


# Internationalizing Best Practices

## LESSONS LEARNED

By Charlotte West





**T**HE CORE TENETS OF CAMPUS INTERNATIONALIZATION—with the goal of welcoming students from abroad and creating a new generation of global citizens who will contribute to the advancement of social and economic development for all—have taken on new meaning in an uncertain political environment.

These three case studies from previous winners of the Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization highlight not only sound educational practices but also the value that society can derive from international education, an important contribution to the dialogue about the need to develop and advocate for a strong U.S. international education policy.

### North Carolina State University

#### ***New Growth and Focus***

Since winning the Simon Award in 2014, North Carolina State University (NC State) in Raleigh, N.C., has changed the name of its Office of International Affairs to the Office of Global Engagement (NC State Global). “The name change reflects a switch in emphasis from cross-border activities to engaging global learning on our campus and local communities,” says Bailian Li, senior vice provost for global engagement.

The office has also extended its reach—both on campus and overseas—with the number of full-time employees growing from 40 in 2014 to 65 in 2018. Li says they’ve expanded the scope of their internationalization activities and increased the visibility of the global engagement office through the office’s own entrepreneurial initiatives as well as increased support from the university.

#### ***University-Wide Center for Study Abroad***

One major effort is the establishment of the NC State European Center in Prague, which grew out of a study abroad program for majors in the College of Design. For years, the university sent architecture majors to



**NC State students explore Prague, where their school has partnerships with Czech universities.**

study in the Czech Republic during the summer, and in 2005 that summer program evolved into the Prague Institute—the first overseas branch of any North Carolina university.

The original model involved sending NC State faculty abroad with NC State students in Prague in what Li describes as an isolated program. More recently, they have developed strategic partnerships with Charles University, Czech Technical University, Czech University of Life Sciences, and the University of Economics in Prague to develop a university-wide study

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**The NC State European Center in Prague is a hub for both students and faculty who are forging new global partnerships.**

abroad center. The center enables engagement with local faculty and offers coursework for students in all majors, including science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

The role of NC State Global has changed since management of the center was transferred from the College of Design. Whereas NC State Global used to primarily provide logistical support for study abroad, they are now taking a lead in the academic sphere, especially in the development of coursework. Over spring break 2017, 15 faculty members who were interested in developing new courses went to Prague to attend a global symposium. They further developed their syllabi and made local connections for their own research in what Li describes as “intentional, strategic partnership building for research.”

### **Funding for Global Activities**

With increased financial support from the chancellor’s office, NC State’s study abroad scholarships increased from approximately \$220,000 in 2014 to \$530,000 in 2018—an increase of nearly 140 percent. NC State Global also set a target of \$1 million in scholarships.

Li says they initially encountered resistance from NC State’s University Advancement department, which was wary of letting other offices approach potential donors. By allowing the



advancement office to take credit for any fundraising, NC Global added three global funding categories for donors to choose from when allocating their gifts: study abroad scholarship support, global strategic initiatives supporting faculty travel, and international student support. “It’s still very early, but at least now it’s on people’s radars that they can donate money to global activities,” Li says.

## **University of Tampa**

### **Experiential Learning**

Although international activities at the University of Tampa (UT) began in the early 1990s, it was the adoption of a quality enhancement plan (QEP), Building International Competence, in 2005 that set the stage for comprehensive internationalization at UT, which was recognized with the 2016 Simon Award. The institution leveraged its accreditation process through the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to make internationalization a strategic priority on campus.

The first QEP helped establish the International Programs Office (IPO), which oversees education abroad, international student and scholar services, and on-campus global programming. It also provided support for international faculty development

## **Best Practices for Campus Internationalization**

### **Play to your strengths.**

“In addition to having strengths in global education, we have nationally recognized strengths in community-based learning. So [the idea behind] our Global-Local Initiative is build on those two areas and offer possibilities for students for sequential, cumulative experiences. ... We have this Global-Local partnership now, where a student may be interested in public health and will, for example, do an internship in Monte Verde, Costa Rica—that’s one of our hubs abroad—and will then come back, reflect upon it, and then may do an internship or community-based learning course focused on public health in Holyoke or Springfield. We want to offer these pathways to students to have two comparative global-local community-based experiences. We want students to see that the global isn’t just over there. The global can be here too.”

—Eva Paus, Mount Holyoke

### **Offer services to students that also support the local community.**

“We started a passport office on campus. The local post office is overwhelmed, and our students spent a lot of time waiting to get a passport. Seventy percent of those we serve are our own students and their families, but we also serve the community. That’s a way for us to recruit local people to participate in our friendship and host family programs. The local engagement piece has been very important and the passport office also generated some funding for international student scholarships.”

—Bailian Li,  
NC State University

### **Communicate with parents to support internationalization efforts.**

“Not only is it important for parents to support their student’s decision to internationalize their degree, but it is equally important to make parents aware of problems that might arise throughout the journey or process. We begin our rapport with parents at admission open houses and continue reaching out to them through a communication plan that includes predeparture, health and wellness information, orientation, and scans of the external environment. We reach out to parents through traditional approaches including email, face-to-face meetings, a parent portal, Skype, and phone conversations. Including parents as a well-defined stakeholder group helps build trust and improves communication during a critical moment.”

—Marca Bear, University of Tampa

programs, the development of an international studies certificate, and the creation of a wide variety of faculty-led travel courses.

In 2016 UT launched a new QEP, Learning by Doing, which focuses on experiential learning. Marca Marie Bear, PhD, associate dean of the International Programs Office, says the new QEP has allowed them to build international components into internships, service learning, and undergraduate research. “Whereas the first QEP was completely focused on international, this one is broader but complements everything we do, which keeps the momentum going,” she says.

