Cultural and Global Competence Strategic Initiative Working Group 2008-09

February 2009

> *Strategic Initiative 3.1:*
> Deepen the engagement of students with ethnic, geographic, socio-economic, and religious diversity so as to prepare them for leadership and service in the world.
> *Tactic (e.g.)* Develop a clear plan and effectively respond to an expectation of Cultural Competency for students.
> *Tactic (e.g.)* Increase our curricular commitment to enhanced opportunities for students to gain a global perspective.
> *Tactic (e.g.)* Establish a clear philosophy, goals and financial models for student participation in education abroad.

Contents

Theoretical Foundations

Cultural and global competence must be at the heart of liberal education. As Hovland (1996) notes, the liberal arts curriculum is the most "critical site for engaging all students with fundamental questions about their changing world" (p. 11) [1]. Braskamp (2008) is unequivocal that being a global citizen requires a liberal education. [2] More than ever before, Gustavus students need the opportunity to learn about the world beyond the borders of their comfort zone. Notwithstanding the historic 2008 election of a person of color to the U.S. presidency, racial and ethnic conflicts persist in our country, as do disparities in equality based on socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, gender, religion, and other social identities. But it is not just in the United States that these conditions exist. Poverty, racism, ethnic conflict, and religious intolerance are present throughout the world. The task of a liberal arts education in the 21st century is to educate our graduates to be citizens who can "mend, repair, and transform the world."[3]

To take on this challenge, our students must be prepared to honestly examine their own prejudices and stereotypes, learn to understand and effectively interact with people of different cultures, and have the knowledge to be a responsible citizen in an increasingly interconnected world. If we are to educate a generation of leaders who will be able to cope with global threats and opportunities - terrorism, environmental degradation, economic globalization - we must help them expand the boundaries of what they know. As Sharon Parks (2006) reminds us, the complex world in which we live requires moral courage, persistence, and a bigger vision if we are to engage the most critical issues of our time.[4]

Deciding on the one best name for these kinds of competencies is difficult. Separating "cultural" and "global" from each other undermines what must be an integrated approach to helping students learn that their own cultural values and perspectives are not the only way to see the world. Our perspective is that cultural understanding occurs best through an engagement with the "other," with someone who is not like us in ways that make the encounter somewhat challenging. The educational experiences with the longest-lasting impact are those which *dis*comfort students enough that they learn to think critically about taken for granted assumptions, but not so much that they feel a sense of failure and just give in to ethnocentric patterns.[5] This engagement with the "other" must be an ongoing, reiterative process that accompanies students throughout their college career.

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[1] Hovland, Kevin. (1996). *Shared futures: Global learning and liberal education*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges and Universities.

[2] Braskamp, Larry A. (2008, September). Developing global citizens. *Journal of College and Character*. X(1), pp. 1-5.

[3] This phrase is the translation from the Hebrew of *tikkun olam*, a Jewish approach to social action which is mirrored in other peace and justice work undertaken by many faith traditions, including Lutheranism.

[4] Parks, Sharon. (2006). Foreword. In Carolyn R. O'Grady and Brian T. Johnson (Eds.), *The spirit of service: Exploring faith, service and social justice in higher education*. Bolton, MA: Anker Press.

[5] Bennett, Janet. M. (2008). On becoming a global soul: A path to engagement during study abroad. In Victor Savicki (Ed.), *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education*. Virginia: Stylus.

Cornwell and Stoddard (1999) have proposed "interculturalism" to describe the way to integrate domestic diversity initiatives with international education. As they note - and we agree - both internationalization and multiculturalism, despite differing motives and strategies, "take as a major premise the importance of learning about cultures different from one's own" (p. 21). The education we provide Gustavus students must enable them to understand diverse cultures and understand cultures as diverse, develop intercultural skills, understand global processes, and prepare for local and global citizenship.[6]

Richard Slimbach (2005) uses the term "transcultural journey" to describe "the quest to define shared interests and common values across cultural and national borders" (p. 206).[7] In this process, learners are challenged

