pedagogy all but necessitate that students travel and study almost entirely in one another's company. For students and faculty members alike, however, shorter learning programs often provide an initial taste of another setting that increases both the awareness of other cultures and the willingness to explore possibilities for further study at a later time. To adopt the metaphor of the Institute for International Education's annual publication, a program of even a few weeks can open doors for participants, providing a formative introduction and increasing one's receptiveness to other cultures and customs. The prospect of leading such a tour often becomes a means of involving faculty members from a range of academic disciplines more fully in an institution's agenda of strengthening global education in a liberal arts framework.

The models of faculty development considered here are not the only possible approaches to enhancing curriculum and teaching with global content. Considered as exemplars, however, these models suggest the scaling up of opportunity and of impact that can occur when institutions collaborate in the achievement of common educational purposes. Faculty development of this kind, when undertaken across groups of liberal arts colleges, can heighten both the visibility and momentum of efforts to globalize the curricula of these institutions. As the number of faculty members who have engaged their professional interests in another setting increases, so too does the possibility of positively influencing the curriculum, not just in the major, but also in the general education components of a liberal arts education.

Collaborative Principles

Certainly there are steps that a liberal arts college can take to infuse global and intercultural understanding more fully in its community of faculty and students. In some cases, moreover, collaboration can enhance the efforts of a single institution to achieve this result. Although the smaller size of liberal arts colleges may support the premise that such institutions are especially conducive to interdisciplinary study, the fact is that not everyone on campus wants to be interdisciplinary, and not all faculty members want to

impart a more global cast to their teaching. Even if an institution as a whole supports efforts to strengthen global elements of its curriculum and learning community, it may not consider collaboration as a central means of achieving this purpose. These facts in themselves help explain the degree to which global and intercultural education become fragmented enterprises as different parties set about independently to fulfill what are essentially shared educational purposes.

Acknowledging these natural impediments, participants in the third Strategic Briefing Roundtable identified some basic principles to guide institutions as they seek to strengthen international and intercultural dimensions of a liberal arts education through collaboration:

- *Provide a collaborative structure that allows institutions to participate at a level they find beneficial to themselves.* Rather than imposing a single standard of entry, collaborative activities should make it possible for institutions to participate at a level they find appropriate to their own purposes. It follows from this principle that not every collaborative activity would necessarily involve every one of the 42 Global Partners institutions. Particular initiatives might involve two or three institutions initially and perhaps attract more partners as the momentum accrues.
- *Recognize the different educational philosophies and goals that inform an institution's curriculum and programs.* While the 42 liberal arts colleges participating in the Global Partners Project are similar in terms of mission, academic stature, and commitment to the tradition of education in the liberal arts and sciences, individual colleges differ about what it means to provide students with global and intercultural education. The curriculum and pedagogy employed in on-campus instruction will bear the signature of a particular institution and its faculty. In the realm of study abroad, institutions exhibit a range of preferences about the nature of the learning experience: To what extent should a student's study abroad constitute an immersion in

another culture? Should students study and live primarily with other U.S. students, or with students of the nation in which they are studying? Should a program involve a home-stay with a family or dormitory living? Should students take courses taught by faculty of a foreign university? What should be the language of instruction? Differing philosophies of education and different student preparation will yield a range of answers to such questions as these. Those answers will in turn determine which collaborative activities a given campus will likely pursue.

- *Recognize the degree to which individual faculty ownership shapes the cast that global and intercultural study takes on a given campus.* Just about every institution can tell stories of how the vision and drive of a single faculty member built a dynamic international program on campus virtually from scratch. The success of such programs is testimony to the dedication and achievement of their campus leaders. In many cases, that success ultimately hinders the possibility of a program evolving to reflect changing circumstances or different educational goals. Not even a chief academic officer can substantially change the culture of international education on a campus when that culture embodies programs, traditions, and leadership that are deeply embedded in an institution's history.

