

Report of the 2020 Commission on International Activities

INTRODUCTION: Purpose and Objectives of International Activities at the University of Virginia

International activities at the University of Virginia cultivate a global perspective in students, faculty and the community. More specifically, they position UVa within the framework of its greatest potential, challenge its students and scholars to extend their horizons of growth and inquiry, and welcome international students and scholars.

International programs are the ultimate expression for enriching the mind. By including different peoples and cultural traditions and framing the University's tasks in global dimensions, Thomas Jefferson's spirit of free inquiry is expanded.

UVa has always freely given the world the fruits of its scholarship, the talents of its students and faculty, and the vision of its founder. Today, in an increasingly interactive global community of scholarship, the University's eminence depends on its intimate involvement in the international academy.

To apply Thomas Jefferson's vision of an Academical Village to the global opportunities this millennium presents, the University must encourage and coordinate international activities across the entire organization. It must make its international dimension an essential part of its identity, a frontier for the whole range of its operations that all are encouraged to explore.

Establishing the University as a global presence requires pursuing the following 10 objectives:

- Encourage students to include study abroad in their educational plans;
- Encourage faculty members to pursue their research, teaching, and service interests within a global framework;
- Plan curriculum so students become familiar with various cultural perspectives, encouraging them to explore subjects in that global framework;
- Make available language and cultural programs of quality, variety and depth, while integrating language and cultural learning with the rest of that curriculum;
- Make available electronic informational and interactive resources, integrating these resources with opportunities for global learning;

- Welcome international students as integral and valued members of the Academical Village and provide for their special needs and interests;
- Invite international scholars to participate in research at the University and facilitate their stays;
- Join with international academic institutions in collaborations that encourage free movement of students and scholars;
- Engage in programs abroad that further the internationalization of the University's general mission; and
- Promote integration and coordination of international resources across the University, while encouraging their expansion.

Current status

The International Activities Planning Commission subdivided international activities into five categories:

- **UVa students and faculty abroad;**
- **Internationalization of the curriculum;**
- **International students and scholars at UVa;**
- **International liaisons; and**
- **Appropriate organization of international activities.**

These tasks can be viewed as “four fingers and a thumb.” The first four categorize the great variety of international activities at many universities. The fifth task -- appropriate organization -- is the thumb that grasps each of the categories, coordinates them and makes them all part of a coherent university enterprise. The International Activities Planning Commission organized its activities in corresponding task groups, and its recommendations are presented in terms of them.

Many new and exciting ideas emerged in the course of the commission's discussions, and some important ones already are being implemented. The International Residential College, scheduled to open in Fall 2001, will combine an internationally focused residential unit with international programming and services. The University plans a new building for residential language programs near the successful French and Spanish houses, doubling the range and capacity of such programs and creating a “foreign-language quarter.” It is scheduled to open in Fall 2002. Participation in study-

abroad programs is increasing, and several new international centers and institutes are being proposed.

The variety and attractiveness of the ideas suggested in this report are the best evidence to illustrate that the University needs a mechanism to sustain dynamism in international activities. They currently lack overall leadership and organization, and the International Activities Planning Commission believes this lack of a “thumb” is the primary reason UVa has lagged behind its peers in this area.

The commission proposed that the position of vice provost for international activities be established. In August 2000, Professor Bill Quandt was appointed interim vice provost.

The immediate task is to take the ideas the commission generated through a regular implementation process. Many ideas require more concrete study, pilot programs and competitive consideration of proposals. The commission recommends creating an advisory council to represent all parts of the University with a significant incentive budget to provide seed money for new projects.

Comparing UVa with other universities

The commission found that international activities should be diverse and diffused throughout all University operations. At other leading institutions, international activities are not separated from other activities and exclusively administered and regulated. Rather, the international dimension is encouraged and coordinated as part of general activities, and success is measured by the fluency with which daily business transcends geographical horizons.

“International” becomes normal, and schools such as New York University or Cornell University accept and encourage the international dimension as part of their identity. Moreover, international achievements have become a central part of their claim to academic excellence.

Compared with other universities, the University of Virginia is by no means inactive internationally, but neither is it a leader. No reliable ranking system is available and the data are problematic, but UVa likely would rank no higher than 40th in an overall scale of international activities and, since many liberal-arts colleges are very active, lower in per-capita terms.

The University ranks 37th in percentage of foreign scholars, a category that tracks very closely with overall academic reputation. It ranks 66th in percentage of foreign students (including graduate students). Comparable numbers are unavailable for participation in study-abroad programs, but the 16 percent of students in study-abroad programs at UVa is well below that of Michigan State University and Duke University.

