

Report of the University of Kansas Task Force on Internationalization August 2001

Summary:

To be a major university in the United States in the 21st century, a university must be an international university. It must provide its domestic students with a window to the wider world through its teaching on campus and its programs overseas, it must encourage its faculty to do research on topics all across the globe and to collaborate with researchers in their disciplines in any nation, and it must welcome students and scholars from every part of the global community.

In accordance with national trends, increased student demand, and the expressed goals of Chancellor Hemenway and Provost Shulenberger, KU has launched efforts to expand opportunities for including an “international experience” as a central component of students’ education at KU. This task force was convened by Associate Provost Kathleen McCluskey Fawcett and Dean of the Graduate School and International Programs Diana Carlin in order to develop concrete strategies to achieve that goal.

The task force was given three main objectives: First, define an international experience in a way that could be measured, certified, and recorded on students’ transcripts. Second, explore ways in which more KU students could take part in study abroad. Third, explore how faculty and scholars and the University will affect and be affected by efforts to increase internationalization. These three objectives were each addressed by a subcommittee of the task force (see Appendix), and this report structured around those missions.

The Task Force reached the following broad findings, which are developed further in the report.

1. There is a tradeoff between defining an international experience in a way that makes such an experience substantial and meaningful, and defining it in such a way that as many KU students as possible will have such an experience. Where to draw the line between rigor and availability is a difficult question.
2. A similar tradeoff exists in study abroad programs. Those programs that lead to the most immersion in foreign cultures and languages are likely to attract relatively few students. There are various ways in which study abroad contributes to international awareness, including learning in a foreign language, immersion in foreign social situations, and study of international “content” either in the classroom or outside it. While different programs may emphasize these components differently, it is important that the effort to get more students abroad not lead to programs which are strong in none of these areas.
3. Currently only Study Abroad meets a reasonable definition of “international experience” and is measurable and certifiable in a way that can be recorded on transcripts. Achieving the possibility for a substantial and certifiable international experience on the KU campus will require development of new certification and recording mechanisms, and funding for new programmatic activities.
4. If the University is to internationalize its students, it must internationalize its faculty. This will not happen by itself. Internationalization must be promoted either through selection (e.g. hiring and promotion) or through development (supporting efforts by faculty to increase their own international experience). Such efforts will require commitment at the highest levels, both in terms of providing funds and ameliorating existing disincentives to internationalization.

Part I. Defining an International Experience

The subcommittee on defining an international experience was convened to consider how best to define a meaningful “international experience,” which could be certified by the university and entered as a part of the student’s official record. Underlying this effort is the simultaneous desire to encourage the largest possible number—or even all—students to add an international dimension to their education.

A. Issues: Given the wide range of things that could reasonably be labeled an “international experience,” a definition which attempts simultaneously to meet the goals noted above presents a dilemma. To make it both substantive enough and widely or even universally applicable to KU undergraduates would clearly require a major—and perhaps unrealistic—reallocation of university resources and effort; to make it accessible to all students without such a reallocation would risk trivializing the definition. To an important degree there is a necessary tradeoff between depth and breadth in pursuing the goal of internationalization of the student experience. This dilemma is not unique to KU: universities across the country are grappling with the same problem.

The consensus of the Task Force is that in this tradeoff, a compromise middle ground is the most reasonable and realistic option. An international *experience*, we believe, might well be something less than a complete international *immersion* in a different social, cultural, linguistic and political context. But it should also be more than a mere *exposure* to things international; we thus propose that “experience” suggests something more than simply international “knowledge” of the sort which might be gained from regular coursework.

B. Definition: In an abstract and qualitative sense, then, we would define an educational “international experience” as:

A sustained interactive encounter with a culture, language, and/or socio-political context substantially different from one’s own and based in another country, which has the desired effect of contributing significantly to a student’s understanding of the diversity of human societies in the contemporary world.

This definition is intended to suggest that the experience should be cross-national (that is, involve countries others than one’s own) and contemporary, in the sense of relevant to current dynamics of interaction among countries, as suggested in debates on “globalization” or “internationalization.” We would also underscore that the depth of understanding which we would hope the experience would provide must, of necessity, build on knowledge of the cultural, historical, and linguistic context of the experience.

C. Operationalization: Given the issues noted above, for purposes of this committee we think it important to operationalize this definition with three criteria in mind. It should be:

- a) *substantial*: that is, requires some significant commitment on the student’s part, and produces some significant “value added” to the student’s educational experience
- b) *certifiable*: that is, that it involves some discrete activity or set of activities that can be registered on a student’s transcript or otherwise recognized officially; and
- c) *accessible*: something that in theory could be done by *any* student, even if in practice it will not necessarily be done by *every* student.