Levels of Collaboration

Even though collaborative efforts to strengthen global education can expect to encounter constraints, we believe the benefits of working together justify the effort that collaboration requires, and even the frustrations that accompany halting and uncertain progress. Knowing that it is unrealistic to expect every institution to collaborate on everything, it is useful to consider different levels and forms that collaboration might take.

A first, basic level of collaboration consists of sharing information that allows individual institutions to be more effective in strengthening global education on their own campuses. This level of exchange entails comparatively little institutional commitment or cost, and these networks of informal exchange provide institutions with an expanded frame of reference for understanding particular strengths and weaknesses of global education in their own setting. A more fully articulated version of collaboration at this level could yield an inventory of institutional capacities for global and intercultural education, providing a context for goal-setting and heightening awareness of what resources exist among participating campuses.

A second, more advanced level of collaboration would engage participating colleges in shared activities that help ensure the academic quality of programs while promoting cost containment. To help identify what might be possible in this respect, staff members of ACM, ACS, and GLCA conducted an analysis of study-abroad data collected from Global Partners institutions in a sample of 18 countries in six regions of the world. While the survey did not seek to capture study abroad activity in every country, the 18 countries in this sample represent more than two-thirds of all Global Partners student enrollment in study-abroad programs that were one semester or more in length in the 2002-03 academic year. The analysis of these institutional data yielded some remarkable findings, summarized below in three tables excerpted from the study:

First, *While there was notable dispersion, students nonetheless tended to cluster in a comparatively small number of study-abroad programs: 2,157 students, or 54.5% of the sample, enrolled in just 114 (15.5%) of the 734 programs represented in the sample of countries (Table 1).*

Table 1. Levels of Student Enrollment

Students per Program	Number of Programs	% of Total Programs¹	Cumulative % of Programs (594)	Number of Students	% of Total Students	Cumulative % of Students (2633)
> 10 Students	114	15.5%		2157	54.5%	
6 - 10 Students	92	12.5%	28.0%	710	17.9%	72.4%
3 - 5 students	154	21.0%	72.0%	585	14.8%	27.6%
1 or 2 students	374	51.0%		506	12.8%	
Totals	734	100.0%		3958	100.0%	

Second, *the largest proportion of students in the sample enrolled in study-abroad programs managed by third-party providers*, that is, programs managed by agencies or institutions other than the 42 Global Partners colleges. Of the 3,958 students in the sample, 1,921 or 48.5% chose programs of third-party providers, while 1,739 or 43.9% enrolled in programs managed by Global Partners colleges (Table 2).

Table 2. Categories of Program Providers

Provider Type (number of providers)	Number of Programs	% of Total Programs	Number of Students	% of Total Students
Third-Party Providers (132)	472	64.3%	1921	48.5%
Global Partners Institutions (23) ²	193	26.3%	1739	43.9%
Direct Enrollment	43	5.9%	219	5.5%
Unknown	26	3.5%	79	2.1%
Totals	734	100.0%	3958	100.0%

Third, *a comparatively small number of third-party providers accounted for a disproportionate enrollment of students of Global Partners institutions*. Just half a dozen third-party providers enrolled 1,032 students or 26% of the sample. The estimated tuition collected for this cohort of students in that year amounts to some \$10 million (Table 3).

¹ Percentages are based upon surveys received and entered as of December 14, 2004.

² The results as of December 13, 2004 showed that there were 37 Global Partners institutions plus the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) that directed and managed study-abroad programs with students enrolled during the 2002-2003 academic year.