The commission visited several institutions to learn about their approaches to international activities. It was abundantly clear on every site visit — and even from a brief comparison of web sites — that the world is already part of many American universities to an extent not yet dreamed of at UVa.

International activities are part of the core identity and leadership of the University of Wisconsin, Duke, NYU and many other schools. Not only is a senior officer of the university in charge, but encouragement of international activities is a central goal of those institutions.

The president and provost are directly involved, and coordination extends throughout those universities. Although UVa appears to be 30 years behind its aspiration group, that gap could be reduced to only 10 years if it makes a concentrated and well-led effort (as with the turnaround at Duke since 1995 demonstrates).

Staffing in essential services for international activities at UVa is inadequate based on internal study of the International Studies Office. It also is small compared with already internationalized universities. Large and efficient study-abroad programs have a staff-to-student abroad ratio of somewhere between one to 50 and one to 100. The International Studies Office's ratio is one to 500.

In services to international students and scholars, most critically in visa services, both Wisconsin and Michigan State have a staff-to-client ratio of 1 to 300. The International Study Office's ratio is 1 to 659. To achieve a ratio of 1 to 300, the University would have to increase staff in this area by 120 percent -- or three persons. Moreover, the larger staffs in the aspiration group can be more specialized and efficient than a small staff, so a comparison of ratios does not address the depth and breadth of services offered by this small staff.

These two comparisons demonstrate UVa's history of neglect in this area, but they do not touch on the “opportunity cost” that international activities have suffered because of the absence of capacity for new program development, expert staff support, and so forth. Addressing these needs will require re-conception of services provided in support of enhanced international activity.

Given the gaps between the University and its aspiration group, it is a testimony to the enterprise of the faculty and the hard work of staff that it is not further behind. Yet, there are limits to the efficiencies that can be squeezed from an inadequate infrastructure. Put more positively, if the University begins to supply leadership and more adequate support services, it can expect a great leap forward in developing its international dimensions.

For instance, it is conceivable that 80 percent of students would participate in study abroad by 2020 if by then the variety and accessibility of options has become compelling and the habit of study abroad has become part of the expected undergraduate experience. The University could likely achieve 30 percent participation by 2005 if the

International Studies Office were developed into a full-service office over the next five years.

To reach its potential, the University not only must fill gaps, it also must seize opportunities to become preeminent among its peers.

UVa already has three especially noteworthy initiatives -- the International Institute of American Studies, the Institute of American Language and Culture, and the Center for International Medicine. Development of each is within reach and would create a position of world leadership in this important area that would be unique and difficult for others to surpass.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of the commission's five task groups was asked to present its recommendations in three time frames: 2020, mid-range, and current action.

Because no one knows precisely what conditions will exist in 2020, and much can happen in 20 years, long-term plans for development are those outlined in the "goals section" of each recommendation.

Two criteria define the "mid-term:" objectives whose progress must gradually accumulate over time, and objectives that require significant external funding.

Current action covers present concerns and opportunities that should be addressed over the next one to two years.

(1) UVa students and faculty abroad

1.1 Goals for 2020

- Eighty percent of undergraduates are involved in study-abroad programs during their time at UVa, making them a normal part of the undergraduate experience. Cost of participation is comparable to on-Grounds costs, and regular financial aid and specific scholarships are available.
- The University offers a full spectrum of study-abroad opportunities. Along one dimension is a broad choice of UVa programs throughout the world, addressing a variety of disciplinary interests.
- Along another dimension are programs of various lengths, from a few weeks to a full year, involving all levels of language capabilities. Options range from

faculty-led summer three-credit programs lasting a few weeks to special fifth-year programs (described below) for honors work.

- Graduate and professional students have opportunities to pursue research abroad.
- Faculty members are engaged in teaching and research around the world.

1.2 Interim tasks

- Expand study abroad along four dimensions -- the percentage of students in study-abroad programs; the percentage of students in long-term programs; the number, variety and quality of UVa programs; and the number, variety and quality of these programs open to UVa students.
- Develop a fifth-year practicum for health-science students, probably in Mexico, that would provide professional training as well as language and cultural training.
- Integrate University study abroad with career counseling and alumni activities. Use the Alumni Association to develop international internships and externships.

