



# Glob Comm


By Christopher Connell

A young man with brown hair, wearing a blue and white checkered button-down shirt, is shown in profile from the chest up, looking upwards and to the left. He has his arms crossed. The background is a gymnasium with a wall of ladders. The ladders are white and are leaning against a wall that has sections of red, yellow, and blue. The lighting is bright and even.


In tough times,  
internationalization  
poses challenges  
and opportunities  
for community  
colleges

# Global Community





When an Eastern Iowa Community College team returned from helping a Ukrainian university develop a business curriculum, one professor introduced a new slide to a lecture teaching Iowa students how to use software tools. “It showed the little town called Drohobych where we worked,” said Jeff Armstrong, an Eastern Iowa administrator. “She was teaching them how to use PowerPoint, but also giving them a geography lesson about western Ukraine. The students didn’t necessarily know that, but they’d ask, ‘How do you pronounce that name?’ and ‘What are the people doing in that picture?’ It’s the multiplier effect.”



The multiplier effect is what hundreds of the nation’s 1,200 community colleges are hoping for as they mount efforts to prepare students not just for careers or transfer to universities but also to become “global citizens,” as many mission statements call it. The means vary, but they include enrolling more international students, providing education abroad opportunities for domestic students, sending faculty abroad on research and development projects, and finding ways to infuse international content into courses from auto mechanics to funeral services to business administration.

This is not a new quest. Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr., then-head of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), exhorted colleagues to think internationally in the 1960s and 1970s during the heyday of community college expansion. U.S. Commissioner of Education Ernest L. Boyer, in a prescient 1977 speech on the interconnectedness of the planet, decried as “disturbing nonsense” the notion that international education “is senior college turf.”

The number of international students enrolled in community colleges spurted 10.5 percent in 2008–09 to 95,785. Two-year institutions now enroll one-seventh of all international students pursuing degrees in the United States. Although the welcome mat is out for these students and the welcome revenues they bring, internationalization remains a hard slog for two-year institutions. The situation has been exacerbated by recent cuts in state funding and other stringencies. In the current fragile economy, even flows of international students are in jeopardy, although community colleges’ price advantage could make these institutions more attractive for those seeking undergraduate degrees.

Madeleine F. Green, the American Council on Education’s vice president for international initiatives, said that by the wide range of measures in ACE’s *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses: 2008 Edition*, “associate colleges are not doing well in internationalization.” The report, based on a survey

of more than 400 two-year institutions, found that on average they:

- Devoted limited staff and infrastructure to internationalization
- Did not stress international education in their mission statements
- Had no requirements for foreign language study or globally focused courses
- Offered some education abroad opportunities, but participation remained low
- Rarely considered international work or experience when hiring and promoting faculty

Still, the situation has improved somewhat since the ACE’s first *Mapping Internationalization* study in 2001, Green said. “The world has changed and the conversation has changed profoundly. College leaders and public officials all at least understand and say the right things about globally competent students and internationalization.”

“There’s always time lag between recognition and action. Campuses change slowly,” added Green. “Internationalization is not just about putting in a course here or there or even doubling your students going abroad from 5 to 10 percent. It’s about a different mindset and that’s a big change.”

Other prominent educators exude optimism on this front.

Under Secretary of Education Martha Kanter, second in charge at the U.S. Department of Education and the first from the ranks of community colleges to hold that post, said, “We are increasingly becoming international centers for higher education for the first two years.” She formerly was chancellor of the Foothill-DeAnza Community College District in California’s Silicon Valley, which enrolled 3,831 international students in 2008–09. Since these students pay full costs, “it’s a win-win for everybody,” said Kanter. “We are part of a globalizing society. The faculty really felt strongly this was a deep and rich part of the curriculum .... We should be welcoming

people from other countries, sharing what we have and learning from them.”