> to develop thoughtful and clarified identifications, not only as members of particular cultural and national communities, but also as global citizens who understand that their neighbor is everyone alive. In a world that daily grows smaller, and in which everyone's problems are everyone else's, transcultural understanding will become the only place where peace can find a home. (p. 218)

The Working Group on Cultural/Global Competency proceeded with the assumption that cultural/global were unified concepts. On most college campuses, the "multicultural affairs" office is physically and ideologically separated from the "study abroad" office and the work of each office is viewed as distinct from the other. [8] The first is intended to provide a campus resource (even a sanctuary) for underrepresented students and to help majority students understand issues of domestic diversity. It should be both a home – to which underrepresented students can return – as well as an intersection – where underrepresented as well as majority students can encounter each other.[9] Obviously, this emphasis on domestic diversity appears to be a different mission than the mission of a "study abroad" office, which is assumed to be about sending students on international travel. At Gustavus, these two offices seek to work integratively because all our graduates must be educated to live and work in diverse settings and a globalized world.

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[6] Cornwell, Grant H. & Eve W. Stoddard. (1999). *Globalizing knowledge: Connecting international and intercultural studies*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges and Universities.
[7] Slimbach, Richard. (2005, August). The transcultural journey. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, Vol. XI, pp. 205-230.
[8] Historically there has been tension in higher education between advocates for and scholars of programs focused on domestic diversity and those focused on global studies. The movement for multicultural reform of education arose out of the civil right movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The desire for fair representation, an accurate view of history, and the inclusion of multiple perspectives profoundly transformed higher education as ethnic, gender, or area studies programs created new curricular approaches to learning about culture and identity. The internationalizing of the academy, on the other hand, dates from the end of World War II. Foreign language study, study abroad programs, exchanges of international students and scholars, and international studies were embraced as a way to promote international peace and understanding. These programs were also designed to bolster U.S. strategic interests overseas, and to assert American idealism into contexts abroad (Cornwell & Stoddard, 1999).
[9] Hank Toutain provided this metaphor.

On the one hand, students should learn that diversity (ethnic, racial, religious, etc.) has a global dimension. In order to understand the "other" we need to know something about their cultural and geographic origins and whether, or how, these have played a role in their identity.[10] On the other hand, students must learn that to fully understand the world beyond their back yards, they need to know about the relevant cultural context(s) influencing that part of the world. We cannot send them on a study program to places that will feel somewhat familiar to them (Minneapolis, London, Australia, or Washington D.C., for instance) without helping them understand the complexity of historical and contemporary cultural influences on those locations.

Cultural/global competence can be improved through off-campus study in either domestic or international contexts. Students may be most significantly affected when they choose to travel abroad, but not always. It can be more potentially transformative to immerse oneself in a study program on the Texas-Mexico border, among illegal immigrants and those who work with them, than to engage with the more familiar cultural context of central London. At the same time, some students will find studying in central London to be a big stretch merely because the location is outside the boundary of the United States.

However, we cannot rely solely on off-campus study as a way for students to gain global/cultural competence. Over half of Gustavus students (nearly 60%) do study off-campus, but that leaves almost half of our students who will not or cannot choose that experience. This means that we must ensure they have multiple opportunities locally or on campus to encounter the "other" as well as learn to see themselves as global citizens. Our entire community has a role to play in this process: faculty, administrators, staff, and our larger regional neighborhood. The history of Gustavus, and its aspirations, are a strong foundation on which to build.

Whether we call them "cross-cultural," "transcultural," "intercultural," or "multicultural," global/cultural competencies should be the hallmark outcomes of a Gustavus education. The world in which our graduates will become leaders is one of uncertainty and disruption, as well as great opportunity. Our graduates must be able to interact effectively across borders of all kinds: cultural, linguistic, and national. Their future, and ours, depends on it.

Working Definitions

We chose to focus our group work on an overall philosophy of global/cultural competence and on strategies rather than to spend much time debating definitions or discussing theoretical approaches. To that end, the following working definitions were used, providing a starting point from which the Working Group could move forward.