1.3 Interim funding

- Create an incentive fund and provide staff support to develop and manage study-abroad programs. These should be based on well-supported faculty initiatives.
- Develop funding to facilitate faculty and graduate-student participation in international conferences and research.
- Create a competitive scholarship program for fifth-year international research modeled on the junior Fulbright program

1.4 Current actions

- Create a planning committee to report in February 2001 on the feasible steps to make study abroad self-supporting and to develop its infrastructure to comprehensive capacity within five years.
- Redesign and provide for regular updating of the International Studies Office web site. Develop a web site to include information on approved international

programs, the effects of international work on faculty benefit packages, the tax implications, and information regarding funding opportunities. The University of Wisconsin web site can be a model for this task.

- Restructure summer session to remove barriers to international study and program development, allowing programs to become self-sufficient and allowing students to pay for the summer session with financial aid.
- Initiate a review of how the tenure process could be adjusted to remove disincentives for research abroad by junior faculty.

(2) Internationalizing the curriculum

2.1 Goals for 2020

- A comprehensive system of area centers, such as the South Asia Center and East Asia Center, provides a regional focus for interdisciplinary faculty and student contact, and they welcome and sponsor students and scholars from the region. These area centers provide a lively interface between the University and the world. They also structure and encourage critical masses of regional expertise available to the rest of the University.
- Faculty expertise and undergraduate and graduate courses covering the history, politics, and cultures of major countries and of all regions of the world are now available.
- University-wide cooperation in international activities is encouraged and access to international opportunities is broad.
- UVa has a university-wide center for the use of foreign languages across the curriculum. The center encourages the integration of language competence with the non-language curriculum.
- Foreign language offerings meet the variety and the depth that students demand.
- A variety of residential learning environments that are international in focus have been developed, such as the International Residential College and the Foreign Language Quarter. These environments mesh with other residential programs and with the University's international activities and programs.
- International research and teaching initiatives use technology to join once remote parts of the world in projects of mutual benefit to partners.

- Global education is integrated with high-school curricula and with language availability in primary schools

2.2 Interim tasks

- Organize area centers in regions where sufficient expertise already exists to form a critical mass. An example would be European Studies.
- Redefine the foreign-language requirement as a gateway to study abroad and as a gateway to more interesting and useful language work. The requirement would provide an extended introduction to a language, but not competence or fluency. The University must create incentives and attractive paths beyond the first two years of study.
- For students returning from third-year abroad programs, create advanced seminars modeled on the University Seminars that allow these students to utilize and apply their knowledge and experiences.
- Reorganize the technology infrastructure to support international objectives. This effort should closely link offices or individuals actively involved in academic research and curricular development, as well as to those charged with overseeing and coordinating international activities.
- Create an International Studies Honors program or certificate that would involve a yearlong international research project.
- Review and enhance the effectiveness of all levels of language teaching, including summer programs.
- Strengthen and coordinate the language-specific houses on Grounds within a “foreign language quarter” off Jefferson Park Avenue.
- Introduce students to international study in their first year, perhaps through orientation materials and a program of activities particularly designed for them. They should have an “international experience” by October of the first year, i.e., an invitation to dinner or a movie at one of the language houses, the Center for International Living and Learning, the International Center, etc.

2.3 Interim funding

- Identify gaps in area regional studies offerings and develop plans to remedy them. For instance, coverage of Southeast Asia could be strengthened.

- Strengthen area centers that could qualify for Title VI National Resource Center status. For example, help the Russian and Slavic Center regain that status and consider what steps could be taken to raise the Middle East program to competitive levels.
- Raise the level of budgetary support for foreign-language departments to the level of other departments in the College, perhaps with contributions from other schools.
- Support fund raising and grant writing by faculty and centers for international activities.
- Support interdisciplinary teaching initiatives that use students' knowledge of foreign languages.
- Fund "cluster hirings:" new interdisciplinary faculty positions based on the University of Wisconsin model.
- Organize and fund noncredit, informal language and culture short courses on the model of "Speaking Freely" at New York University.

2.4 Current actions

- Develop the International Residential College into a major locus of international programming and activity.
- Improve the general international orientation of UVa's web-based information.
- Expand the Community of Science faculty database to include all faculty members and to include international activities.
- Begin discussions and planning for fifth-year abroad programs.
- Organize a pilot "Speaking Freely" program to begin in Fall 2001.

(3) International Students and Scholars

3.1. Goals for 2020

- The International Studies Office is the central and visible symbol of UVa's commitment to international studies.

- The University sponsors multiple programs for international visiting scholars, both short- and long-term, with appropriate living arrangements and integration into the University community.
- The Institute for American Language and Culture is a first-rate program combining advanced English as a Second Language, cultural fluency and individualized programs for specialists. The institute operates workshops in the summer as well as during the academic year.
- The International Residential College is a natural focus for programming that involves students, faculty and visitors with academic and cultural interests in international studies.