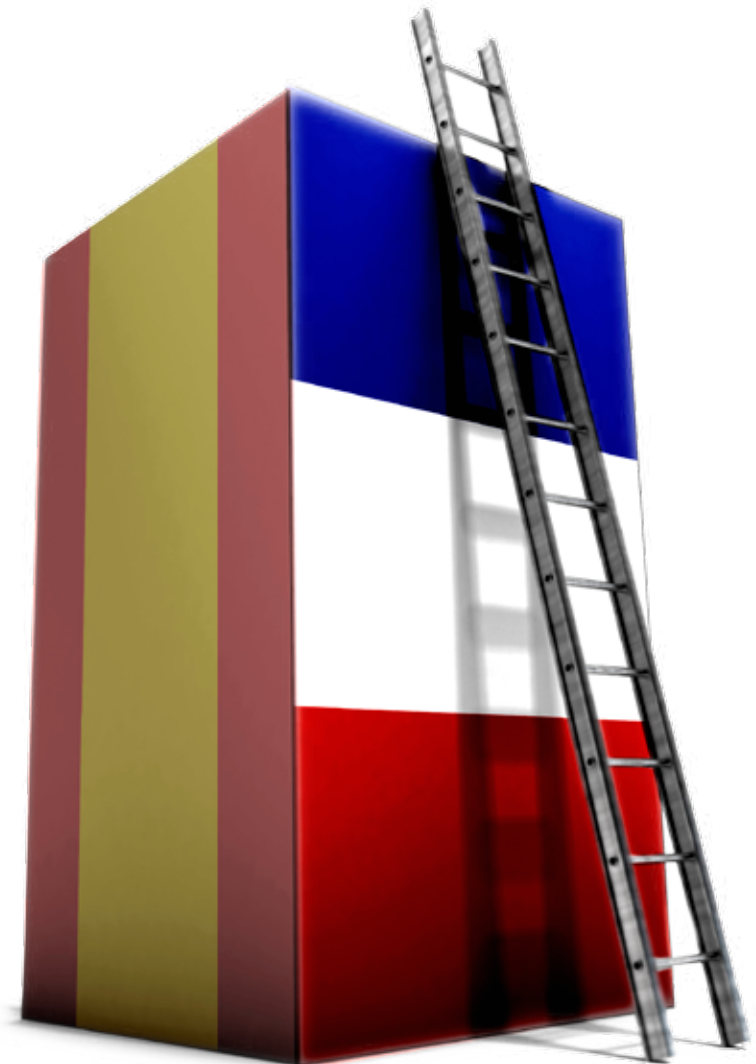
Allan E. Goodman, president and CEO of the Institute of International Education (IIE), predicts that “community colleges are going to be a big part of our future.” Already they figure more prominently in “the thinking and doing about international education. They are developing their own foreign policies. They are reaching out to particular student groups around the world because they realize how enriching it is for the American students who are there.” Some community college winners of IIE’s Andrew Heiskell Awards for Innovation in International Education have arranged for auto mechanics and nursing students to spend two weeks in other countries studying how those skills are taught there, he said. “That actually fits directly into the curriculum of a community college. I think we’ll see a lot more of that because last time I looked they repair cars in other countries, and there are sick people, too. There’s a lot more opportunities and I think the colleges are going to explore and find them.”

## Minuscule Education Abroad Numbers

Community colleges enroll 6.5 million students, including nearly 95,785 of the 671,616 international students who studied in the United States in 2008–09. The export numbers are far less robust. Although almost half of all U.S. undergraduates are community college students, these institutions send a minuscule number—about 6,600 each year—on education abroad programs. Some community colleges are providing scholarships and banding together to offer opportunities, but with older students who often are working and raising families, “even short-term programs are tough nuts for community colleges,” said ACE’s Green. Even a two-week education abroad experience may cost as much as a year’s tuition, which averaged \$2,402 at two-year public institutions in 2008–09, according to the College Board.