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[10] This is not to say that manifestations of racism, oppression, privilege, difference, and power are the same within the U.S. as in other parts of the world. Each country brings its unique history to bear on the ways diversity is expressed or understood. Nevertheless, a transnational way of looking at diversity highlights the complex relationships between history, identity and place and can help us understand why racism toward African Americans in the U.S. is different than – yet similar to – racism toward Afro-Caribbeans in England.

- **Cultural competence** is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, institution, or among students, staff, and faculty, and enables effective interaction in cross-cultural situations.

    Operationally defined, cultural competence is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of interactions, thereby producing better outcomes.

- *Culture* is the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups.

- *Competence* is the capacity to function in a particular way: the capacity to function within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior defined by a group. Being competent in cross-cultural functioning means learning new patterns of behavior and effectively applying them in the appropriate settings.

    (Adapted from King et. al., "How is cultural competence integrated in education?" Accessed from http://cecp.air.org/cultural/Q_integrated.htm 9/25/08. Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice of the American Institutes for Research.)

- **Global competence** is the ability to contribute to knowledge and to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate its meaning in the context of an increasingly globalized world. The skills that form the foundation of global competence include the ability to work effectively in international settings; awareness of and adaptability to diverse cultures, perceptions and approaches; familiarity with the major currents of global change and the issues they raise; and the capacity for effective communication across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

    (Adapted from Brustein, William. I. (2007). "Paths to global competence: Preparing American college studies to meet the world." Accessed from http://www.iienetwork.org/page/84657/ 9/25/08. IIE Network, Member website of the Institute of International Education.)

- **Diversity** is "everything you are, and everything you are not."
    Each of us has a number of social identities by which we tend to identify ourselves. These may be based on physical, social, or cultural attributes. Some of these identities are changeable (i.e. our religious affiliation), others cannot be changed (i.e., our ethnicity), and others can be changed with some difficulty (i.e. our gender). Important social identity markers include ethnicity, race, socioeconomic class, religion, ability, gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, and language.

Outcomes for Student Learning: Cultural/Global Competence

The following foundational principles about global/cultural competence were articulated by the Working Group in response to the question "If our graduates were

culturally and globally competent they [would, could, are ....]." These are the student learning outcomes we should expect from a Gustavus education.

Gustavus graduates:
- Speak a second language.
- Know something about the history of oppression both nationally and globally.
- Recognize privilege.
- Apply theories of oppression and privilege to their own lives and their career.
- Are able to take another person's perspective.
- Have experiential, not just textual, learning about culture.
- Are able to shift their own perspective depending on the context.
- Have capacity to engage in meaningful relationships with people different from themselves.
- See cultural/global competence as an ongoing, developmental process.
- Understand identity development theory and can articulate their own social identities.
- Question universalist statements/claims.
- Recognize gestures, personal space issues as they relate culturally.
- Are able to respectfully and passionately disagree.
- Are equipped and encouraged to take more risks to step out of their comfort zone.
- Are able/willing to intervene regarding bias, bigotry.
- Feel a sense of responsibility toward others and toward the world.
- Recognize how cultural competence works in different realms, e.g. individually, intergroup, nationally, globally.
- Have traveled widely.
- Better understand themselves.

Below are the recommended tactics advocated by the Working Group to achieve the above competencies. The most direct impact on students is through curricular and co-curricular opportunities. But the institutional environment and faculty/staff development must also be attended to if curricular and co-curricular initiatives are to be effective. Any strategies must be accompanied by ongoing formative and summative assessment. Measurements of intercultural sensitivity should be assessed when students begin college and when they graduate (we recommend that faculty and staff also have the opportunity to participate in this kind of inventory). The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) is one instrument that might be considered, but there are other diagnostic tools available that would provide the data needed to evaluate success with the following tactics.

