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The Global Partners Project
Strategic Briefing Roundtables

Overview and Summary

The following essays derive from a series of Strategic Briefing Roundtables convened between January 2004 and January 2005 as part of the Global Partners Project, with major funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Participants in the roundtables included chief academic officers and other campus leaders across 42 member institutions of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS), and the Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA). The purpose of the roundtables was to consider potential means of strengthening global and intercultural education at these liberal arts colleges, and in particular, to consider the prospect of collaboration as a means by which individual institutions can enhance the quality of international programming and achieve cost efficiencies.

The context for these roundtables is a recognition of the growing importance – and the growing expense – of ensuring that a liberal arts education includes a substantial degree of global perspective and understanding. Virtually all colleges and universities today, including those selective liberal arts colleges that participate in the Global Partners Project, understand the value of building a strong international component into their missions and programs. Leaders of these colleges also understand how complex, difficult, and expensive it is to impart a vital global and intercultural dimension to the life of their campuses. These institutions seek to provide an education that prepares students for citizenship in a global society, and within many academic disciplines there is a growing emphasis on trans-national approaches. Yet the strengthening of international study and research programs, curriculum, and co-curricular activities remains a challenging and multi-faceted task.

The essays developed from these Strategic Briefing Roundtables take account of changes that have occurred in the domain of international education. Two changes in particular have set the current age apart from earlier decades:

- *A greatly expanded market of study-abroad programs competing for student enrollment and dollars, accompanied by a growing desire of students to spend part of their undergraduate careers in an another setting.* For colleges that export their financial aid to students enrolling in such programs, the flow of dollars leaving the institution is substantial, and in some cases there is little assurance that the programs of third-party providers are of suitable academic quality.
- *A changing paradigm for global and intercultural education.* A growing conviction within the academy, and in society itself, that a capacity for global and intercultural understanding entails something more than the study of a single nation or region. While the prevailing area study concentration of earlier decades

focused primarily on learning the language and customs of a single nation, there is an emerging sense of need to understand any setting as a complex array of factors representing the influence of many nations and cultures. This increasing global and intercultural emphasis has implications for the way that international education is organized and taught. More than before, educating for global awareness and understanding must be a shared effort among departments and divisions of an institution.

Study abroad constitutes an important element of an institution's efforts to provide students with a global perspective and understanding, and considerations of this theme formed a significant dimension of each roundtable in the series. Many institutions confront the fact that a growing number of students seek to spend part of their undergraduate careers studying in another country. In addition to the growing costs this phenomenon entails for students' home institutions, a recurrent concern is to ascertain that students choose programs that are academically rigorous and consistent with the goals of a liberal arts education.

No less important than study abroad are the actions that liberal arts colleges take to instill global and intercultural perspectives as elements of their students' education on campus. In a variety of ways, these essays address the need to provide students with opportunities to engage international perspectives, regardless of whether they participate in study abroad. One concern is to ensure that students who have studied in another country come to understand that experience as integrally related to the learning that occurs through the curriculum and campus life of their home institution. It is important that all students of liberal arts colleges encounter global perspectives in the course of their undergraduate education: in the context of the academic major, in programs of general education, and in the co-curricular life of the institution.

Each roundtable expressed strong interest in pursuing opportunities to collaborate in strengthening global education at these liberal arts colleges. The strength of this interest is itself a major finding of these discussions. At the same time, a series of observations distilled from the roundtables provides an important context for approaching collaborative opportunities:

- Collaboration strengthens the hand of liberal arts colleges in addressing issues of quality and cost in programs of study abroad, and it allows individual institutions to enhance the range and depth of on-campus programs through the development of networks and shared opportunities with faculty and students of other colleges.
- To develop a culture of global and intercultural engagement requires effective leadership both within and among institutions. Those who exert such leadership often have differing educational philosophies and management styles. One requirement of successful collaboration is a willingness to relinquish some measure of individual "ownership" in the pursuit of shared educational purposes.