Rosalind Latiner Raby, director of California Colleges for International Education (CCIE), a nonprofit consortium of 84 community colleges, said the real barrier is a lack of institutional support and commitment. In a 2008 report for the Institute of International Education on “Expanding Education Abroad at U.S. Community Colleges,” Raby wrote, “The predominant issue preventing college students from studying abroad is not student interest. Rather, it is the lack of institutionalization of study abroad.” Most community colleges do not have a professionally staffed education abroad office and “if they aren’t offering opportunities,

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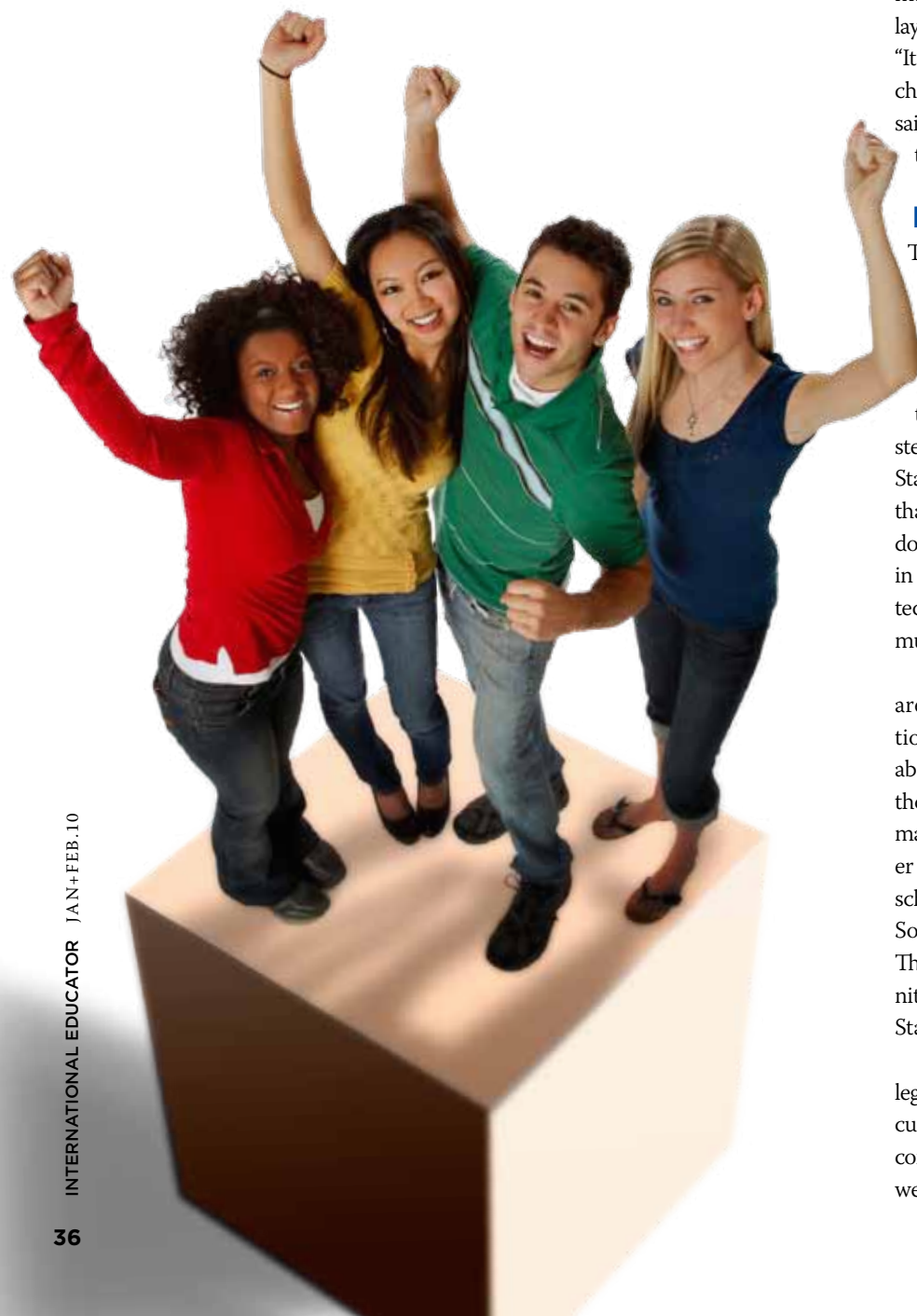
The grim financial picture poses further challenges for two-year colleges, and not just for education abroad programs. “Oftentimes when there are budget cuts, international is one of the areas that gets cut,” said Judy Irwin, director of international programs and services for the AACC, which has scaled back its international recruitment fairs. Irwin recently took a group from 21 colleges to Vietnam, fertile ground for recruiters. In the past they would have stopped in several other countries, but the trip also would have cost three times as much. Still, Irwin believes that community colleges are laying the groundwork for further internationalization. “It’s not just recruitment or study abroad or faculty exchange or enriching the curriculum; it’s all of them,” said Irwin. “They may only be doing one of (these), but they are trying to put certain things in place.”