Recommended Tactics

Curricular and Co-Curricular Strategies
- Require off campus study of all students. At least one of these should be international.
  - Examples:

- January Interim (1 cr) - immersion in a culture other than the student's own (domestic or international).
- Semester-long immersion in a local site in conjunction with an on-campus class (1 cr).
- Semester away (domestic or international).
    - Have courses taught off campus, in locations that reinforce cultural/global competence. Consider "moving classrooms" - get away from rigid assumption that education happens just on campus.
    - Require pre- and post-immersion opportunities (courses/seminars) for all immersion experiences, or pre-departure and re-entry courses/seminars.
    - Study away experiences should be integrated with the student's major whenever possible without eliminating a student's opportunity to choose something simply out of personal interest.
- Establish a well-articulated philosophy for off-campus study. The following principles should guide any choice of off-campus academic learning. Study away should:
    - be immersion, not tourism;
    - include community-based learning approaches whenever possible, such as service learning, to encourage cultural immersion;
    - be connected to our mission as a college;
    - be rigorously academic (e.g. have learning outcomes, assessments, goals);
    - be developmental. We understand that students start at different places, and our goal is to move them beyond that point;
    - have an approval and advising process;
    - be integrated into each major;
    - be financially neutral or significantly subsidized.
- Ensure cultural/global competence in all our graduates. Approaches could include:
    - Establish a culture ("CULT") general education requirement. Specific courses would meet established criteria for such a designation (similar to our process with WRIT).
        - Students would develop *knowledge*, e.g. of other cultures (including beliefs, values, perspectives, practices, and products), of their own social identity development (racial, gender, etc.); *skills*, e.g. uses alternate points of view to consider issues; able to think critically about causes of global conflict; able to access multiple forms of information; and *attitudes*, e.g. able to engage in dialogue about the "tough stuff" such as racism, globalization, etc.; tolerates cultural ambiguity; demonstrates a willingness to seek out intercultural opportunities.
    - Expect every major would include at least one course on cross-cultural competency that is relevant in that discipline.
    - Create a major and minor in cultural/global competence.
    - Seniors develop portfolios that demonstrate how they integrated global/cultural competency into their major studies and/or how they have achieved global/cultural competency prior to graduation.

- Every sophomore required to take an on-campus seminar called "Cultural 101" (similar to FTS). This would include the following types of course content:
  - Global issues and systems (e.g. economic, political, environmental).
  - Knowledge of diverse cultures (beliefs, values, material culture, perspectives, etc.).
- Expect all students to speak a second language by the time they graduate.
- Train and empower students to take on-campus leadership as peers on cultural/global competence issues. Examples include peer-facilitated discussion circles, student-led colloquia, etc.
- Develop cross-cultural dialogues on campus, co-facilitated by students and faculty, that engage members of the campus community in discussions about issues of diversity.

Instructional Strategies

- Provide funding and release time to support course development that contributes to cultural competence.
- Provide training for faculty so they can address issues of bias on campus and in the classroom.
- Provide training for faculty so they can facilitate discussions in the classroom on hot button issues, such as racism, homophobia, etc.
- Provide incentives or reward systems that would induce faculty to regularly work a January Interim or a semester in a culturally diverse setting.
- Provide funding for international travel for faculty to ensure global/cultural competency. Expect course development or on-campus programming as an outcome of their experience.
- Enable administrators and hourly staff to serve as back-up leaders of January Interim off-campus study. This would require funding and release time for their participation.

Institutional Strategies

- Ensure the campus climate is welcoming to all, including to members of underrepresented groups. This includes:
  - Establish measurable targets for all divisions and administrative offices to have a racially diverse staff, as well as clearly defined goals and objectives in cultural/global competence appropriate for its particular mission. Each program, division, or office should be able to articulate clearly defined outcomes for contributing to an inclusive campus community.
  - Conduct regular assessment of how effectively these targets/outcomes are being reached, and hold programs, divisions, and offices accountable.
  - Expect all staff, faculty and administrators to participate in regular professional development in diversity training.
  - Ensure all promotional or public materials (print, web, recruitment, etc.) represent Gustavus as an inclusive campus in which global/cultural competence is nurtured and expected.