3.2 Interim tasks

- Leverage increased coordination of services to foster interactions with the University's curricular and co-curricular programming. The area centers could play a major role.
- Investigate present supervisory, programming and support services provided through the International Studies Office.

3.3 Interim funding

- Develop attractive housing dedicated to use by international scholars and located in the international quarter.

3.4 Current actions

- Immediately increase the budget of the International Studies Office. At critical times, a shortage of people and operating funds restricts the staff's ability to respond to requests. As a result, the University seems unresponsive to and uncaring about international students.
- Provide adequate and appealing space for International Studies Office.
- Clarify and simplify procedures for hosting international scholars. The University's cumbersome financial and residential arrangements for hosting international scholars often deter international initiatives, particularly those involving scholars from developing countries.
- Restructure and expand English as a Second Language operations into an Institute for American Language and Culture, with the opening of a Summer

Institute for American Language and Culture in summer 2002. Targeted at university-level teachers in English and American Studies at foreign universities, the institute could include American Studies seminars, advanced English as a Second Language master classes, field trips and guest lectures. This could be done in conjunction with the International Institute of American Studies (see below).

(4) Institutional liaisons

4.1 Goals for 2020

- The infrastructure for international activities is sufficient to encourage and sustain flexible academic relationships with appropriate institutions and programs abroad.
- The University maintains a select number of comprehensive institutional relationships with outstanding world universities. These provide UVa with institutional *pieds à terre* throughout a broad geographic distribution, encourage a fluid set of more specific relationships among academic programs, and lower the costs of doing academic business abroad.
- The University boasts a robust international structure for its strengths in American Studies.
- The University is exploring collaborations of varying degrees that advance the mission of UVa in a rapidly changing worldwide intellectual culture.

4.2 Interim tasks

- Create a network of academic linkages that integrates what occurs across as much of the University as possible with every major world region. This network will have to build upon existing ties that can be strengthened or broadened. Ideally, the University should have a program along the lines of the Valencia, Spain, program in every major world region.
- Undertake department and school self-studies targeting development of overseas institutional partnerships.

4.3 Interim funding

- Establish an International Institute of American Studies. The blessings of history, location and current academic strengths have converged to make American Studies UVa's area of greatest international competitive advantage.

This institute would approach its work from interdisciplinary and global perspectives. It would not simply be a place for Americans to interpret America for fellow Americans; it also would provide the forum for global interpretations of America for as broad an audience as possible.

- The International Institute of American Studies should be founded in consultation with international programs in American Studies around the world, and it should remain a venue for international consultation and coordination. This omnibus forum would be fruitfully associated with (and draw upon the successful experience of the existing programs in) American Studies, the Miller Center, and the International Institute for Jefferson Studies, as well as individual schools and departments. Such an institute would go far toward establishing UVa as a world university, since no one wishing to contribute to American Studies could afford to ignore it. The ensuing synergy would create a significant “import benefit” for the University, as Americanists from around the world would come to enrich the intellectual life of the University in novel and mutually reinforcing ways.

4.4 Current actions

- Explore specific countries or regions where program innovation appears especially promising. Examples include France and Japan.
- Establish guidelines for developing international liaisons, including such issues as exchanges and property acquisition. The guidelines of the University of Wisconsin and Michigan State University are models.
- Encourage proposals for other pilot programs of international cooperation.

(5) Organization of international activities

5.1 Institute-appropriate mechanisms to encourage and coordinate international activities

- (a) The vice provost** --The major reason for establishing the position and office is to provide strong, university-wide leadership for continuing development of the global dimension of the University. The vice provost would have two major functions: coordinating and encouraging the spread of international activities throughout the University and representing the interests and mission of international activities to the central administration, alumni and foundations.
- (b) Advisory Council on International Activities** -- Since international activities at UVa and at the leading universities are faculty driven, and since successful

leadership in this area requires communication and coordination across the University, an Advisory Council on International Activities seems necessary. Such a council, chaired by the vice provost and with members drawn from all schools and area centers, would meet regularly and serve as an official review and sounding board for international activities.