### **Help from the State Department**

They are getting help from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Culture Affairs (ECA) and its EducationUSA network of 450 advising centers in 170 countries, which are singing the merits of community colleges for career and technical training and associate degrees and as a stepping stone to four-year colleges and universities. State launched a Community College Initiative in 2007 that brings disadvantaged students from Egypt and a dozen other developing countries for a year of training in fields such as business administration, information technology, nursing, and tourism. More than 50 community colleges have hosted 900 students.

Community college students on Pell Grants are also eligible for Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarships of up to \$5,000 for education abroad. Gilman targets minority students, especially those studying science, technology, engineering, and math, and those bound for Muslim countries and other nontraditional destinations. Recently the Gilman scholarships were opened up for summer study in the Southern hemisphere and the so-called STEM fields. That was specifically done “to attract more community college students,” said Paul Hiemstra, director of State’s Global Educational Programs Office.

ECA is also trying to convince more community college faculty to apply for Fulbright fellowships. There are currently 15, and two new slots in Russia reserved for community college faculty and administrators recently were added. Applications have tripled. “A lot of com-





munity college faculty assume the Fulbright program is not for them. We're doing everything we can to make sure that they know that's not the case," said Hiemstra.

## Under the Radar?

ACE's Green believes some community colleges feel a need to keep their international activities "under the radar" lest their boards ask, "Why are you messing around with this stuff? There's work to do right here in River City?" J. Noah Brown, president of the Association of Community College Trustees, said, "I'd be less than honest if I said that doesn't happen. It happens quite a bit and it's a constant struggle, particularly when the economy goes down" and people feel threatened by globalization. But Brown said, "That is a continuing challenge for trustees, absolutely. But if you go and talk to some of the businesses in that same community, they understand this. Part of the trustees' job is to be an advocate within the community and help (it) understand the things that go on that impact that community."

At the same time, other countries are hungry to learn from the success of the American community college model, Brown said. "There is great interest from around the world in how that model might be molded and shaped and frankly exploited in their own countries," he said. "They're really beginning to understand that these colleges are real economic engines in their communities." Brown went to the Middle East in June with a U.S. State Department academic delegation. "That was a profound experience for me," he said. There was widespread recognition in the region that allowing "more people to get educated and trained and become successful is by its very nature a stabilizing force."

Goodman said one reason for his optimism that community colleges will play a larger role in international education is that after years of investments in primary and secondary education, developing countries now need places to send their increasing number of graduates. "More and more are going to come to the United States, and...discover that community colleges are a good way to start," he said. Community colleges also can expand their faculty and classes more readily than research universities, said Goodman.

They may also be more welcoming for students whose English may not yet be up to most U.S. universities' standards. "What community colleges offer are not only the same courses at an accredited institution at lower cost, but also the opportunity to learn English and to be able to come with a low or no TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score," said AACC's Irwin. "They may have to take a year of ESL, but most of our colleges have strong intensive English programs."

