

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY'S INTERNATIONAL LABORATORY:
A Road Map to Global Engagement



PHOTO: Honors College students during
2016 study abroad trip to South Africa

WCU
WEST CHESTER
UNIVERSITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

West Chester University (WCU) has seen notable growth in our study abroad programs, an increased interest by faculty and staff in international research and teaching opportunities, and a steady number of international students enrolling at the University.

As we develop an institutional strategic plan that continues to move us forward by staying true to our mission, one of providing an educational experience to our students leading to truly globally competent citizens, it was considered prudent by President Christopher Fiorentino and the members of the President's Cabinet to conduct a self-study on internationalization activities at WCU and to develop a strategic and intentional strategy moving forward. The self-study was

guided through the framework of the Internationalization Laboratory of the American Council on Education (ACE), an invitational learning community that assists participating institutions in developing goals and strategies for comprehensive internationalization. WCU applied for membership for the 2017-19 cohort and was selected by ACE to participate. The Global Leadership Team (GLT), comprised of members from various units across the

campus, have been working on the self-study for two years. Our intent was not just to suggest an optimal structure, foundation and roadmap for the future, but also to create a baseline of important data points for future comparative analysis and assessment of programming.

“Preparing our students to be global citizens is a key component of our mission and goals.”

—West Chester University President Christopher Fiorentino

Our self-study report is based on evaluating the internationalization structure, achievements, and opportunities at WCU along these four goals. As we analyzed the campus feedback and also the responses to our self-study questions from twenty-one units across campus, a clear consensus emerged. *The WCU community is truly committed to prepare our students to be citizens of a multicultural community, both at home and in a globalized world.* The GLT believes the proposed outcomes to be realistic and achievable within the 2019-2022 three-year timeframe.

As part of the self-study, the GLT proposes that internationalization efforts at WCU be considered comprehensively through the four overlapping strategic goals described below. The GLT also recommends that the various task forces proposed below be assigned both implementation and assessment responsibilities. Moreover, as the ACE Peer Review Team emphasizes in its full report, WCU is at a critical moment in terms of internationalization, with some sense of urgency in retaining the momentum developed over the past few years.



Goal 1: Increase the number of international students enrolled in our academic offerings onsite and through distance education.

Under the leadership of the Vice Provost for Strategic Enrollment, the University should develop and implement a plan to achieve the international student enrollment targets set by the GLT and consider the recommendations in the report.

Goal 1 Targets/Outcomes:

- Increase the international F-1 student population to 3% of the University student population by 2022.
- Increase the student participation in international student programs and services by 25% by 2021.

The University should also set up a task force, co-led by a representative from the Center for International Programs (CIP) and the Division of Student Affairs, to improve the programs and services available for international students on campus.

1

Goal 2: Through improved access, diversify and strengthen international educational experiences for the WCU community.

The University should set up a task force co-led by a representative from the CIP and a Faculty Representative to achieve the education abroad targets set by the GLT and consider the recommendations in the report.

Goal 2 Targets/Outcomes:

- Increase participation in and access to education abroad programming by 50% by 2021.
- Create a permanent funding model to cover the costs of faculty/staff leading study abroad programs by 2021.

2

Goal 3: Integrate global learning outcomes into our curriculum, co-curriculum, and academic programs.

The University should develop a task force with the responsibility to achieve the joint targets and outcomes of Goal 3 and 4. The action task force would be led by representatives from the Division of Student Affairs and from Academic Affairs.

Goal 3 Targets/Outcomes:

- By the end of Spring 2020, the WCU Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC) will approve the definition of "Global Learning" and the objectives and outcomes that are required for the designation.
- By the end of Spring 2021, WCU's CAPC will designate curricular and academic programs or courses as "Global Learning" and the Division of Student Affairs will approve a Global Learning Initiative as part of its sustainable leadership programming.

3

Goal 4: Promote global awareness and engagement in research, scholarship, teaching and service.

Goal 4 Targets/Outcomes:

- By Fall 2021, academic units will update the departmental teacher-scholar models to include the consideration of globally-focused criteria/standards for faculty promotion and tenure.
- All WCU divisions and units will embrace and incorporate an internationalization value statement and commitment to global engagement in their mission or program statements by Spring 2021.

4



“Several of my professors have moved to the U.S. as adults and not only does this give them a very different and illuminating perspective on teaching and the content of their classes, but they also have very well-developed networks of contacts in the academic world internationally. Many of my international experiences have been facilitated through these networks of contacts, started either by email introduction or through guest lectures or seminars regarding topics of shared research interest.”

— Ms. Lydia Pehlert

Graduate Assistant, Data Monitoring and Analysis,

Office of Sustainability at WCU

Graduate Assistant, Department of Geography and Planning at WCU

Overall, the GLT considered various parameters including resources, collaboration and partnerships, administrative structure and leadership, and articulated institutional commitment to propose the most effective pathway to achieve the proposed outcomes. Strategies to achieve the goals and outcomes include the recommendations based on building sustainable and scalable internationalization efforts across the University. The GLT acknowledges that while certain recommendations will allow us to achieve one or two proposed outcomes, some recommendations will have a wider impact beyond the goals of the self-study.

While much work remains in terms of the recommendations and outcomes noted throughout the report, the GLT is pleased to report a number of internationalization highlights and success stories that illustrate the level and degree of comprehensive internationalization across the four major goal areas.

With regards,

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