- Collaboration is a strategy – a step that an institution takes to strengthen its own position in a particular dimension of a liberal arts education. A given institution will collaborate to the extent that its own interests are served in doing so; it follows from this that not every institution will collaborate with others on every issue. Institutions need to choose, individually and collectively, which are the most important issues on which to collaborate.

Included in this packet are three essays from the Strategic Briefing Roundtable series. Accompanying the essays is a list of collaborative possibilities distilled from all three roundtables. This list, entitled “Global Partners Collaborative Prospects: A Summary,” outlines potential directions that these Global Partners institutions might pursue together in strengthening global and intercultural dimensions of a liberal arts education.

Collectively, the documents of this series articulate principles that any institution might apply as it seeks to ensure that global and intercultural education constitute vital dimensions of a liberal arts education. At the same time, the papers represent a map of strategic directions these institutions could pursue collectively as they seek to ensure the quality and control the cost of efforts to provide their graduates with strong foundations of global and intercultural understanding.

These are not white papers laying out definitive strategies that Global Partners institutions have chosen to pursue. They are working papers, seeking to provide a context for strategic decisions that the leadership of these institutions and their three consortial associations could make in addressing the challenges of global education through collaboration.

A guiding theme of the Global Partners Project has been to explore new models in international collaboration. One result of these deliberative soundings has been to affirm the importance of some existing models for strengthening international education. For example, the discussions emphasized the benefit to curriculum and teaching that result from professional development grants that allow faculty members to travel and study in foreign countries. At the same time, the roundtable discussions generated certain ideas that venture beyond familiar outlines of collaborative practice. Some of these ideas are:

- to develop a buyers’ cooperative of institutions organized for the purpose of securing volume discounts from third-party providers of study-abroad programs;
- 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;

- to 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.; or
- to provide language instruction across two or more campuses using audio-video technology.

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.

Executive Summary
First Roundtable

Collaborative Prospects, Tough Questions:
The Challenge of Internationalization on Global Partners Campuses

This working paper explores the prospect of institutional collaboration as a means to enhance international dimensions of the undergraduate learning experience among 42 liberal arts colleges that participate in the Global Partners Project. The essay considers both the advantages to institutional collaboration and the obstacles that often make it difficult for colleges to work together in achieving the shared educational purposes of globalizing their curricula and campus communities. It considers a series of questions that often occur at the conjunction of educational vision and practical resource constraints – in particular, questions that arise as institutions confront the implications of study abroad on their institutional budgets.

The limited resources of a small campus naturally constrain the possibilities for off-campus educational opportunities or other forms of internationalization. For the purpose of containing costs, expanding curriculum, and ensuring educational quality, collaboration makes good sense for liberal arts colleges that are linked by similarities of mission and standards. In reality, however, liberal arts colleges often find it hard to sustain the progress they have made in internationalizing their campuses and developing collaborative partnerships. The paper explores the question: How can collaboration among similar institutions help each achieve the shared educational purpose of internationalization, while increasing efficiency and reducing cost?

The growth of in the number of U.S. students enrolling in study abroad provides one index of the attempts many campuses have made to augment international components of their students' education. In contrast to two or three decades ago, college students now enjoy a wide range of opportunities to study for a season in many parts of the world. A large number of study-abroad programs are now managed by third-party providers, and in a variety of ways institutional budgets bear the cost of sending students on these programs. The essay articulates several core purposes that international education seeks to achieve, both for the undergraduate major and for the general education components of a liberal arts degree. It then asks a series of questions that address the practical means of fulfilling those purposes. For example: Does a truly international learning experience require leaving campus? Do all students need the sustained immersion experience in another country? As colleges, how do we know that our steps to integrate international experience with a student's broader program of learning add genuine value?

A notable result of the first Global Partners Strategic Briefing Roundtable was the expressed willingness of chief academic officers and other academic leaders to explore ways of collaborating more effectively and innovatively. Many institutions participating in the Global Partners Project already collaborate through the auspices of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS), or the

Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA); this roundtable suggested not just a willingness but a genuine need to explore broader collaboration in the combined framework of these 42 colleges and three consortial associations.