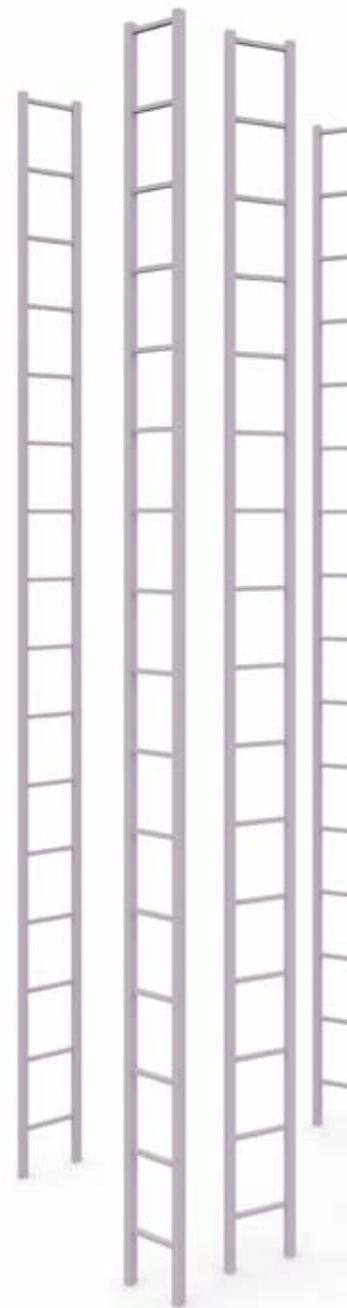
ACE's Green said community colleges do have the potential to attract more international students with lower tuition and smaller class sizes. "On the other hand, if you're an 18-year-old and you're going to a commuter, urban campus where everybody is 27 or older," that may be a disadvantage she said. "It depends on the college, the location, and the facilities."

## More than an 'Open Door'

Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), one of the nation's largest, counts 1,663 international students among its enrollment of 42,633 on a half-dozen campuses in suburbs near Washington, DC. NOVA is the only community college that has signed up for ACE's Internationalization Laboratory, in which institutions work closely with ACE over a year or more to develop action plans. NOVA's Internationalization Task Force produced in 2007 a detailed blueprint for pulling together diffuse activities at its separate campuses. Internationalization, it said, "should mean more than simply having an 'open door'" for immigrants or allowing a few individuals to promote "isolated international initiatives." The task force went on:

What it should mean is that all students gain worldwide perspectives from their NOVA education; that all classes appreciate intercultural differences; that faculty and staff view the scope of their professional lives globally; that the college provides means for students to have learning experiences overseas and for faculty to gain professional development beyond traditional locations; that services to students reflect multicultural considerations; that our learning environments echo multicultural themes and images; and that the entire NOVA learning experience be one from which students, faculty, staff, and visitors alike draw an excitement about the world microcosm that is NOVA.

Paul J. McVeigh, Jr., then a dean of humanities and sciences, and now associate vice president for global studies and programs, spearheaded this push. Creating his new position was among the task force's 15 recommendations. Looking back now, McVeigh said some things are moving faster than others, which "is the nature of a big institution. The fact that I moved into this position is a way for a lot of people to say, 'Well, it's taken care of now. We can move on to something else.' That becomes a challenge for me sometimes to get it back on the front burner." McVeigh works out of the executive vice president's office without a staff of his own. He chairs a Global Studies Committee of faculty and administrators that works on forging "a globally conscious curriculum." A separate office handles visas and services for NOVA's large contingent of international



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students. The 2007 task force reported that some faculty had given up leading students on education abroad “because they were no longer willing to navigate the college’s complex and burdensome travel policies and unable to assume the trips’ financial liabilities.” NOVA has no full-time education abroad staff and sends only a smattering of students on education abroad programs.

Raby said it is not unusual for a community college strong in one area of internationalization to be weak in others. She often finds that colleges with large international enrollments “are not doing any work in international development or internationalizing curriculum. It’s a strange situation.”