Certifying the experience on transcripts will require the development of new administrative and reporting procedures, but these need not be extremely complicated. We suggest the following changes:

1. There would be a box on the student's transcript, which could either be checked or not, which indicate whether the student had an international experience.
2. A set of criteria would be developed to clarify what would count as an international experience and what would not.
3. A student claiming to have had an international experience would have to have certified by a faculty member that the experience in question met the criteria.
4. A form with the details of the experience and student and faculty signatures, which would report the experience to the registrar's office, would have to be developed.

This plan is not without shortcomings. Most notably, different faculty might apply the criteria differently, but that is already true in all the evaluation done on campus in which letter grades are given. Some care will have to be given to developing the criteria and reporting forms, and to publicizing the procedures involved.

D. Certifiable International Experiences at KU

1. At the present time, the only activity that both meets substantive criteria as a significant international experience and can be measured as such is study abroad. Study abroad has the distinct strength of presenting the ideal opportunity for substantial "interactive encounters," and the advantage of being easily certifiable. Here the Task Force consensus was strong:

participation in an organized study abroad program is the ideal. We thus endorse the idea of making every effort to increase study abroad opportunities, and to encourage and facilitate student participation in such programs by both lowering the costs and increasing the incentives for students to participate (via financial aid, flexibility in curricula, etc.). The shortcoming, however, is that it may not always be accessible. Some number of students on campus, for financial, health, personal/familial, and other reasons, will always see it as impossible to participate in such programs. Consequently, we believe that it is highly desirable to provide some other possibilities or options for students to add this international dimension to their education.

2. A currently non-existing option which merits further consideration would be some sort of institutional mechanism for recognizing and certifying an "international experience" that is both substantial and meets the definition we propose above, but which takes place at the student's initiative and without direct university involvement. Many KU students become involved in internationally-based opportunities such as service-related volunteer work, an internship or other learning work experience, or a research opportunity, frequently through religious or charitable institutions or through family or friends abroad. Such an experience might be certified under the procedures outlined above.

3. Another option is recognizing the international content of certain majors at KU. A significant, and apparently increasing, number of KU students are already pursuing majors that, by their very nature, might qualify for recognition as having provided an "international experience." Among these are the International Studies co-major, the majors in the various area studies programs, and majors in foreign languages. There is a possibility, however, that students pursuing such majors could in theory acquire *knowledge* without the *experience*. The expectation of many Task Force members, nevertheless, was that in reality the cumulative effect of the many opportunities for

interaction with international scholars, students, and others which is inherent in such majors will normally add up to a significant experience. There was some sense, however, that this should not be taken for granted, and that indeed these students should be particularly encouraged to add a distinct international *experience* to their studies to complement and strengthen these majors.

4. It might also be desirable to create a possibility for students who cannot go abroad and do not have an “international” major to have an international experience. One possibility is the creation of special semester-long programs with the goal of bringing some of the advantages of study abroad on to campus via an intensive focus on multiple dimensions of some area of the world. The various area studies centers on campus (or other comparable units), could be charged with creating an integrated set of mutually reinforcing activities over the course of a semester, which could include some mixture of credit-bearing courses and non-credit experiences.. This might include enrolling in some courses directly related to the area of study, KULAC (language across the curriculum) or foreign language courses, participation in cultural activities, weekend workshops or seminars, film series, regular interaction with international students from the region via participation in programs like the new “KU Cousins” program, and more. This would simultaneously provide an opportunity to better tap the underutilized resources of international scholars and students on campus. Such programs would clearly require further thought and work to elaborate, as well as the commitment of resources to allow the area studies programs to develop them. They could, however, be programmed and scheduled in a decentralized manner through the different programs, which could creatively devise options and supervise and report participation in them.

5. Intriguing, and as yet virtually unexplored, possibilities for new forms of international experiences are provided by the expansion of new forms of electronic communications around the world. It may well be possible, for example, to link a course at KU with an international partner institution and to incorporate collaborative projects or an on-going dialogue or discussion, carried out electronically between students at the two institutions.

