

Global Engagement and the ISU College of Agriculture

*A white paper describing the rationale and vision for global engagement
by the College of Agriculture at Iowa State University*

November 2004

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***Travel is fatal to
prejudice, bigotry, and
narrow-mindedness.***

—Mark Twain

Introduction

The College of Agriculture has had a long and rich tradition of global engagement. Recent developments, both local and national, cause us to reflect on the current and future role of the College in interacting with colleagues, students, institutions, and organizations outside of the U.S. This white paper describes the College's rationale and vision for maintaining and expanding our global engagement.

Why is global engagement important now?

The rationale/argument for colleges of agriculture to engage globally is becoming increasingly urgent. It is noteworthy that in "Frontiers of Agricultural Research: Food, Health, Environment, and Communities" (2003), the Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources of the National Academy of Sciences identified globalization as one of five research areas requiring special investment and attention. Trade in food, agricultural commodities, and environmental goods and services has become global. Our Iowa producers have never before faced stiffer competition from abroad. Our graduates are entering a marketplace that expects them to operate in a globally interdependent environment as a member of an increasingly diverse work force. Information and communication technology permit effortless, real time communication around the world. Environmental degradation on a global scale directly affects every citizen. Stability in our lives is threatened because of poverty, injustice, and conflict affecting a large portion of the world's population. Population growth concentrated in developing countries has contributed to the existence of approximately 880 million malnourished people in the world.

The American Council on Education identified the preparation of a globally competent citizenry as an important responsibility of our society:

America's future depends on our ability to develop a citizen base that is globally competent. Our nation's place in the world will be determined by our society – whether it is internationally competent, comfortable and confident. Will our citizens be competent in international affairs, comfortable with cultural diversity at home and abroad, and confident of their ability to cope with the uncertainties of a new age and a different world?



***Travel teaches
toleration.***

—Benjamin Disraeli

It is in our national interest to attract scientists and students to the U.S. as a way of building mutually beneficial links. Unfortunately, there is growing evidence that we are attracting fewer of the best and brightest from other countries due to a variety of obstacles including bureaucratic and perceptual. The loss of representatives of the global community in our college hurts our efforts to create a university environment in which cultural, ethnic, racial, and political diversity are valued as important aspects of the fabric of the ISU community. Charles Vest, former President of MIT, stated that it is in the interest and tradition of universities to open their doors to others.

The cornerstone on which great American research universities are built is openness — openness of our international boundaries and openness of our campuses to immigrants, visitors, students, faculty, and scholarly colleagues from all over the world. (2004)

How do we articulate our global vision?

The ISU Strategic Plan 2000-05 listed global engagement as one of our core values.

In today's fast-paced world, higher education must become a network that links students, faculty, business, industry, government, and community. We think globally to shape our actions, to better serve our constituencies in their quest to realize the promises of a better world.

The draft ISU Strategic Plan 2005-2010 states that our mission is to create, share, and apply knowledge to make Iowa and the world a better place.

The plan states that we accomplish our mission through collaboration and cooperation,

with honesty and integrity, and with sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of our state, nation, and the world. In our vision statement we state: Students will become well-rounded, global citizens who are technologically proficient,



culturally informed, and ready to lead. And one of our 9 goals is to Increase students' awareness of global, cultural, and diversity issues.

At the College level, our 2003-05 Strategic Plan recognizes our roles in local, national and global engagement. The plan states:

The College of Agriculture will enrich the lives of people in Iowa, the nation and the world through excellence in education, scholarship, service and leadership in food, agricultural, environmental and social sciences.

How do we pursue our global vision?

Our college strategic plan addresses global engagement in Theme 4 entitled Global Programs:

Goal # 1: Strengthen strategic partnerships with institutions in other countries

In order to improve the College's effectiveness in carrying out its mission, Global Agriculture Programs and its Faculty Advisory Committee selected strategic international partners with whom we will focus the majority of our College-led international activities. Our purpose in pursuing strategic international partnerships is to enhance agricultural higher education and research at Iowa State University and partner institutions and to promote knowledge generation and utilization for food security and environmental sustainability to benefit people throughout the world. To achieve this purpose we will develop and maintain strong, strategic partnerships with the following institutions in three related categories.

***No law or ordinance
is mightier than
understanding.***

—Plato

Student and Faculty Exchange

Brazil	Federal Universities of Vicosa
China	Zhejiang University
Costa Rica	University of Costa Rica
France	Institut Supérieur Agricole de Beauvais
Germany	Hohenheim University
Greece	Perrotis College of Agricultural Studies
Ireland	University College, Cork
Korea	Yeungnam University
Mexico	Monterrey Tech – Queretaro Campus
Ukraine	National Agricultural University

Faculty and Graduate Student Research

Brazil	Federal University of Vicosa
China	Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences
Italy	U. of Padova and Cassamarca Foundation
Netherlands	Wageningen University and Research Centre
Global	International Maize and Wheat Improvement Ctr.
Global	International Livestock Research Institute

Institutional Development Partners

India	Bangalore University of Agricultural Sciences
Peru	Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina
Uganda	Makerere University *
Global	Food and Agriculture Organization

* It is our intent to develop a study abroad site at Makerere University during the next few years.

