Do you teach courses with a global or cross-cultural focus? Do you conduct international research? Do you work with local communities? Are you interested in aligning your courses or academic program with USF’s Strategic Plan? Do you think students need a global perspective? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you will want to learn about the USF Global Citizens Project and the opportunities available to faculty.

The Global Citizens Project is a university-wide initiative aimed at preparing our students to succeed in a global society. What is a global citizen? A global citizen draws on a host of abilities and understandings to engage meaningfully with diverse people, places, events, challenges, and opportunities. Those of us who incorporate an international, global, or cross-cultural focus into our courses individually contribute to students’ development of these global abilities and understandings. But how explicit are we in this? Do our students understand that when they learn about colonialism in a history course or population dynamics in a statistics class, that a foundation for understanding contemporary global issues is being set? And for those of us who might not incorporate a global perspective into our courses, should we? We know that the kinds of competencies necessary to be successful in today’s global society cannot be learned in one course, let alone one class session. So how are we connecting our courses with others to reinforce students’ global abilities and understandings? Perhaps most importantly, what are the abilities and understandings of a global citizen? The Global Citizens Project addresses all these questions and more.

Through many formal and informal conversations with faculty and students over the past year and half, the Global Citizens Project has defined three primary global competencies with six accompanying student learning outcomes within the area of global citizenship. By incorporating these learning outcomes into our courses, we can “globalize” our curriculum and explicitly connect courses across departments and colleges. Wouldn’t it be nice to know that the engineering student in your anthropology course found your course useful? Or that your chemistry program was relevant to the humanities? A shared set of global learning outcomes infused throughout the undergraduate experience can do that. By incorporating the learning outcomes of the Global Citizenship Project into our curriculum, we can also align our courses and programs to the Strategic Plan, since goal #1 is to prepare “well-educated and highly skilled global citizens.”

Mark your calendars—the Global Citizens Project and all the opportunities associated with it officially launch in the fall of 2015. Please check out the website at <usf.edu/gcp> to learn more (the About and Faculty sections will be of most interest to readers of this newsletter), and of course if you have questions, feel free to contact me at karladavis@usf.edu or 974-4051. As director of the Global Citizens Project, I look forward to working with you!

Dr. Karla Davis-Salazar is an Associate Professor of Anthropology in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies. Her current interests lie in pedagogy, curriculum development, and assessment, among other higher education issues, especially for undergraduate students. As part of these interests, she developed and now directs USF’s Global Citizenship General Education Program, which provides students with a globally focused general education curriculum culminating in a significant study abroad experience.