E. Increasing and enhancing other international opportunities at KU:

Although the range of options for substantial international experiences on campus is currently limited, the Task Force also noted that there are in fact many opportunities available to KU students that could be described as an “international experience,” even if these are not readily certifiable or substantial enough in themselves to merit reporting in a student’s official record. These, however, are often both of significant value in themselves and have the desirable effect of stimulating or reinforcing student interest in participating in more substantive international activities. An international roommate, teacher, or friend, or a seemingly chance encounter with an international cultural event, are frequently the spark which sets a student on the path to internationalization.

In this context, then, the Task Force would emphasize the importance of funding and support for a wide variety of activities which contribute in various ways to the internationalization of the campus and of the KU experience. Prime among these would be the continued effort to increase the number and the national diversity of international students, scholars, and professors on campus, and to maximize the opportunities for “interactive encounters” between these visitors and American students at KU. Semester-long visiting professorships from KU’s international partner institutions provide one model for this. The newly-established “KU Cousins” program

similarly provides an excellent opportunity for cross-national interactions, and incentives for increasing student participation in the program might be studied. Residence halls are a prime locus for a student's extracurricular university experience, and programs that attempt to pair American and international roommates, or stimulate internationally oriented social and cultural events in the residence halls, similarly merit attention.

An especially significant obstacle to increasing the presence of international graduate students at KU is the difficulty in recruiting students from abroad due to the reluctance—indeed most often the explicit ban—by departments on awarding TA positions or other financial aid to incoming international graduate students. This difficulty is particularly regrettable given that recruiting graduate students from abroad for TA positions could be a highly promising means of simultaneously bringing high quality students into graduate programs and of creating an international presence in positions which, by their nature, demand regular interaction with undergraduates, fellow graduate students, and faculty on campus. Exploring opportunities for financial aid for international recruitment of graduate students thus presents an additional strategy for further internationalization of the campus.

The Task Force emphasizes that further work is necessary both to develop and enhance programs that will serve the purpose of internationalizing the KU educational experience, and to encourage and recognize student participation in such programs. Finally, we should note that these efforts, to succeed, will also necessitate significant and increased efforts to promote an understanding of the importance of such activities among KU faculty members.

Part II Study Abroad

As discussed above, study abroad is currently the only certifiable international experience available to KU students, and it is the consensus of the Task Force that study abroad remain the focal point of efforts to give KU students international experience. In order to do that, several challenges need to be met. First, in order to ensure that study abroad programs are indeed providing a meaningful international experience, and that they meet accreditation standards, there needs to be a more institutionalized process of developing and approving programs than currently exists. Second, there need to be procedures in place for documenting what actually goes on in study abroad programs, and for reviewing them. Third, the costs to both students and faculty of participation in study abroad will have to be reduced.

A. What defines a KU study abroad program?

The Task Force believes these guidelines have been written in terms general enough to apply to all KU study abroad programs regardless of length or country site of a program (short-term, summer, semester and year programs). Although the Task Force decided not to include the special cases of service-learning, non-credit internship, and graduate research study abroad activities, it does not mean to exclude these cases from the suggested assessment, development, and review processes given below.

Definition:

A study abroad program occurs in a country other than the U.S., bears university-level credit, and it is held outside of the U.S. for academic reasons. It is not enough simply to conduct classes taught by U.S faculty in another country. A study abroad program must have an international component, either through learning in a foreign language, immersion in foreign institutions and/or structured social situations, or rigorous study of international “content” either in the classroom or outside it.

B. Program Development

In order to ensure that study abroad programs of high quality meet all criteria for assigning university-level credit, and that they remain within existing college/school and departmental curricular planning, a standard procedure for developing, approving, and evaluating a program should be established. The procedure should include:

1. The creation of a Program Plan that describes or includes:
 - a) the rationale for the program, including the place of the program in the KU curriculum and the academic benefits to be gained by holding the program abroad.
 - b) the program description (see section on Documentation, below);
 - c) a planning timeline;
 - d) a course evaluation mechanism;
 - e) a program evaluation procedure (this would include both student and faculty input, site visits, etc., and is elaborated in greater detail below).

2. An approval process in which all involved parties (Department Chair, Dean, Director of OSA, and the Dean of OIP) certify that they are aware of the new program and support it. (This is a more rigorous process than currently exists, but is much less onerous than the various procedures for approval of new courses that exist across the university.)

As part of that approval process, OSA should be tasked with ensuring that proposed programs meet university standards and accreditation requirements for the granting of credit hours (this will become increasingly important as study abroad programs move further away from a standard seminar schedule into more innovative formats). Further work between OSA and the registrar's office will need to be done to develop a set of criteria for assigning credit. It will be crucial to define "instruction." As well as classroom instruction, instructional hours include structured activities held outside the classroom that are relevant to the course. This would include activities such as: a course-related museum visit, a guest lecturer, or a corporate or plant visit.