Examples of programs include a research abroad program in entrepreneurship in Swaziland, a student teaching program in Northern Ireland, and clinical programs for nurses in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

The QEP aims to help students develop critical thinking, discipline-based knowledge and skills, and written and oral communication. “We’re seeing a dovetailing [between international and experiential learning],” Bear says. “The education abroad intersects with internships, service learning, and research. We’re trying to show to potential graduate schools and potential employers that these are the dimensions that our students have upon graduation. We’re just being really intentional about building



Roman Barber participated in UT’s first-year abroad program in Seville, Spain, in 2017.

it into our programming throughout the four years because in some way, shape, or form, [our students] will have acquired these dimensions.”

### Early Experiences Abroad

Along with the launch of the new QEP, UT created a four-year study abroad pipeline that highlights opportunities for students to go abroad early in their college career.

UT initially created two first-year abroad programs: a semester-long program in Ireland or Spain and a summer pre-enrollment program in Costa Rica aimed at first-year students. Bear says that students who were involved in first-year abroad programs show repeat participation in other study abroad programs, using their experiences as a springboard for junior-level internships. Her office is now increasing focus on programming for sophomores, including a travel course to Cuba. “If a student for whatever reason can’t participate their first year, we’re giving them solid options that are designed by our faculty at the sophomore level,” says Bear.

She adds, “Advancing internationalization goals when there are so many external variables and circumstances to consider can be challenging, but it strengthens our resolve to work within the community to graduate students with the global skills, knowledge, and attitudes to contribute to our collective understanding of the world we share.”

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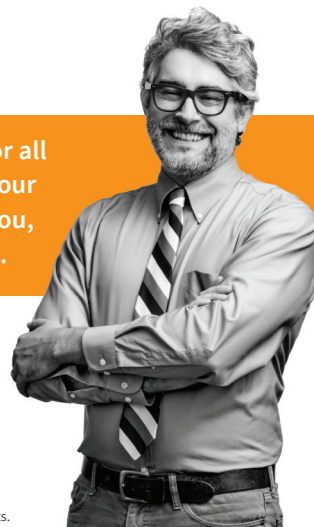
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\*From a 12/17 survey conducted by Intead International Education Advantage, LLC, Salem, MA, for ECE. Results based on responses from 1,105 recent ECE applicants.



Students at Mount Holyoke focused on social change for sustainable communities at the school's Global Challenges conference in February.

## Mount Holyoke College

### Impact Assessment

Mount Holyoke, the women's college in South Hadley, Massachusetts, that won the Simon Award in 2015, is focused on assessing the impact rather than the outcomes—the number of participants—of their international initiatives. To date, they have made great strides in assessing the study abroad experience. Eva Paus, who is a professor of economics and serves as the Carol Hoffman Collins director of the McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives, says the shift to impact assessment was born out of a desire to know whether the college was meeting the global education goals it aims to achieve. After surveying several tools for assessing study abroad, they adapted a self-assessment instrument used by another liberal arts college. Since 2015, all study abroad participants have been required to complete a survey once they return to campus.

Paus says the survey results have led them to focus more on the link between study abroad experiences and careers: “[We found that] studying abroad for a semester or year had a profound impact on students’ personal development as it advanced their independence and initiative, their ability to communicate across difference, and their willingness to learn from people who

are different from them. These skills and dispositions are highly valuable in students’ job searches. So we have put more emphasis on the value of study abroad for careers.”

They have adjusted their study abroad programming, particularly the predeparture orientation, based on the assessment results: “We flag these areas of potential impact much more explicitly,” says Paus, “and provide students with a broader framework through which they can filter their study abroad experience much more intentionally than before.”

### Faculty Engagement on Campus

Along with assessing global learning outcomes, the McCulloch Center also launched a survey about faculty’s international engagement, which has provided the basis for new initiatives such as course connections between faculty members in different departments. With persistence, the center received responses from nearly 90 percent of the faculty.

The results showed that since 2012, 43 percent of faculty had collaborated with an institution outside the United States, and 51 percent had conducted research with a global focus. Seventy-eight percent had lived outside the United States for an extended period of time. And 42 percent of faculty expressed interest in potentially linking their course with a faculty member who is teaching a course in a language other than English.

“What’s really striking is how many of our faculty are involved in global education through different venues—their own research, teaching, and personal experiences. Together with the fact that we collectively speak over 50 languages, it speaks to a disposition of openness to different cultural and national perspectives,” Paus says.

The faculty survey is part of a larger effort to make visible the wealth and interconnectedness of the college’s many internationalization initiatives. The McCulloch Center also recently hired a half-time communication specialist in global education who is tasked with highlighting the many venues and examples of internationalization at Mount Holyoke, through faculty and student examples.

“Even though we are a small, residential college, that doesn’t mean that everybody knows what everybody else is doing. Having this centralized resource allows us to connect people and invite them in when we are trying to launch a new initiative,” Paus explains.

She adds that international education on her campus, as well as across the international education field more broadly, has taken on even more significance recently. “In the face of rising nationalism and prejudice in this country and elsewhere, international education becomes so much more important if we really want to speak to and promote a greater sense of shared humanity,” she argues. “Our college’s exceptional international diversity offers pervasive opportunities to engage across difference on an individual basis and thus [students] learn to appreciate differences and become more open to different ways of thinking.” ■

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

NC State in Prague  
<https://prague.ncsu.edu/>

Mount Holyoke Global-Local Initiative  
<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/global/global/local>

University of Tampa Spartans Academy Abroad  
<http://www.ut.edu/spartansacademyabroad/>

University of Tampa Quality Enhancement Plan  
<http://www.ut.edu/qep/>

NAFSA Simon Best Practices Index  
<http://www.nafsa.org/SearchExcerpt.aspx>

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