- o Redouble efforts to hire staff and faculty from diverse groups. Establish benchmarks and hold supervisors/directors/chairs accountable for progress.
  - o Sanction and educate students, staff or faculty who commit hate crimes.
  - o Expect leadership from the top in supporting diversity and cultural competence.
- Integrate the work of the Center for International and Cultural Education and the Multicultural Programs Office in one site. Expand staff and programming resources.
- Ensure that off-campus study is cost neutral. Options include:
  - o Fully fund off-campus study so that any individual student will pay no more than he or she would have paid to remain on campus.
  - o Redouble efforts to solicit funding to support students in off-campus study through scholarships or grants.
  - o Establish a revolving low interest loan program that would enable students to borrow from and repay Gustavus for the costs of off-campus study.
- Step up recruitment of international students and underrepresented U.S. students. Undertake a significant financial campaign to support this.
- Provide sufficient staffing support to offices which work on global/multicultural initiatives. (The number of underrepresented students on campus has more than doubled in the last few years, but there has been no commensurate increase in the number of staff in offices which serve these students.)
- Create residential opportunities or learning/living communities focused on cultural/global themes.
- Develop satellite campuses in selected sites around the U.S. and the world which reinforce learning about cultural/global issues and enable students (and faculty) to develop competence.
- Refocus off-campus study options so that they are organized thematically rather than geographically. Themes could include "Environmental Issues," "Ethnic Conflict," etc.
- Provide each department or program with a "cultural counselor" or advisor dedicated to guiding students' study of culture and help them plan their off-campus immersion experiences.
- Hold an annual conference, as significant as Nobel or MayDay, that focuses on cultural/global competence. This would be a "signature" Gustavus event.

Appendix A: Description of the Working Group Process

The Working Group on Global and Cultural Competence began meeting in October 2008 and worked together as both a large group and in smaller groups through January 2009. The group members chose to organize themselves into three task forces in line with each of the tactics currently articulated under strategic initiative 3.1. Each task force met weekly and provided reports to the larger group. The entire Working Group met together for three highly focused meetings.

To provide an atmosphere for discussion characterized by openness, mutual respect, and maximum participation, group members adopted three groundrules.
- Suspend our assumptions.
- Work together as peers, regardless of rank or role on campus.
- Confidentiality - what is said in the group stays in the group.

These were important guidelines, and we found it necessary to continually remind ourselves of these as the work proceeded.

As co-chairs, we saw our task as primarily to provide a structure for the work of the group, to elicit a wide range of opinions and ideas (especially to surface underlying tensions or disagreements), and to act as cheerleaders for innovative and forward-thinking ideas. We provided a guiding philosophy for the group's work, based on directives from the Provost's Office as well as on our own sense of how to generate the most productive group atmosphere. While we hoped the group's work would build on past and current on-campus efforts, we intentionally wanted our process to not get bogged down in discussions about or recriminations over past initiatives. We repeated the following guidelines at every meeting:
- Think big and think forward.
- Ground ideas in a liberal arts, student learning context.
- Consider money no object.
- Imagine what the College could look like, be like, be doing in the year 2020.

The following four readings provided some theoretical foundation for the group's discussions:

Bennett, Janet M. (2008). On becoming a global soul: A path to engagement during study abroad. In Victor Savicki (Ed.), *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education*. Virginia: Stylus, pp. 13-31.

Braskamp, Larry A. (2008, September). Developing global citizens. *Journal of College and Character*. X(1), pp. 1-5.

Cook, Richard J. (2008). Embracing diversity at Allegheny College: Signs of success at a residential college of the liberal arts and sciences. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 1(1), pp. 1-7.

Tatum, Beverly Daniel. (2004, April 2). Building a road to a diverse society. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, p. B6.

We used brainstorming as a key device and encouraged as many unusual, creative, or offbeat ideas as possible. The co-chairs subsequently organized all recommendations into categories for public dissemination. All members of the Working Group have had a chance to review this final document.

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