Table 3. Third-Party Program Providers (Top 6)

Program Provider	Number of Programs	% of Total Programs	Number of Students	% of Total Students	Program Cost x # of Students (Tuition Only)	Average Cost per Student
1 IFSA (Institute for Study Abroad) Butler	57	7.8%	314	7.9%	\$3,311,075	\$10,544
2 IES (Institute for the Int'l Education of Students)	21	2.9%	256	6.5%	\$2,553,790	\$9,975
3 SIT (School for International Training)	43	5.9%	149	3.8%	\$1,633,693	\$10,964
4 CIEE (Council on Int'l Educational Exchange)	25	3.4%	149	3.8%	\$1,125,007	\$7,550
5 Arcadia U	33	4.5%	98	2.5%	\$1,072,250	\$10,941
6 Australearn	14	1.9%	66	1.7%	\$477,530	\$7,235
Totals	193	26.3%	1032	26.1%	\$10,173,345	\$9,857

One version of a more advanced collaboration would be to function as a buyers cooperative with third-party providers to which Global Partners institutions send a substantial number of students each year. Global Partners colleges could organize themselves as a collective entity to negotiate tuition discounts from major third-party programs in exchange for an assurance that, between them, these colleges would send a given number of students to those programs each year. Just as important, collaboration in this mode would give Global Partners institutions a powerful voice in shaping the curriculum and related aspects of study-abroad programs of third-party providers, helping ensure that students' learning experiences align with the educational goals of these liberal arts colleges.

A third level of collaboration also builds directly on the study-abroad survey results summarized above. The data displayed in Table 2 show that 48.5% of Global Partners students in the sample enrolled in programs of third-party providers, while some 44% enrolled in programs managed by Global Partners institutions themselves. A series of agreements among these 42 colleges could result in students choosing study-abroad programs managed by Global Partners institutions themselves more often than the programs of third-party providers. It is not unreasonable to think that a commitment among institutions to collaborate in the provision of study-abroad programs would result in 60% to 70% of students from these institutions enrolling in programs managed by a Global Partners college. The agreements among institutions could take the form of "silent" or in-country collaboration, in which several liberal arts colleges enter into agreement with a common provider of services, allowing each institution to call the

program its own. Collaboration could also take the form of institutions making it both possible and attractive for students of one Global Partners institutions to enroll in the programs offered by other institutional partners. Collaboration of this kind could be seen, for example, in advising practices that encouraged students to enroll in a study-abroad program managed by a Global Partners college when it is available in a given setting; or in policies that favor the export of an institution's financial aid to the programs managed by Global Partners institutions.

To be certain, collaboration at these more advanced levels requires a degree of commitment to work together – to devote the human and financial resources needed for collaboration to be effective. Whether the focus of collaborative activity is the enrichment of on-campus learning or the strengthening of study abroad, in some cases collaboration requires that individual institutions and their faculty members relinquish some measure of direct control over the content and dynamics of learning programs. The benefit to institutions in return for these commitments, however, is an expanded range of programs under the purview of partner institutions, and greater assurance in the quality of their students' learning, from the knowledge that they are being educated through the programs of colleges whose mission, academic stature, and commitment to global and intercultural education resembles that of the student's own institution. In some cases, moreover, collaboration offers the prospect of cost savings from the pooling of resources among partner institutions pursuing common educational goals.

The Possibilities for Collaboration

As institutions move from basic to more extensive forms of collaboration in achieving shared educational purposes, the level of commitment required among partners also increases. The third roundtable in the Strategic Briefing Roundtable series considered a range of collaborative possibilities for strengthening global and intercultural education on Global Partners campuses. The proposals encompassed collaboration of several kinds and represent different levels of engagement among institutions. Some of these proposals have been discussed in some detail in this paper:

- A seminar-and-travel approach to faculty development involving several campuses.
- Collaboration in short-term study-abroad programs.
- A buyers cooperative for negotiating program components and cost of study abroad from third-party providers.
- Collaborative agreements among institutions to encourage more students to participate in study abroad programs managed by Global Partners institutions.

The third roundtable of the Strategic Briefing series engaged in lively discussion of several other collaborative possibilities. The proposals of this roundtable have been combined with those that emerged from two other sessions, in addition to proposals that emerged from three Global Partners Regional Alliance Projects focusing on the possibilities for collaboration in targeted regions of the world. Collectively these proposals provide an extensive range of answers to the question of what these 42 colleges might do to strengthen global dimensions of learning through the vehicle of collaboration. These suggestions are compiled in an appendix to this document, entitled, “Global Partners Collaborative Prospects: A Summary.”