The degree of interest and enthusiasm for pursuing collaborative strategies to strengthen global elements of these liberal arts colleges is itself a major finding from this roundtable discussion. Participants in this discussion suggested an array of collaborative actions that could strengthen the global and intercultural environment of their learning communities; these recommendations have been combined with those of the two other roundtables in the series in the accompanying document, entitled “Global Partners Collaborative Prospects: A Summary.” In addition, two key ideas that informed the thinking of several participants were: to pursue policies and financial arrangements that encourage students to enroll in study-abroad programs managed by other Global Partners institutions; and to explore the possibilities for “silent collaboration” among two or more liberal arts colleges in the management of study-abroad programs, helping achieve economies of scale and making possible a shared approach to curriculum development.

As the Mellon Foundation’s current grant for Global Partners nears its end, a fundamental next step for these 42 participating institutions is to consider which of these collaborative avenues they might wish to continue into the future. The essay concludes with a set of questions regarding these and other collaborative possibilities: What are the areas in which collaboration makes best sense for Global Partners institutions and their faculty in the present and foreseeable future? Which collaborative actions would confer greatest value to these institutions in return for their commitment of human and financial resources? What kinds of incentives would be most helpful to institutions and their faculty to encourage effective collaboration? What kinds of structures of collaboration would likely be most effective?

Executive Summary
Second Roundtable

Educating for Global Understanding:
Challenges and Collaborative Possibilities
For Liberal Arts Colleges

Global Partners institutions are national leaders in providing students with opportunities for international and intercultural engagement as part of a liberal arts education. The proportion of students from these campuses who study abroad in the course of their undergraduate career greatly exceeds the percentage of U.S. students from all four-year institutions who study in another country. At the same time, leaders of Global Partners institutions perceive that the challenge of educating for global understanding and engagement has grown more complex. While earlier conceptions of international education tended to focus on studies of particular nations or regions, a growing conviction is that global education must foster an awareness of how the fabric of life in any one setting includes threads that weave through other nations, histories, and cultures. For a liberal arts college to cultivate this perspective requires dialogue and productive partnerships among faculty members from different academic departments, international studies officers, and student affairs officers. Campuses often find that there are impediments to the achievement of such partnerships on campus. In addition, roundtable participants expressed concern that in consigning so many students to the study-abroad programs of third-party providers, these institutions are partially outsourcing to external agencies the responsibility for instilling a strong global-intercultural awareness as part of a student's undergraduate education.

Regardless of what program a student has chosen for study abroad, it is a core responsibility of the home institution to ensure that students come to understand an international experience in the broader framework of their education at a liberal arts college. If study abroad is to have an enduring, transformative impact, it is critically important that students have the opportunity to reflect on their learning experience in an academic context, both during the time away and on the home campus after the experience has occurred. The essay underscores the need for liberal arts colleges to prepare students for the learning they will experience abroad, and to provide structured opportunities for students to reflect critically on their off-campus learning from an academic perspective.

Beyond the question of linking study abroad to students' campus learning, every institution faces the challenge of instilling a more active engagement with global and intercultural elements in its curriculum and campus community. The roundtable makes several recommendations to strengthen the infusion of international awareness and understanding. They include: providing recognition and reward for those who actively engage global dimensions in their teaching; focusing initially on the academic major as a framework for internationalizing the curriculum; focusing on student advising as a means of promoting international engagement; and developing the potential of service learning and mentored independent study to help students expand intercultural awareness.

Institutional collaboration has significant potential for helping liberal arts colleges provide students with enriched opportunities for increasing global and intercultural understanding. The essay outlines several areas in which collaboration can extend the reach of individual institutions in this regard, under three broad rubrics: collaborative approaches to study abroad; collaboration to foster increased understanding in students' on-campus learning; and faculty development initiatives. The recommendations of this roundtable have been combined with those of the two other roundtables in the series in the accompanying document, entitled "Global Partners Collaborative Prospects: A Summary."