### **Making Education Abroad ‘Visible’**

From the coasts to the heartland, some two-year colleges are making strides in a broad range of international activities. Santa Barbara City College (SBCC) sent more than 1,200 students on its education abroad programs between 2002 and 2008, although the number has dropped from a high of 282 in 2003 to 183 in 2008. “We had to cancel two (new) summer programs this last summer, but we still have had very strong numbers for our semester programs,” said Carola Smith, senior director of international programs. SBCC has offered classes in China, Chile, Mexico, Vietnam, Russia, New Zealand, and Vietnam, as well as across Europe. This past fall it sent students to study Spanish language and Latin American culture for 13 weeks in Chile and Argentina, and in the spring two groups of SBCC students will be in Rome and Cambridge, England, studying art, history, political science, and writing. In summer 2010 classes will be offered in Costa Rica (Spanish), Vietnam (teaching English as a foreign language), and Vienna, Munich, and Prague (marketing). The costs range up to \$7,700, but Smith said that “would be comparable to what students would have to spend for a semester living here in Santa Barbara.” SBCC provides \$500 to \$1,000 scholarships for all students with demonstrated

need, and the programs are vigorously promoted on campus. “We try to make these programs very visible,” said Smith, who first came to SBCC as an international student from Germany. “Our faculty are very actively involved in the marketing. They do a lot of presentations in classrooms. It’s always reassuring for students to meet the faculty who will be leading the programs. We do a lot of posters and tables on campus.” She also reminds incoming students and parents that education abroad will look good on their resumes.

Only a handful of community colleges are among the 300 institutions belonging to the Forum on Education Abroad, which sets standards of good practices for this field. But Brian Whalen, the Forum president and CEO, also is bullish about their potential. “I do think that education abroad activity will increase at community colleges in the future, likely after the economy turns around. There is exciting work being done at many community colleges in the education abroad area, but it needs time to grow and mature,” said Whalen.

John Halder, president and executive director of Community Colleges for International Development (CCID), said, “The financial realities are putting a halt to activities, even though there are more community colleges’ designing study abroad programs and more faculty anxiously wanting to put programs together than ever before.” CCID, a consortium of 160 colleges based at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, runs collaborative programs using a “Troika” model developed by Michael Brennan, international education director at Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, Florida. CCID secures three-year commitments from at least three colleges to send students on a joint education abroad program and to fund scholarships of at least \$750 per student.

“We’re trying to put in place mechanisms that make this easier for students to participate,” said Halder. “We have nursing students going to Ecuador to spend a week in Quito in a clinic and then another week in a clinic in the rain forest. We’ve had sustainability and international marketing programs in Denmark, and emerging economy programs in Ukraine and China.” About 100 students participate each year, although Halder is girding for a drop in 2010.

### **Putting out the Welcome Mat**

Eighteen community colleges enrolled more than 1,000 international students in 2008–09. The leader by a wide margin was the Houston Community College System, with 5,580 international students in 2008–09. Explaining its draw, Gigi Do, senior director for international initiatives said, “Houston is a very

international city,” with living costs far below cities on the East and West coasts. Do came to the United States as an 8-year-old Vietnamese refugee as the Saigon government fell to communist North Vietnam. Today Do travels regularly to Vietnam to oversee HCC’s partnership with Saigon Institute of Technology. Some 220 Vietnamese students have received HCC degrees since classes started in 2003. HCC is also working with King Saud University in Saudi Arabia to help it gain U.S. accreditation, and it has links to other universities in Costa Rica, Mexico, Brazil, Bermuda, Pakistan, and India. “Workforce training is a big thing for us now,” said Do. “We’re training the trainers.”

Do local taxpayers or the board of trustees ever question these international activities?

“They’re supportive because when we work globally, the costs are being paid by our international partner schools. We don’t use our own resources to go overseas,” said Do. HCC actually turns a profit that it taps “to help our own American students study abroad (and) do faculty international development.”