An Opportunity for Leadership

A central theme of all three Strategic Briefing Roundtable sessions was a forceful conviction of the value of collaboration in strengthening global and intercultural dimensions of learning at liberal arts colleges. In linking together the strengths that exist on different Global Partners campuses, these institutions position themselves to enhance international and intercultural learning in ways that no single college can achieve on its own. Collaboration expands the frame of reference and creates opportunities for the enhancement of global learning and understanding – among individual faculty members,

within departments and disciplines, and ultimately across institutions. Working with other Global Partners institutions in the achievement of shared educational purposes, these colleges can accelerate the momentum of curriculum and learning development that occurs on a given campus, helping instill learning programs with stronger components of global and intercultural content – within the academic major, and ultimately within the elements that constitute a student’s general education at a liberal arts college.

Collaboration is an essential strategy to ensure that these institutions remain at the forefront in recasting liberal arts education to meet the educational needs of students in the twenty-first century.

In the six years of funding it has provided to the Global Partners Project, the Mellon Foundation has planted seeds of a powerful transformation within and across these 42 participating colleges. Through its programs of curriculum and faculty development, its best-practice seminars and workshops, publications, and a select set of regional alliance projects, Global Partners has helped propel these institutions to leadership in redefining the global and intercultural dimensions of a liberal arts education in the U.S.. It is critically important to identify a limited set of collaborative activities that can ensure continued momentum in strengthening global and intercultural education across these liberal arts colleges in the years ahead. Collaboration is an essential strategy to ensure that these institutions remain at the forefront in recasting liberal arts education to meet the educational needs of students in the twenty-first century.

A central factor in any process of cultural and organizational change is the presence of dynamic and effective leadership. Late last year, five major research libraries – Stanford, Harvard, Michigan, Oxford, and the New York Public – accelerated the progress toward a different age of information retrieval through their decision to scan their printed collections and make them searchable through the Internet with Google. In taking this step, these leadership institutions have helped propel academic libraries and their host institutions into a mode of thinking that differs profoundly from the past, as knowledge and information are no longer confined to physical collections of volumes on shelves.

Just as access to knowledge has greatly expanded through digital media, the frameworks for understanding interactions of daily life now have an increasingly global cast. An act of leadership by another major U.S. institution in January 2005 helped denote how much the world has changed in this respect. In the first week of the new year, the New York Times ceased to publish what it had called the “International Business” section of its newspaper. In doing so, the Times effectively signaled that in a world of global exchange, the designations of domestic and international business had ceased to be a meaningful distinction. The “Business Day” section henceforth incorporated news of both the nation and the world.

In the same sense, higher education institutions can expect that in the years ahead, international education will become more completely synonymous with a liberal arts education. Liberal arts education will become inherently more global. Small residential colleges of the kind the Global Partners institutions represent may choose to follow the trend, to accommodate separately at the margins the growing responsibility to educate students for lives of global citizenship. Or they may choose to assert leadership by actively developing their programs of learning to impart more global and intercultural dimensions, not just in the major, but also in the general education components of a liberal arts degree. Working together, these 42 institutions have the opportunity to exert genuine leadership in the fulfillment of this educational challenge.

Appendix

Global Partners Collaborative Prospects

A Preliminary Summary
from the Global Partners Strategic Briefing Roundtable
and the Regional Alliance Projects

Strengthen the Position of Global Partners Institutions in the Market of Study-abroad Programs

Consumer report of off-campus programs. Develop a collaborative initiative to provide qualitative review of study-abroad programs from the standpoints of key program attributes (i.e., instruction by U.S. faculty members or direct enrollment in a foreign university, home-stay or dormitory living, cost, etc.) – in effect a consumer report, which could serve liberal arts institutions both within and beyond the Global Partners network in identifying study-abroad programs that are well suited to students’ educational needs.