In the months ahead the Strategic Briefing Roundtable Project will provide Global Partners institutions with an opportunity to choose their future – collectively, and to some extent, individually – with regard to the nature of international and intercultural education on their campuses. Inherent in the prospect of collaboration is the question of how deliberate these liberal arts colleges wish to be in defining international dimensions of undergraduate learning. To what extent do institutions take direct responsibility for providing their students with a substantial grounding in these dimensions of learning? To what extent are institutions willing to allow the market of study-abroad providers fulfill this educational responsibility? How prescriptive are institutions willing to be to ensure that their faculty members actively seek to educate for global responsibility, or that their students choose study-abroad programs of proven quality and reasonable cost?

There are no simple answers to these questions, and an absolute conformity of institutional views should not be a prerequisite to effective collaboration. At the very least, collaborative arrangements can strengthen the hands of Global Partners institutions as each confronts questions of this kind in its own campus community. The sharing of information – yielding an increased understanding of policies and practices at similar institutions – provides a powerful means for institutions to deal effectively with the pressures created by the market for study abroad. Beyond the realm of information sharing, strategic collaboration offers the possibility of greater control over the quality and cost of the education students experience, both in study abroad and on their home campus.

Executive Summary
Third Roundtable

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

This third essay in the Global Partners Strategic Briefing Roundtable series addresses the challenge of instilling global and intercultural understanding as core elements of every student's education at a liberal arts college. 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 range of perspective 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.

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.

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. In fact many of the opportunities for fostering increased appreciation of national and cultural differences exist outside of the classroom. 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.

It is in the realm of curriculum, however, that an institution has most direct control of students' learning experience. This roundtable 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. A central theme of this essay focuses on the possibilities for extending the range and depth of faculty development opportunities through collaboration.

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 the proposals given particular consideration in the paper include: a seminar-and-travel approach to faculty development involving several campuses; collaboration in short-term study-abroad programs; a buyers cooperative for negotiating the cost of study abroad from third-party providers; and collaborative agreements that encourage more students to participate in study-abroad programs managed by Global Partners institutions.

The proposals of this roundtable have been combined with those that emerged from two other sessions, in addition to proposals distilled 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 accompanying document, entitled, “Global Partners Collaborative Prospects: A Summary.”

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 enhancement 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.

The Global Partners Strategic Briefing Roundtable Project

The Strategic Briefing Roundtable Project is a component of the Global Partners Project, an initiative of 42 liberal arts colleges and three consortial organizations – the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), Associated Colleges of the South (ACS), and Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA) – to explore possibilities for strengthening international dimensions of a liberal arts education through institutional collaboration. The Global Partners Project is funded through a major grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The Strategic Briefing Roundtable Project is overseen by a Steering Committee consisting of an academic dean of one institution from each of the three consortial organizations participating in Global Partners and the presidents of the three consortial organizations (ACM, ACS, GLCA). Members of the Steering Committee are:

Lawrence Breitborde, Dean of the College and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Knox College (ACM)

Roger Casey, Dean of the Faculty, Rollins College (ACS)

Gregory Mahler, Provost, Kalamazoo College (GLCA)

Elizabeth Hayford, President, ACM

Wayne Anderson, President, ACS

Richard Detweiler, President, GLCA

The draft working essays developed from this project are based on three sessions of the Strategic Briefing Roundtable. The first session took place in Atlanta, Georgia in January 2004, the second in Chicago, Illinois in October 2004, and the third in Winter Park, Florida in January 2005. The roundtable sessions were facilitated and the working essays drafted by Gregory Wegner, Director of Program Development at GLCA. The essays will provide the basis for further consideration by a group of presidents of ACM, ACS, and GLCA member institutions to consider future opportunities for collaboration in international and intercultural programming. The following individuals were participants in the Strategic Briefing Roundtable Project and helped frame the central themes of the resulting essays.

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