

## **Entwining Curricula Internationally**

### **QEP Proposal**

**December 1, 2010**

#### *Introduction*

Students and faculty of today and tomorrow need a global approach to learning and problem solving. They also need facility and ease with the contemporary technologies that are shrinking the world. The following proposal describes a program to link educational and professional curricula at UK with those at universities abroad. Titled the Global Curricular Initiative, this program will provide UK faculty with the technological, pedagogical, and financial resources and training to effectively link their courses with those offered abroad. The links will range from shared reading materials to fully integrated, co-taught, and synchronistic offerings that award dual credit. The scope of the project is much more, however, namely to embed such experiences in many of the University's courses so that as many as 90 percent of our students take at least one, and hopefully several, Global Curricular Initiative courses before they graduate. Widespread linkages of this sort will result in a much more internationalized campus, one where almost all of our undergraduate students and many of our graduate students and faculty will learn and work in a technologically-enhanced global environment.

UK's menu of language and culture courses represents a welcome start to internationalization. UK professors are also beginning to offer boutique courses that include meaningful contact with international scholars and students through technologies such as Skype and social media. Study abroad experiences, meanwhile, provide deeper cultural understanding for those able to participate. However, international experience and understanding are too important to leave to occasional boutique courses or to depend on students' financial ability to travel. Technology-mediated interactions with international students and scholars offers a personalized entrée into foreign cultures. From which the great majority of our students can benefit. Utilization of communication tools that are becoming very affordable, if not commonplace, enables the University to provide meaningful international learning and problem solving experiences to potentially all students.

#### *How the Proposed Program Meets QEP/University Goals*

Internationalization of student experience supports two of the six themes of the Quality Enhancement Program: Expanding Global Awareness and Involvement and Advancing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning. In addition, the proposed program supports both the University's 2009-2014 Strategic Plan and the University's Strategic Plan for Internationalization.

### *QEP Theme 2*

Students, and the campus as a whole, will directly benefit from the proposed involvement with international universities. It is a stated goal of the University and an implied responsibility of professors as mentors help students undergo meaningful international experiences. Without such experiences, it is far too easy to exist in the small, confined intellectual landscape of the University, Kentucky, or the United States. The proposed Global Curricular Initiative opens doors for international learning, understanding, and co-constructed knowledge.

The Global Curricular Initiative will enable faculty to work directly with international colleagues to pair UK classes with courses at international institutions – allowing students here and abroad to read the same materials, contribute to group discussions, participate in group activities, complete group assignments, and work on collaborative research, thereby interfacing with individuals from different backgrounds and cultures while completing coursework and research. The outcomes of such activities will range from the simple acquisition of information and knowledge to shared meaningful experiences with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Longer-term outcomes might include collaborative research relationships for undergraduates, graduate students, and professors. The “big-picture” outcome of the proposed program is enhanced understanding, knowledge construction, and problem solving.

This educational experience will help equip students with the dynamic, flexible, and culturally intelligent skill set required for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Through Participating students and faculty may encounter initial growing pains as they learn and adjust to cultural variations, including communication and work habits. With the appropriate support, however, students and faculty will learn to not only understand but also appreciate these differences.

### *QEP Theme 5*

Implementation of this innovative internationalized curriculum will require progressive pedagogical and technical support. The proposed program goes beyond the transition from the “sage on the stage to the guide on the side” to a globalized peer-to-peer development model. By stressing the collaborative learning process, students will learn how to be productive members of culturally diverse teams. Facilitated through advances in technology, student ideas and projects will be presented to international audiences for critique, comment, and expansion. Students will thereby become co-constructors of knowledge and also start developing technological literacy – an IT IQ – so that they know how to utilize technology in a variety of settings from the classroom to the workplace environment. The end result will be students engaging in holistic personal and academic growth through the use of the vast technological possibilities available today.

### *UK Strategic Plan*

The University of Kentucky's 2009-2014 Strategic Plan includes a focus on preparing students to succeed in an increasingly interdependent global economy and society. Critical to this development is the ability both to welcome and to utilize different perspectives and systems of belief. The exposure and opportunity to create meaningful relationships with international peers proposed here lays the foundation for this goal of the Strategic Plan.

Equipped with enhanced ability and desire to negotiate varying points of view and belief systems, students and faculty participating in the proposed program will also have opportunities to solve problems and address research questions with international colleagues. The Global Curricular Initiative will thereby support Goal Two of the Strategic Plan, namely to promote research and creative work beyond the borders of the University and the United States.

#### *UK Strategic Plan for Internationalization*

Internationalizing the University's curricula naturally supports the Strategic Plan for Internationalization. The University has the opportunity to dedicate significant intellectual, technological, and financial resources to foster international exposure for students, faculty, staff, and the community. The proposed program here presents a pervasive systematic development opportunity for the campus to provide students, faculty, staff, and the community not only exposure to different cultures and belief systems, but also with the opportunity to grow and develop personally as a result of this exposure.