A buyer’s cooperative. Function as a buyer’s cooperative with third-party providers of study-abroad programs, for the purpose of negotiating quantity discounts, and to influence aspects of the curriculum, instructional method, living arrangements, and other elements of the study-abroad learning experience for students of Global Partners institutions. (Closely related to the buyer’s cooperative is a consortial approach to negotiating student exchange agreements with universities in other nations.)

Shared analysis of enrollment data. Engage in systematic efforts to collect, analyze, and share campus data on study-abroad enrollments, making possible individual campus comparisons to other Global Partners institutions as well as comparisons between Global Partners campuses and institutions nationwide as collected by the Institute for International Education (IEE).

Share information about study-abroad programs managed by Global Partners institutions. Construct a data base of study-abroad programs managed by Global Partners institutions in a form that is readily accessible through the Web to international studies officers, faculty members, and students of participating institutions. (Such information gathering could show, for example, which programs students of Global Partners institutions choose most often for study abroad, or what institutions have conducted site visits or other qualitative reviews of third-party programs.) A tool of this kind could increase the likelihood of students choosing the programs of Global Partners providers – ideally providing the basis for financial arrangements offering economies of scale and reduced cost to participating institutions.

Pursue Collaborative Approaches to Study Abroad

Collaborate in the management of study-abroad programs. One possibility is to pursue arrangements for “silent collaboration” among institutions in operating a common program for study abroad, allowing partnering institutions to share the costs of contracting an on-site agency that would provide instruction, housing, and support to students in a given setting. Such an arrangement would allow each institution to call the program its own, while making possible significant economies of scale.

Develop shorter programs. Collaborate in the development of shorter study-abroad programs that allow students to gain a first experience of another culture and setting, thus helping provide footings for a more extended period of study abroad at a later time.

Inter-consortial partnerships with liberal arts colleges abroad. Develop exchange agreements and related partnerships with higher education institutions in other nations that have been established on the model of liberal arts colleges in the U.S., working with these institutions to develop learning programs that help U.S. students understand their own culture in broader perspective.

Strengthen Global and Intercultural Dimensions of Education on Campus

Engage with local cultures. Develop consortial programs to foster heightened student engagement and understanding of cultural differences that exist in immigrant communities in the U.S., many of which are in close proximity to Global Partners campuses.

Multi-campus international forums for students. Convene multi-campus events that engage both international and U.S. students of Global Partners institutions in formal and informal exchanges that promote increased understanding of cultural differences of students from different countries – helping international students expand their networks and feel a sense of engagement with other students beyond a single institution, while helping U.S. students understand a range of diversity beyond what they encounter on their own campus.

Strengthen Continuity between Study Abroad and Campus Learning

Interconsortial forums for student research based on study abroad. Create inter-campus and inter-consortial forums that allow students who have studied

in a given region to reflect on their experiences and share them with others from an academic perspective, helping students understand their study-abroad experience as integrally linked to their on-campus learning.

Publication of student papers from study abroad. Develop a Global Partners venue for publishing the best student papers derived from study-abroad activities across the 42 participating institutions.

Language instruction across campuses using technology. Develop a program to provide instruction in the language of under-studied regions (e.g., Kiswahili) across campuses in real-time using video conferencing technology, providing valuable opportunities for language study to students preparing for or returning from study in a given region.

Share Information, Expertise, and Campus Resources that Support Curriculum Development, Teaching, and Research in International Subjects

Shared framework for curriculum development. Pursue initiatives across institutions to make international and intercultural education more integral to the curriculum and learning experience of undergraduates at Global Partners institutions. Work through consortial means to make international and intercultural education synonymous with a liberal arts education from these institutions, as opposed to an auxiliary to be taken or left according to student and faculty proclivities.

Inventory of institutional capacities. Develop an inventory of institutional strengths and weaknesses with respect to global and intercultural education across the 42 participating Global Partners institutions – not for the purpose of “ranking” institutions, but rather to help individual colleges set goals for strengthening global elements of their own curriculum and learning community, and to identify areas in which collaboration could help a given institution achieve its goals. (Such a compilation could yield a more informed understanding of which institutions might naturally cluster together in achieving shared purposes, while at the same time helping identify institutions that are poised to show leadership in the pursuit of particular goals.)

