

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2018



Salisbury University: A Maryland University of National Distinction

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY

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Salisbury University International Education Strategic Plan



International Education Strategic Plan 2014-18

Introduction and Background

Salisbury University created its first strategic plan for internationalization for the period 1999-2004. That first document was ambitious and inspirational though perhaps before its time. The most significant accomplishment of the first plan was the creation of the position of director of international education.

The plan was not updated for the 2004-09 period as the University struggled to commit to a vision for Comprehensive Internationalization.

The International Education Strategic Plan 2009-14 was the most significant in the University's history. Co-authored by the director of international education on behalf of the administration and the International Education Committee of the Faculty Senate, the plan charted a course that has resulted in substantial advances in the Comprehensive Internationalization (CI) of the University.

In a 2005 publication titled "Building a Strategic Framework for Comprehensive Internationalization," the American Council on Education defined CI as an internationalization effort that "pervad[es] the institution and affect[s] a broad spectrum of people, policies and programs, leads to deeper and potentially more challenging change ... [and is] a broad, deep and integrative international practice that enables campuses to become fully internationalized."

NAFSA: Association of International Educators has awarded the Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization, named in honor of the late senator from Illinois, Paul Simon, since 2003. No more than five universities nationally are recognized each year for their efforts toward a robust approach to CI on their campuses.

The 2009-14 strategic plan was structured to achieve Comprehensive Internationalization and the results have been transformative.

As the 2009-14 strategic plan concludes, study abroad participation has increased by 50 percent, the number of short-term faculty-led study abroad programs has increased dramatically, the University has created its first semester-long study abroad programs and SU has added a new full-time professional study abroad advisor. In AY 2012-13, 365 SU students studied abroad for academic credit, a record high.

The U.S. Department of Education measures student participation rates in study abroad in its annual Open Doors Report, produced by the Institute for International Education (IIE), as a percentage of the graduating senior class. A university with 100 percent study abroad participation would send abroad the same number of students in a year as it graduates. Based on this methodology, SU currently sends abroad approximately

18 percent of its student body. At the national level, the percentage of four-year, degree-seeking undergraduates who study abroad was 14 percent during the 2010-11 academic year (last year for which statistics are available). Therefore, SU's study abroad participation rates are just above the national average.

In a certain sense, the growth of study abroad under the current strategic plan is not the most impressive aspect of the new CI strategy. While the growth is impressive, it marks a continuation of expansion that had begun under the first strategic plan in 1999. During the 10-year period, 2003-13, study abroad participation at SU increased by 175 percent.

The 2009-14 strategic plan initiated two transformational efforts that mark a historic expansion from a focus on study abroad programming to a legitimate University-wide CI strategy. The two new pillars to this strategy, joining study abroad programming, are global faculty mobility and international students.

No CI effort can be undertaken without a commitment to global mobility for faculty. A major accomplishment of the 2009-14 strategic plan was SU's designation by the U.S. Department of State as an authorized participant in the J-1 Exchange Visitor program in the categories of Student and Professor. This designation has allowed SU for the first time to sponsor visas for



visiting international scholars to come to Salisbury to teach, conduct research, study, collaborate with faculty colleagues and engage in other professional activity. Since the designation in 2011, SU has sponsored 12 J-1 Exchange Visitors in the Professor category, with nine faculty Exchange Visitors in residence simultaneously during fall semester 2013.

SU faculty members continued to win Fulbright Scholar Fellowships at impressive rates during the course of the 2009-14 strategic plan. More importantly, the University began contributing institutional resources to global mobility for SU faculty at new levels. Funded mainly by the new English Language Institute, the Center for International Education has provided full or partial funding for nine different SU faculty members to travel to actual or potential strategic partner universities abroad since 2011. The faculty members have come from all four schools and have engaged in a variety of activities, from delivering lectures, to meeting with leadership of the partner universities, to conducting research, and networking with peers.

The strategic focus on faculty global mobility and faculty development in CI is now one of three pillars of SU's CI effort and must be expanded during the 2014-19 strategic plan.

Without question, the most significant accomplishment of the 2009-14 International Education Strategic Plan has been the unprecedented growth in the number of international students on SU's main campus in Salisbury. At the beginning of the strategic plan period, SU had never exceeded 0.8 percent international student enrollment. In context, 3 percent of American higher education enrollment is composed of international students. This national percentage includes



community and technical colleges, which tend to enroll far fewer international students.

A particular note must be made in regard to international student enrollments in SU's graduate programs. While graduate education in American higher education averages an international student enrollment around 15 percent, SU's international student enrollment in its graduate programs has never exceeded 2 percent. During AY 2012-13, international student enrollment in graduate programs was below 1 percent.

Within the University System of Maryland (USM), SU's anemic international student population compares to over 10 percent international students at University of Maryland College Park, 6-7 percent international students at Towson and University of Maryland Baltimore County, and 4-5 percent international students at University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

In order for any CI effort at SU to be successful, it is imperative that the SU main campus in Salisbury becomes a more internationally diverse learning community. The most important accomplishment of the 2009-14 International Education Strategic Plan in its entirety was the creation of the English Language Institute (ELI) in 2010. From its first enrollment of eight students in 2010, the ELI enrolled 120 students during fall semester 2013. The ELI now ranks fourth – behind New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania – as a source for non-resident students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degree programs at SU. The ELI employs five full-time teaching faculty, 10-12 part-time instructors and a small administrative team. It has achieved all of its growth without funding from University operational funds. It is a self-supporting unit, generating positive revenue that is now being used for international faculty development, international recruiting and other initiatives.

