# USF Faculty Perceptions and Practices in the Internationalization of the Curriculum

2013-14 USF Faculty Learning Community Project

## Purpose of the FLC

Determine USF faculty member perceptions and practices related to the internationalization of the curriculum.

## Context

The USF Strategic Plan for 2013-2018 emphasizes the need to graduate "well-educated and highly skilled global citizens." Internationalization of the curriculum is one of the many elements of a university plan for providing students with the content and skills necessary to develop a more global graduate. In the early stages of the FLC meetings the group thought it would be important to determine how USF faculty members perceived internationalization and what they were doing about it in the classroom. The group developed a survey with both quantitative and qualitative elements that would provide a "faculty voice" to the internationalization process at USF.

## Knowledge Base

Internationalization of the university, and the curriculum, is how higher education responds to globalization. A widely accepted definition of internationalization is that of Jane Knight, "Internationalization at the national/sector/institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education." (*Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization remodeled: definition, approaches, and rationales. Journal of Studies in International Education, 8(1), 5-31*)

Individual faculty member action at the course and program levels is essential for the development of a more global perspective for the institution and the graduation of more globally competent students. (*Brustein, W. ( 2009) in Ross Lewin, The Handbook of Practice and Research in Study Abroad, Hoboken, NJ: Routledge Press.)*

Surveys of faculty members indicate a general acceptance of the importance of providing more international and global content for students; however, this acceptance varies by discipline area. The greatest support for internationalization of coursework is from faculty members in the humanities and social sciences, with less support from faculty members in the mathematics and basic sciences disciplines. (*Siaya, L., & Hayward, F. M. (2003). Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education.*)

## Quantitative Analysis

### Do you incorporate international perspectives in your teaching? 30% said "no" 70% said "yes"

Of those indicating they did not incorporate international perspectives in their teaching, 26% were from non-science disciplines, 32% were from science disciplines and 42% did not provide information about their discipline. Assessment was accomplished via: Written papers (69%), Class participation (62%), Oral presentation (49%), Quizzes (%), Exams (53%).

Females were significantly more likely to incorporate international components into their classes (p=.01). Additional analyses revealed *no significant differences between males and females in the number of hours of course time spent on international topics, perceived description of course focus (international component, significant unit, elements threaded and entire course) and type of assessment (written paper, class participation, oral presentation, quiz or exam).*

A Chi-Square revealed a significant difference in the number responding "yes" to the first question and years of teaching experience. There was *a significant difference between the group of faculty with experience in the 10-15 year range and the group of faculty with 5 and under years of experience. p=.002.* Faculty in the 10-15 year range were more likely to answer yes, they did incorporate international components.

**Which describes your class (with respect to the amount of international perspectives)?**

International component N=28 (29%)
Significant unit N=15 (16%)
Element threaded N=32 (34%)
Entire course N=20 (21%)

## Selected Qualitative Themes

### What do you believe it means to internationalize the curriculum?

•Comments indicating uncertainty about what it means to internationalize the curriculum or indicating it isn't relevant to a discipline (N=10 (9%))
•Comments indicating a more comprehensive view of internationalization (N=27 (25%). Statements more closely related to understanding that internationalization is a way of thinking ; going beyond adding some international content to course.
•Comments indicating the addition of some international content, not so much focused on a more comprehensive view of internationalization (N=73 (66%))

### What are the most important global topics for you?

- Topics that were discipline oriented (N=58 (50%))
- Topics generally focused around cultural diversity (N=31 (27%))
- Topics on environmental and sustainability issues (N=17 (15%))
- Topics that emphasized women's issues and human rights issues (N=12 (8%))

### Describe briefly how you incorporate international perspectives into your courses.

- Readings, class discussions, in-class activities, compare/contrast (USA/other), case studies (54)
- Visual media: film, videos, documentaries (9)
- I do not (8)
- Encourage international students to offer their perspectives during lecture (4)
- International guest speakers (1)
- Encourage students to use international resources (databases, media, libraries) (1)
- Incorporate my(faculty member) experiences abroad (1)
- Assignments (research papers, exams, quizzes) with an international focus (6)

**In many cases, respondents did not complete some sections of the surveys, so the results are best described as exploratory and informative. The results may provide guidance for future research on the topic.**

## Method

The FLC developed and distributed an online survey that would seek both qualitative and qualitative data on USF Tampa campus faculty perceptions and practices related to the internationalization of the curriculum. The survey was distributed to all USF Tampa Campus chairpersons with the request to distribute to their faculty. 143 faculty members completed it.

## Reflecting on the survey results and USF's strategic goal of graduating global citizens

- Well over 70% of the respondents to this survey indicated they were including some international perspectives in their courses, indicating that there is an awareness that students will need a broader perspective in a global economy. Yet given the broad array of definitions and the diversity of topics seen as important to the faculty, is there enough of a coherent academic program for USF to achieve its mission goal statement of producing global citizens?

- The instructional strategies used to incorporate international perspectives suggest a continuance of previous instructional approaches where content is added on, not focusing on the broader theme of creating a more global perspective.

- What university wide process can be initiated to coalesce the richness of faculty interests to better insure an academic program that will better increase the probability of graduating global citizens?


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