The addition of courses with global learning outcomes, the promotion of student study of world languages, a higher percentage of students spending time abroad, and the addition of minors and majors in critical-need languages all, of course, contribute to the development of international understanding and appreciation. However, the proposed incorporation of international linked curricula across campus represents a pervasive systemic change for students and faculty.

#### *Nuts and Bolts of Implementation*

The basic idea of the program is simple: to have faculty and students at UK and at foreign universities jointly plan and share educational experiences in academic courses. These experiences include the full gauntlet of what occurs in a course and in a classroom, including common syllabi, common lectures, common assignments, discussions, group activities and assignments, one off events, and student and faculty research collaborations. Faculty will be linked in planning and teaching the classes involved, whereas students will primarily be linked through the shared course experiences themselves and whatever common or convergent preparation they make for classroom work. These linkages will be mediated by modern communication technologies and software.

This type of international collaboration is occurring on campus, but in a nascent stage of development. A few professors have incorporated communication with authors and researchers

studied in the course via conference call and Skype. When this occurs, students are able to ask questions and to discuss themes presented in the literature; thereby participating in a multi-modal learning experience that complements the traditional written word, and verbal and visual communication with the expert or author. Currently, this limited integration of progressive pedagogy is considered boutique instead of pervasive. However, with the appropriate pedagogical and technological support, the pervasive and extensive integration of the source of knowledge is possible.

### *Course Development*

University faculty will join with colleagues at foreign universities to plan courses that offer extensive shared experiences for the students at UK and at the partnering international institutions who take these courses. The collaborative planning work may occur over multiple media, including email, Skype, and video conferencing. However, there is great value to supporting faculty travel between the institutions involved for intensive one- to two-week planning sessions. This international travel will facilitate potential secondary benefits such as research collaborations between the faculty concerned and, eventually, more extensive curricular and research connections between the units and institutions involved. Additionally, for a limited period of time incentives will be provided to UK faculty to participate.

It is anticipated that many of the joint educational ventures will be pursued by faculty who share common research interests. Shared research interests are a principle reason why faculty in different countries come to know each other. Enabling faculty to co-plan courses that they subsequently co-teach also fosters greater research collaboration. Particularly as the subject matter addressed in the course is likely a shared research interest of the faculty instructors.

It is also anticipated that once faculty at both institutions experience how easy, enjoyable, and enriching such joint educational ventures are, additional joint ventures will be pursued. Enabling faculty travel to foreign universities (and vice versa) will enhance this possibility. It is anticipated that the number of paired courses will annually double for the first five years of the initiative.

### *Course Elements*

The jointly taught courses can involve a variety of elements that offer students shared experiences. It is anticipated that these courses will contain combinations of such elements as the following. In addition, currently unanticipated elements made possible by this proposed program will likely arise during implementation:

(1) Common lectures: Faculty at UK or a foreign university can give lectures that students from both institutions listen to—either synchronically or asynchronously. Synchronic broadcast opens up possibilities of further shared real-time experiences such as students hearing one another ask questions.

(2) Common reading materials: This is the sine qua non of any meaningful shared experience. Shared knowledge and information are essential if people are to be able to interpret and negotiate the technology-mediated academic and intellectual interactions they have with people belonging to cultures and countries different from their own.

(3) Discussions: Video conferencing technology enables robust audio and visual interactions between groups in spatially distant locations. Full blooded discussions can be held between students in the two locations about reading materials, common lectures, and the topics these address.

(4) Group activities: The same technology facilitates group activities embracing students in the two locations. In fact, many of the group activities implemented in traditional classrooms can be transferred to a video conferencing environment once students get to know each other. The fact that the students come from different cultures and countries actually increases the possibilities of enriching group exercises since the element of cultural and national difference becomes a resource on which such exercises can draw.

(5) Group Assignments: A particularly intriguing group activity in this context is group assignments. Carrying out these assignments requires work outside the classroom and thus increased interaction and communication between students at the participating institutions. Smaller groups of students will thereby come to know each other on both a professional or academic and personal level.

(6) Student research collaborations: The envisioned format cannot, all by itself, accommodate research that involves travel to distant sites. Nor can it accommodate laboratory work very easily at present, though it is possible to imagine ways collaborative lab research can embrace a dimension of synchronous or asynchronous interaction at a distance; new software might further enhance this possibility. Apart from these, many sorts of collaborative research projects requiring significant interaction between students in the two locations can be easily carried out. Like group assignments, such collaborations enable smaller groups of students to become much better acquainted.

#### *Program/Initiative Assessment*

The proposed program builds upon the assessment criteria discussed in the Strategic Plan for Internationalization. Students participating in the proposed program should demonstrate an enhanced learning experience when compared with a control group of students. Exposure to international scholars and peers will provide participating students experience that will help them succeed in a global economy.