- (c) **Incentive budget** -- All successful programs that the commission studied — and especially that of Duke University, which is in a situation most comparable to that of UVa — have large incentive budgets for time-limited investments in program innovation. Most international activities begun by the vice provost would either become self-sustaining (as in the case of successful study-abroad programs) or become part of the regular budgets of schools (as in the case of incentive contributions to new lines). In some cases, incentive funding may be necessary to qualify a program for Title VI or other federal money.
- (d) **Quality senior professional staff** -- Especially at the University of Wisconsin, the commission found that senior staff involved with supporting and developing international activities were key to the quality of the core program and services. Not only are more staff needed; senior staff of sufficiently high quality and experience is needed if the University is to achieve its aspirations.
- (e) **Staff of the vice provost's office** -- The vice provost does not have to manage all of the University's international activities, but she or he must lead them. The office staff — including an executive assistant, a capable office assistant and a development officer — needs to be sufficient to support leadership.
- (f) **Endowment support for international activities** -- Such support can generate targets of opportunity for development initiatives and for new donors. A vigorous development effort in international activities, supporting significant projects like those described in this report, could attract globally minded donors of all sorts, including but not limited to international alumni.
- (g) **A comprehensive International Institute** -- The International Institute could coordinate ongoing programs and create synergies and efficiencies by performing useful common tasks for the area centers and other international programs. Bringing the centers together in a common physical location, as most in the aspiration group have already done, would be ideal.

5.2 Transitional arrangements

- Since a vice provost for international activities cannot be hired for Fall 2001, it is important to begin developing and implementing the suggestions of the International Activities Planning Commission. This will require active

leadership from an interim vice provost, a university-wide International Activities Committee, an incentive budget and some staff support.

- (a) **Interim vice provost for international activities** -- The interim vice provost would provide leadership for international activities during the transition. His or her functions would involve: organizing and chairing the International Activities Committee (see below); organizing and supervising various *ad hoc* committees focused on specific projects; working with fund raisers to target international projects; and representing international activities both within and outside the University.
- (b) **International Activities Committee** -- This would be a broadly representative, university-wide committee — a forum to discuss new initiatives, a primary source for the organization of *ad hoc* committees, and a major channel of communication across the University. It would advise the interim vice provost on allocation of the incentive budget.
- (c) **Incentive budget** -- Essential to the encouragement of international activities is the existence of short-term financial support. Initially, this budget could be in the \$50,000 to \$100,000 range.
- (d) **Development support** -- International activities touch on many aspects of development that previously have not been explored. One of the interim vice provost's major tasks would be to collaborate with Development in these areas.
- (e) **Staff support** -- In moving toward permanent arrangements capable of sustaining implementation of international projects, it is important to begin developing staff support.

Outcomes

Immediate Needs and Tasks

The University of Virginia already engages in several international activities. The creation of this commission, the conference “Universalizing the University” in October 1999, the International Residential College, the discussion of a Foreign Language Quarter, and the planned restoration of the SCOLA international news service all contribute to the dynamism and optimism about UVa' future as a center of global excellence.

The immediate priority is providing an effective transition between the International Activities Planning Commission and more permanent arrangements. Many of the concrete suggestions and ideas need further development, and detailed plans must be made to reconfigure study abroad and other important areas.

Most important, the momentum gained from Virginia 2020 and the activities of this commission should not be allowed to dissipate before the University puts permanent arrangements in place. The commission recommends the following concrete **task groups** for the transitional leadership:

- **Study-abroad organizational and fiscal task group** -- The group would consider how to realize the academic goal of maximum participation in study abroad and how to achieve fiscal self-sufficiency in these efforts.
- **International initiatives task group** -- This group would explore international liaisons and possible study-abroad sites. It would investigate funding opportunities for faculty proposals on a competitive basis.
- **Internationalizing the curriculum task group** -- With a broad mandate, this group probably would have smaller working groups to cover: development of "Speaking Freely" programs, interdisciplinary programs, languages across the curriculum, etc.
- **Area studies task group** -- This group would study ways to raise University capacity in coverage of world regions, make area resources accessible and useful across the University, and develop foundation and other support for such activities.
- **International students and scholars task group** -- This group would deal with the problems of international students and scholars at UVa. It also would consider how to maximize their contribution to the quality and diversity of UVa's academic and social atmosphere.
- **International learning technology task group.**
- **International Institute of American Studies exploration team.**
- **Institute of American Language and Culture exploration team.**
- **Center for International Medicine exploration team.**

The Work of the Commission

The commission had both positive and negative inspirations for its work. On the positive side, since each member is personally involved in international activities, it is taken as fact that the University of Virginia has the capacity for rapid globalization if it so chooses.

No defect separates UVa from its aspiration group, only a gap in leadership, resource commitment and hard work. On the negative side, each of the members has worked hard on the commission because his or her own international activities are chronically and sometimes acutely frustrated by the University's inattention.