For short-term programs, some of the instructional hours may be fulfilled by class meetings, work assignments, and research conducted prior to and after returning from the program abroad. Without such additional instructional time, study abroad programs of ten days abroad or less are able to earn a maximum of two credit hours.

C. Program Documentation

The Program Plan, summaries of student course evaluations, program evaluations, and the faculty director's (or group leader's) report should be kept on file in the department. These will make up the Program Manual that is maintained year to year for use of current and future faculty and staff. Copies of the Program Manual (excluding the student course evaluation summaries) should also be on file in OSA.

New and existing program manuals should contain the following items:

- a) Brief description of program rationale and objectives
- b) Course credit/instructional hours ratio (detailed description)
- c) Academic and programmatic description including model itinerary
- d) Detailed course description and syllabus (follows standard KU syllabus model)
- e) Description of pre-departure orientation
- f) Description of evaluation of coursework of individual student (written assignments, exams, papers, case studies, oral interviews, journals; person assigning grades, etc. This may be part of the syllabus).
- g) Sample student course evaluation form (academic and program evaluation may be separate forms)
- h) Budget (see OSA budget officer for assistance)
- i) Description of program review procedure
- j) Program Proposal Approval Sheet (w/signatures of Faculty Director, Department Chair, Dean, OSA Director, Dean of OIP).
- k) Copy of faculty and staff contract
- l) Description of Faculty Director or Group Leader's responsibilities.
- m) Appendix: supporting materials (foreign institution information; faculty vitas; etc.)

D. Program Evaluation

For existing programs, a standard procedure for program evaluation should be required and should include:

1. Criteria: Program evaluation criteria, drawn up by faculty, department chair, OSA, and OIP, must address means for maintaining the fiscal health of program; safety and security of program participants/staff; student demand and faculty support; and continued departmental support of program.
2. Description of evaluation process (for example, faculty and staff evaluation, student evaluation, periodic site visits by department/administration, etc.) with sample documents included.
3. Periodic re-evaluation of program benefits vs. program costs.

E. Increasing Student Participation in Study Abroad

It is clear that at KU and at other universities the two primary barriers to study abroad concern the added cost and the difficulty in fitting Study Abroad into major requirements. A third barrier is simply the lack of awareness among many undergraduates of the possibilities of study abroad and the benefits. To overcome these barriers, the Task Force recommends the following initiatives:

1. The University should assess an International Education Fee to fund international education opportunities such as study abroad programs. It is worth noting that the Office of Study Abroad is “self-funding” meaning that it currently is dependent on its own revenues to cover expenses.
2. The University should require or strongly recommend that every department provide a study abroad experience suited to its curricular mission. It is currently difficult for most students and most majors to maintain normal progress toward their degree while on study abroad, because few study abroad programs currently are designed to fulfill specific major requirements.
3. Because Study Abroad has important implications for how a student pursues his or her degree, planning for study abroad needs to begin early in the student’s career at KU. OSA should develop greater input in the New Student Orientation program and work more closely with the Freshman/Sophomore Advising Center.
4. Raising private funds for study abroad scholarships (in the upcoming Capital Campaign) should be a major priority. Financial Aid packages are often transferable to study abroad. But since many KU students help pay for their education by working, which is almost always impossible while studying abroad, there remain substantial financial barriers.

F. Increasing Faculty Participation in Study Abroad

Two means to increasing study abroad discussed above are increasing the number and variety of programs and fitting those programs better into major requirements. Both of these goals would be eased by making it easier for faculty to develop new Study Abroad programs and reducing some of the institutional disincentives for doing so.

1. Offer New Program Development Grants funded by Schools/OIP/OSA/University that would cover reasonable travel, lodging, transportation, meals, supplies expenses for interested faculty to conduct preliminary fact-finding work for new study abroad programs.
2. Find ways to overcome the various personal obstacles to faculty leadership of study abroad programs, including, most notably, that supervising a study abroad program requires faculty to separate from their family for a considerable period of time. The task force recognizes the reasons why family members cannot travel at University expense, but believes that the problem cannot simply be ignored because of these obstacles.