Assessment of participating students will include assessments of (1) global knowledge of other cultures, how the students' culture or relates globally, and a demonstrated understanding of global issues including economic and political interdependency. Participating students should

also (2) demonstrate the ability to communicate with and, understand individuals from different background as well as to (3) utilize an alternative lens or understanding when approaching problem solving. Finally, participating students will not only learn to accept and appreciate differences.

#### *Direct Benefits to Campus and Community*

Widespread implementation of the proposed initiative will potentially affect most of the undergraduate student body, as well as many graduate and professional students and faculty/staff. Students will benefit from the diversity of thought and experience encountered through the relationships they develop with international peers. Faculty will benefit from the opportunity to work with students and colleagues of various cultural backgrounds. For participating students and faculty, the relationships developed may evolve into wider research collaborations and partnerships.

Participating students and faculty will also benefit from experience with the sophisticated technology utilized in the course such as Skype, video conferencing, Second World, and emerging possibilities. Greater proficiency and comfort with this international communication technology will prepare students to excel as professionals or scholars of the future.

Less directly, the UK campus community will benefit from the increased ability of students and faculty to interact effectively with individuals from different cultures. The development of these interpersonal skills will translate across campus into greater communication and collaboration among students and scholars of differing backgrounds.

Moreover, the internationalization of coursework at the University might translate to the community. Lexington boasts a diverse population representing many cultural backgrounds. Greater attention to the benefits of collaboration on campus might lead to greater collaboration with the community members.

#### *Other Benefits*

Technologically linking courses holds the potential of enhancing a wide variety of courses at UK. This is especially true of the general education courses that satisfy the Global Dynamics Component of the Citizenship Requirement. Focused and extensive interactions with students in other countries about the international issues studied in these courses will greatly deepen UK students' understanding of these issues by making the perspectives of others on these issues more vivid and persuasive and even injecting into courses perspectives that would be otherwise unavailable. The Global Curricular Initiative will add a, so to speak, live global component to courses satisfying the Global Dynamics Requirement.

Courses that combine such diverse elements will make a strong contribution to (1) expanding UK students' understanding of cultural and national differences and (2) enabling them

to better negotiate these differences. The courses will achieve these results by making such understanding and negotiation part of the procedural-structural fabric of courses, as opposed to a topic. Note that, in this regard, the proposed program does not substitute for study abroad experiences. The program, however, is a cost-effective means of providing a mass of students with internationally experiences, thereby fostering greater international understanding and the critical ability to work with people different from oneself.

Moreover, the exclusive focus on academic activities in the proposed courses contrasts with many study abroad programs where extracurricular experiences absorb more of a student's attention than does academics. It is clear, finally, that these courses make their contribution to a better grasp and facility with international differences through the shared experiences that all the students participating in them undergo. It is the experiences of listening, reading, and reacting to the same presentations and materials, carrying out and discussing the same assignments, and jointly carrying out group exercises, group assignments, and collaborative research that inform students of differences and require them to respect, cope with, and work with and through them.

These benefits are all the greater should the UK course focuses on some aspect of human life at the location—or in the region—of the institution to whose course it is linked. In this situation, UK students will be interacting with students elsewhere about these students' own worlds. Courses in area studies, history, public health, agriculture, and education are only a few examples of subject areas that will especially benefit in this way.

Although the experiences gained through these internationally-linked courses cannot substitute for study-abroad experience, it is anticipated that interactions with peers of the sort envisioned will whet UK students' interest in spending time abroad. There is nothing like direct interaction and collaboration with peers elsewhere to enhance the attractiveness of and felt need to travel abroad. It is hard to say how decisive this influence will be, but it is anticipated to be significant.

International course links should also strongly enrich the experiences and learning of graduate students. It is always beneficial for students (and faculty) in one graduate program to meet and interact academically with students (and faculty) in graduate programs elsewhere. They thereby encounter perspectives and ideas that differ from those represented in their home programs. Such interactions also open the door to joint research among students and among faculty.

A final likely benefit is greater ties between the units offering linked courses. It is likely that success in linking courses will breed further successes. Once initial links are established through the efforts, for example, of pairs of faculty who know each other professionally, the ease of implementing this format will encourage colleagues in the units involved to do the same. It is easy to imagine UK students enrolled in particular majors or graduate programs having repeated interactions with students in a corresponding major or graduate program elsewhere. Just how

extensive such shared experiences can become is anyone's guess. We are optimistic that many graduate programs will deepen their ties quickly and that such ties can lead to further exchange and collaborative efforts. Regarding undergraduate majors, it is fair to say that the types of linkage imagined are far easier to implement than are exchange programs and easier to set up than are short study abroad trips. They are also sure more quickly to touch many more students than those who avail themselves of exchange programs or short trips.