In addition to these College-wide partners, departments and individual faculty have developed mutually beneficial linkages with institutions and individuals throughout the world.

Goal #2: Prepare students for working and living in a diverse, globally interdependent world

We can improve student learning by providing opportunities for study and work abroad. In keeping with the university's increased emphasis on undergraduate education, the College has expanded the number of students studying abroad by 500 percent over the course of six years. In 2004-05 we are

After all, science is essentially international, and it is only through lack of the historical sense that national qualities have been attributed to it.

—Marie Curie

offering study abroad opportunities in over 20 countries on all 7 continents. With this impressive progress we are now second in the nation among Colleges of Agriculture in the number of undergraduates we send abroad. Yet, much work remains as only 7 percent of our undergraduate students go abroad each year and 75 percent of those studying abroad participate in programs of less than three months duration.

Pursuing Goals 1 and 2 will help us strengthen our global connections that in turn will help us to improve the quality of our programs. In addition to those listed under Goals 1 and 2 the following strategies will be employed.

First, we can enhance faculty and staff development through short study trips focused on specific themes. Recent faculty and staff development trips have focused on value added agriculture in Italy, food safety in England and Belgium, sustainable and organic agriculture in Cuba, and grain production in Brazil. Such investments keep our faculty and staff up-to-date with trends around the world and permit them to bring these lessons learned back to the classroom and lab.

Second, we can increase scientific engagement through a variety of mechanisms. These may include exchanges of scientists, cooperative research, sharing of data, exchange of germplasm, and other such mechanisms. An interesting example of efficiency gained through international involvement can be found in the use of winter nurseries to expedite crop breeding programs.



Third, we can help to serve the needs of international partner institutions. This is in line with the long ISU tradition of assisting developing countries as well as countries in transition, generally with support from external sources. The College of Agriculture is not a funding source for development activities; however, competitiveness in international grant and contract competition can be enhanced when ISU faculty and host country partners work together.

Fourth, we can contribute to Iowa economic development. This can be done by bringing international visitors to the state, helping to create linkages with potential trading partners, conducting research on international topics that directly impact Iowa, and by linking with Iowa businesses and government units and non-governmental institutions that are actively engaged internationally. We can contribute to the state's economy through two-way technology flows whereby Iowa simultaneously contributes and benefits from technology exchange.

Fifth, we will organize administratively to support student, faculty and staff involvement internationally. In our College, the office of Global Agriculture Programs coordinates our global engagement activities. The mission of Global Agriculture Programs in the College of Agriculture is to provide leadership and service in globalizing learning, discovery, and engagement programs that serve the people of the state, the nation and the world. The GAP staff:

For the world is not to be narrowed till it will go into the understanding..., but the understanding is to be expanded and opened till it can take in the image of the world.

—Francis Bacon

- provide administrative support to faculty and staff who lead study abroad programs;
- help faculty prepare proposals for international work (but GAP staff do not serve as PIs on projects);
- help host externally funded trainees as well as visitors that contact the Dean's office; and,
- advise on protocol issues, MOU's, security etc.

How will global engagement be valued?

International engagement is one of the priorities of the College as evidenced by the strategic plan. As such, it is considered an appropriate activity for students within the context of their curriculum or program of study, or, in the case of faculty and staff, within the context of their position responsibility statement or job description. For students, rewards are offered in the form of scholarships for international study. Recognition comes in the form of grades for participation in international courses and greater competitiveness in the job market.

For faculty, global engagement must fit within the framework of the position responsibility statement. The position responsibility statement does not specify a percentage of time for international activities because global engagement should be pursued as part of one of our three mission areas (teaching, research, extension/outreach). For promotion and tenure the following are examples of global engagement seen most frequently during the past three years.

He who does not travel does not know the value of men.

—Moorish proverb

- Assistant Professor: serving once as a leader-in training for a short-term study abroad program, presenting a paper at an international conferences, supervising an international graduate student.
- Associate Professor: serving as group leader on a study abroad program, writing a successful grant for international cooperation on a research project, making presentations to extension audiences about globally relevant topics, engaging in a Faculty Professional Development Assignment in another country, international consulting, presenting work at an international conference, serving as a group leader for a study abroad program.
- Full Professor: serving on the board of an international agricultural research center, serving as conference chair of an international conference, conducting research abroad with international collaborators, delivering a keynote address at an international conference, engaging in a Faculty Professional Development Assignment in another country, serving as group leader on a study abroad program, submitting grants to expand international educational exchange opportunities for students and faculty, international consulting, hosting international scientists.

***World peace will not
be built on empty
stomachs.***

—Norman Borlaug,
Nobel Peace Prize winner

Summary

The college is committed to global engagement because we believe quality across our three mission areas is enhanced when we interact with students, scholars and collaborators from other countries. We believe that we gain strength from welcoming diversity of thought, culture, political views, and experience onto our campus and into our community. We are committed because Iowa has a history of reaching out to help when challenges arise around the world. We are committed because global engagement offers us a laboratory for preparing students for the globally interdependent future they will encounter. Finally, we are committed because, in keeping with our land grant traditions, we have a responsibility to share our research-based knowledge with those who can benefit from it, whether it be a farm family competing in the global economy, a foreign student seeking training to bring back to her/his country, or a struggling institution in a developing country.

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