3. Find ways to increase recognition of study abroad directorship in the distribution of rewards on campus. There is a widespread perception that directing study abroad programs is very time consuming, but substantially undervalued in merit salary and promotion processes, and hence is a bad move professionally. If there are institutional disincentives to directing study abroad, the majority of faculty will follow them. Allowing departments to have a space on the Blue Form dedicated to international service would help in this respect.
4. Make major changes in the working relationship between study abroad faculty directors and OSA. Currently, faculty directors are expected to develop much of the logistical arrangements for study abroad programs, as well as the curricular aspect. This is not the best way for faculty members to spend their time, and does not allow for the economies of scale and the gains from experience that would occur if these tasks were handled centrally. OSA should carry much more responsibility for promotion and student recruitment (with input from faculty and program staff), and assist in program organization, especially in non-academic areas of travel, lodging, tours, etc.

Part III Internationalization of KU: Issues for Faculty and Scholars

A university is only as international as its faculty. To truly promote internationalization at the University, we need to focus on promoting international exposure of faculty as well as students. Much of what is envisioned in the preceding sections of this report is predicated upon much more extensive internationalization of the KU faculty. We must pursue an holistic approach that covers a broad range of activities such as international travel, exchanges with international scholars and students, language training, study abroad, recognizing international activities in promotion and tenure, and providing public recognition for international service.

To further the internationalization of the University, the Task Force offers the following recommendations. These recommendations are intended to encourage faculty to pursue research on other countries, to collaborate more effectively with scholars of other countries, and to enhance the exchange of scholars and graduate research students between KU and institutions outside the United States.

To promote internationalization of the faculty in the University, KU should adopt a two-tier approach:

“Level One” activities directly promote increased research and teaching at KU about other societies. These should be rewarded as service and also receive funding and resources from the University to expand our involvement in them. We define "international research and teaching" as the study of or teaching about a society outside the United States where the distinctive culture of that society is significantly different from the mainstream culture of the United States and where that culture is the primary objective of study. Even though international research and teaching on other societies is the primary goal of the funding outlined below, the ultimate goal should be to support exchange and collaborative research programs as well, because these programs also help create a truly international university.

“Level Two” activities: 1) involve KU faculty in increased international connections and 2) encourage attracting more international students and scholars to come to KU. These activities should be encouraged, the University should facilitate them, but they should have a lower priority for funding from University resources than Level One Activities.

The Task Force strongly recommends that the Office of International Programs, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the professional schools have as a major goal obtaining private donations and foundation support, as well as state funds, to fund both Level One and Level Two activities.

A. Level One Activities (top priorities)

Examples of activities or actions that KU could take to promote internationalization at **Level One** are the following:

1. Increased international research and conference travel for faculty. Faculty should be eligible for international travel support every year or two years, rather than every three years.
2. Increased funds to expand KU's exchange programs with other universities and more fully utilize the relationships we already have. Faculty and, where appropriate, graduate

students from exchange universities and their counterparts from KU should be assisted in forming joint research projects and in using international scholars and students in KU courses. Departments and research and teaching groups could apply for seed grants to underwrite the costs of expanding exchange programs or beginning new ones. Such programs could encompass a broad range of activities--collaborative research, teaching a module of a course, exchange of graduate students, visiting scholars, and making international scholars and graduate students available in KU courses on the Lawrence campus. Various programs such as the joint ACLS/DAAD research projects between the U.S. and Germany and the ACTR program sponsored by the U.S. State Department can be used as models.

3. Special foreign language classes for KU faculty and graduate students to help acquire another research language or language for traveling to new areas. If sufficient interest is found among faculty to learn a certain language, a GTA could be hired to teach a two hour per week class, for example.

B. Level Two Activities

Examples of activities or actions that KU could take to promote further internationalization at **Level Two** are the following:

1. Promote and facilitate study tours for KU faculty to become more knowledgeable about world areas.
2. Encourage departments and programs to evaluate their mission and determine how they could better promote Study Abroad, increased international contacts, and/or teaching of international subjects.
3. Give departments the option to include on the Promotion and Tenure Blue Form space to have the candidate describe his or her international work. This could be a space on the Blue Form that reads: "If specified by your department, please describe the international aspects of your teaching and research and how they have contributed to the internationalization of the University."
4. Encourage schools, departments, and programs to create awards for international teaching, service, and research similar to the Provost's Award for International Service. Such awards are appropriate at both the pre-tenure and tenured levels.
5. Encourage departments to use the information from Office of International Programs on the international scholars who come to KU every year, and to provide relevant information on visiting international scholars to the Office of International Programs.