The only real difficulty with our proposal is scheduling. Essentially no universities outside North American have semesters that correspond with those at UK. This situation implies that it will not be possible to link courses over entire semesters. Substantial overlap does exist, however, between UK's semesters and those at practically all foreign universities. As a result, it will be widely possible to link courses for at least halves of semesters and in many case for longer than that.

It should be stressed that the increased understanding and ability to deal with international differences will be available to all UK students and are not costly to achieve. The program will offer international experiences to students in majors and programs that do not focus on international topics or lend themselves to international travel. These experiences will also be considerably cheaper to have than those had through study abroad programs.

#### *Who Would be Involved*

A campus-wide initiative as proposed here will require the support of Central Administration. It is proposed that a steering committee be developed and work under the leadership (or delegated leadership) of the Provost, with the support of the Vice Provost of International Programs, the Vice President for Institutional Diversity, the Vice President for Enrollment Management, and the Deans (or their designees). Members of the steering committee should include representation from undergraduate and graduate programs and all colleges.

This proposal includes the addition of a pedagogical specialist in integrating internationalization of the curricula. This position will provide participating faculty and staff the necessary training based on best practices research. As faculty develop relationships with international colleagues and create and implement their curricula, the pedagogical specialist will provide support.

It is also anticipated that a technological specialist will be hired to serve the proposed program exclusively. This position will be charged as an on-site specialist with all the equipment necessary to defy space and place boundaries.

Implementation of the proposed project will also demand appropriate technological support from the existing infrastructure. Staff of the Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching may participate in training to support the technological demands of the program.



## Proposed Budget

Implementing this initiative required dedicated staff, in particular, a pedagogical specialist, a technology specialist, a teaching assistance, a graduate specialist, and student workers. Office space will need to be identified for these individuals.

Personnel	Salary	FTE	Total
Pedagogical Specialist	65,000	1.00	65,000
Teaching Assistant	25,000	1.00	25,000
Graduate Assistant	14,000	1.00	14,000
Technology Specialist	65,000	1.00	65,000
Student IT Support			90,000
Total Salary			259,000
Fringe	259,000	0.25	64,750
<b>Total Personnel</b>			<b>323,750</b>
Travel			
International Travel (faculty)	5,000	10.00	50,000
<b>Total Travel</b>			<b>50,000</b>
Supplies			2,000
<b>Total Supplies</b>			<b>2,000</b>
Contractual			
Vendor Tech Support			50,000
Incentive stipend for professor	5,000	50.00	250,000
<b>Total Contractual</b>			<b>300,000</b>
<b>Total Direct</b>			<b>375,750</b>
<b>Administrative</b>	<b>375,750</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>97,695</b>
<b>Total Proposed annual budget</b>			<b>773,445</b>

The proposal includes initially outfitting five classrooms with the appropriate technology.

Equipment			
Tele-presence Equipment	100,000	5.00	500,000
<b>Total Equipment</b>			<b>500,000</b>

**Endorsements:****██████████ Associate Provost for International Programs:**

*I am pleased to express my support for the "Entwining Curricula Internationally" QEP proposal, which connects students globally through technology as well as face-to-face partnerships. The proposal makes systemic what is already happening in an ad hoc manner: faculty who partner internationally for their research are realizing the benefits of putting their students in direct contact with each other. Most valuable in this initiative, from my perspective, is the opportunity to create global teams of students for discussion, debate, problem-solving, and project development. This interpersonal and intercultural skill is essential for the 21st-century workplace, and while we teach "about" it, we do not give students the opportunity to engage with this concept. Working in a team, particularly with Asian or other non-Western counterparts, requires skills of negotiation, compromise, code-switching, and acute perception. This QEP will pave the way for global teamwork to become an integral part of many of our courses, and to create paradigm-changing learning situations. It can be a central feature of the new cross-campus certificate in international scholarship, as well as a key piece of the General Education Global Dynamics component and the International Studies major and minor.*

*In sum, the proposal is well aligned with our major curricular and global initiatives, and complements the horizon-expanding work of faculty and students. I strongly support its adoption.*

**██████████ Director, School of Journalism and Telecommunications:**

*The proposed program would greatly enrich what we're able to do in helping our students experience and understand other cultures. What I particularly like about this proposal is that it offers a means to broaden our students' contacts beyond the "usual" places. For example, a number of faculty members in the School of Journalism and Telecommunications have been working in Zambia for several years; the missing link has been connecting our students in Kentucky with the students we meet in Zambia. The proposed program would provide a way of doing that that would be practical and highly beneficial to both groups. This would also be a very useful way to interact with our colleagues at Shanghai University and at Manipal University in India, adding another dimension beyond the traditional exchanges of faculty or students. I see many possible applications for this program at UK; I would certainly push my college to be one of the early adopters.*