## South Africa and Salzburg

Bronx Community College (BCC), part of the City University of New York system, and its National Center for Educational Alliances worked extensively on Ford Foundation projects in post-apartheid South Africa aimed at improving the connections among its schools, training colleges, and universities. It now is part of a new partnership funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to help a dozen South African training colleges better prepare young people for jobs. Springfield Technical Community College in Massachusetts is also part of that effort, led by AACC and ACE.

While continuing its work on national and international articulation projects, BCC has stepped up efforts to internationalize its own offerings in the Bronx. “What was bothering us was that we weren’t benefiting the college enough from all this work. We really needed to find a way to bring this into the college,” said Barbara Schaefer-Pegel, director of the National Center for Educational Alliances. BCC has sent 35 faculty and staff to the Salzburg Global Seminars in Austria for an intensive week of study of international issues, and has paid for students to go there as well. “We’ve begun to develop global learning objectives,” she said. “Our goal is to reach all our students.”

Eastern Iowa Community College District has worked on development projects from the Ukraine and Georgia to India and Thailand, but in recent years has found it harder to win those contracts from USAID. “If you want to work in Thailand, you have to have specific expertise in AIDs. And there’s a lot more competition for those dollars,” said Jeff Armstrong, interim president of Muscatine Community College. “With turnover and a lot of new faculty and staff, we’re kind of revisiting all those things right now, and talking about how you develop a new plan and reenergize people.”

Skagit Valley College, near the Olympic Mountains and Puget Sound in northwest Washington state, prizes a faculty exchange with Beijing Foreign Studies University that dates back 20 years.

Each sends a professor to teach at the other’s campus. “Boy, the people that come back are thrilled with the experience,” said President Gary Tollefson. “Not only do they have a China experience, but because BFSU brings in what they term foreign experts from all over the globe, our faculty are engaged with people literally from all over the world. These people come back just cranked up.”

Skagit Valley endured a 10 percent, \$2 million cut in its state appropriation this current academic year. It let go one of the four persons who work in its international programs office. But the institution managed to send 15 students and an instructor this past summer on a 2-and-a-half-week trip to China to help with rebuilding in a mountain village of Sichuan Province where a terrible earthquake struck in 2008 (the students paid \$2,000 of the trip costs). Tollefson is looking for ways to enable more Skagit Valley students to gain such international experiences. One possibility he’s exploring is tapping some of the tuition revenues brought in by the college’s 215 international students to provide scholarships for education abroad. “We think it’s important for our students to experience a whole range of different cultures, different languages, different perspectives,” he said.

## Global Citizenship Requirement

Santa Monica College instituted a global citizenship requirement in 2008 for all associate in arts degrees. Students must earn three credits in global studies, ecological literacy, or American cultures, or by education abroad. Superintendent and President Chui L. Tsang and the trustees have made global citizenship a top priority. But the impetus for the curricular requirement came from the faculty, said Dean of International Studies Kelley Brayton. The Academic Senate embraced a goal of producing graduates who understand peoples, customs, and cultures in other parts of the world; who appreciate how interdependent our lives are; and who are “committed to combining one’s learning with a dedication to foster a livable, sustainable world.”

Santa Monica, which enrolls more than 2,800 international students, also sends faculty and staff to the Salzburg Global Seminars—34 in the past three years—and it recently won a \$178,000 Title VI-A grant from the U.S. Department of Education to further develop its international studies and language programs. Brayton heads an international programs staff of 25 that includes an associate dean.

Even in tough times it has friends in high places. It is the alma mater of a former body-builder who enrolled at the college after emigrating from Austria in 1968. Arnold Schwarzenegger went on to become Mr. Universe, a Hollywood film star and, in 2003, governor of California. Speaking at a recent gathering of community college trustees and presidents from across the nation, Schwarzenegger said, “I am so appreciative of the extraordinary education I got at Santa Monica City College.”

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