Dissemination of best practices. Drawing on the work of Global Partners activities to date, as well as the experience of individual institutions, develop a program to disseminate best practices in addressing shared institutional challenges concerning global education and study abroad.

Develop a traveling circuit of experts to Global Partners campuses, to help support curriculum development and teaching activities that foster deeper understanding of the international dimensions that are integral to a liberal arts education.

Arrange to bring young visiting scholars to liberal arts campuses. Drawing on the work of the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) project, pursue consortial agreements with research universities that would provide campus internships for those who are doctoral candidates or who recently completed Ph.D.'s in international and intercultural topics, giving these young scholars an opportunity to engage in a mentored teaching activity in a liberal arts college, while at the same time making it possible for young scholars to enrich the global and intercultural environment of Global Partners campuses with their knowledge of a field.

Apply technology to enrich curriculum and teaching in global subjects. Expand the study of geography and the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in the social sciences, language and culture and environmental studies, geoscience, and biological science among other disciplines across Global Partners institutions.

Expand Consortial Efforts in Faculty Development

Exchange programs with universities of other nations. Build on existing relationships to broaden consortial exchange agreements with universities of other nations, developing contacts of Global Partners faculty with scholars and institutions abroad while also facilitating the process of bringing scholars of other nations to Global Partners campuses.

International learning centers. Continue to foster a series of international learning centers, built on relationships that have been developed with leaders of key foreign universities, each serving as a point of contact and interaction for Global Partners faculty members conducting research, study, or curriculum development in a region.

Faculty development seminars. Continue shared efforts to strengthen faculty development, through interconsortial seminars that focus on issues of curriculum development and pedagogy with regard to a particular region, or to the enhancement of global and intercultural education in general.

Seminar-and-travel approach to faculty development. Pursue a consortial and inter-consortial approach to faculty development in the form of travel grants to visit other nations and cultures. One possibility is a format in which faculty from several institutions convene in a pre-departure seminar to formulate individual and collective goals; these colleagues travel together through much of their time abroad, then re-convene after returning to the U.S. to share findings and outline conceivable impacts on their research, teaching, and curriculum development. (The same three-part educational structure holds promise for groups of students across Global Partners institutions as well.)

Engage in Consortial Approaches to Assessing Learning, Understanding Costs, and Enhancing Participation in Study Abroad

Consortial effort to assess student learning in study-abroad programs. Adapt, refine and implement promising practices for assessing what students learn in study-abroad programs.

Strengthen understanding of costs associated with globalizing campuses. Drawing on relevant models, pursue consortial approaches to gain a better understanding and control of the costs that Global Partners institutions incur in supporting globalization efforts in general and study abroad in particular.

Shared efforts to foster broader engagement with global and intercultural elements of a liberal arts education. Develop strategies to encourage more students who are typically under-represented in international dimensions of a liberal arts education to participate and benefit more fully. Underrepresented student groups at present include athletes, male students, science majors, students of color, and students of lower socio-economic status.

Interconsortial Support and Advocacy on Issues of Pressing Common Concern

Develop a collaborative network for advice in visa processing. Develop a consortial network to provide advice and support for campus officials attempting to process the visas of international students coming to a Global Partners campus.

Lobbying for common causes. A shared approach to lobbying the federal government on pressing matters of shared concern, such as the issue of international students and scholars seeking visas for temporary entry into the U.S.

Charting a Course for the Future of Global and Intercultural Education

A global futures commission. Establish a Global Partners working group of faculty members with broad international experience to consider cross-cutting issues that are likely to impact global and intercultural education in the future, and to outline ways in which institutional collaboration can help these liberal arts colleges harness their productive energies to formulate and shape the issues of the future. (Examples of cross-cutting themes include environmental issues, border studies, and human rights issues).