International student enrollment surpassed 200 students in fall 2013 and rose to 2 percent of total enrollment. This growth marks a 175 percent improvement in just three years.

There still is much work to be done in this key pillar of the CI effort. While study abroad participation at SU slightly exceeds the national average, even with the impressive recent growth in international student enrollments, SU still is significantly short of national averages and even further behind our sister institutions in the USM. Of the 200 international students on campus in fall 2013, over half are enrolled in the ELI. The number of international students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degree programs is still scandalously low. We have just begun to advance in this critical area. The 2014-19 International Education Strategic Plan must focus as a first priority on continuing the progress.

Future Direction

The 2014-19 International Education Strategic Plan features two overarching goals.

The first goal is to create an engaged global learning environment in which all students develop international and cross-cultural skills and an enhanced global consciousness in order to thrive as professionals, citizens and individuals in an increasingly interdependent world.

The first goal is the primary driver the rest of the plan. It recognizes that international education is not an innovation of contemporary American higher education. The search for knowledge and understanding, which is the bedrock of all University life, knows no national boundaries. Higher levels of teaching and learning have always demanded a global outlook. Even a regional state (one might say alternatively provincial) university must cultivate a global consciousness in its learning community. The pursuit of knowledge demands it.

The second goal is to improve the financial strength of the University by expanding the global markets from which student enrollment is actively pursued and increasing the percentage of international students as a proportion of the student body.

The second goal recognizes the economic realities of the contemporary American higher education system. Public universities cannot depend on tax dollars to thrive or even survive. In order to afford to offer higher education at a reasonable cost to Marylanders in our region, SU must be savvy in its efforts to generate revenue and create its own financial resources. Actively expanding our market for students to dynamic and growing marketplaces not only outside of Maryland but also around the world is a critical goal to achieve a healthy sustainable university.

The two principal goals that drive the 2014-19 International Education Strategic Plan are broken down into a series of strategies and action items. Based on the success of the 2009-14 strategic plan, and the evolving thought in American and global higher education on best practices involving CI, the plan focuses

on three critical pillars: **international students, study abroad, and faculty mobility and development.** Many peer institutions refer to these components as the proverbial three-legged stool of the CI effort. If one leg is weaker than the other, the stool cannot stand. Only when all three are strong can the University use the CI stool to reach new heights in its aspirations for excellence in all areas of its institutional mission.

Based on SU's own institutional history, the leg which represents international students is the one most in need of strengthening. Therefore, it is listed as Strategy 1. The ongoing success in study abroad at SU dating back over a decade puts the University in a good position to continue to strive for excellence in this area, hence it is listed as Strategy 2. A two-legged stool, focused only on incoming and outgoing global student mobility, is incomplete without a commitment to the international development of the faculty. For this reason, global faculty mobility is Strategy 3.

Each strategy is followed by action items. While no strategic plan can predict the future, and needs can and do change over five years, the action items listed must guide our priorities in our CI efforts as we move forward. Each strategy requires the active participation of many units around the University. None can be achieved without the coordinated efforts of the whole University. Human and material resources throughout the campus must be marshaled to prioritize the goals and action items. While the world may often seem flat, all universities have limited human and material resources. Failure is an option. Without a coordinated approach across all units, we can exhaust ourselves chasing down an infinite number of possible initiatives, partnerships and opportunities in the four corners of the world while achieving no lasting success.

It is often the case at larger universities with greater resources that individual academic units house their own international offices. For example, the Department of Homeland Security will authorize up to 10 Designated School Officials (DSO) for a single university to help manage the university's legal obligations in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). SU does not have the luxury of such human resources. Likewise, many colleges of engineering, liberal arts, agricultural sciences or business at larger universities employ their own study abroad professionals within their schools to advise students and manage study abroad programs hosted by the individual colleges. Once again, the four academic schools at SU are not in a position to support such levels of professional staffing on their own. In short, we must move forward in our CI strategy as a single university community. The 2014-19 International Education Strategic Plan provides the map to do so.



The Plan

Strategy 1: Increase percentage of international students in student body to 5 percent.

Action Item 1 – The U.S. Department of Education and Homeland Security defines international students on American university campuses to include visiting exchange students, non-credit English-language students, and post-graduation Optional Practical Training (OPT) students as well as degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students. SU has always reported to federal authorities according to these definitions. This understanding of international student enrollment must be adopted throughout internal SU reporting in order to maintain consistency with mandatory external reporting.

Action Item 2 – The English Language Institute has become the primary source of new international students into admitted degree programs at SU. In addition, non-credit ELI enrollment now makes up half of all international student enrollment at SU. The ELI must continue to grow and expand as quickly as it is able. The greatest hindrance for sustained growth is space. Space needs for a growing ELI must be addressed.

Action Item 3 – International student enrollment goals will be achieved through partnership with foreign universities, technical colleges, high schools and other educational entities. The pursuit of Memoranda of Understanding and other formal agreements toward the end of enrolling more international students must be prioritized over other types of international agreements and partnerships.

Action Item 4 – The SU Handbook was adapted in 2012 to account for successful completion of the ELI as an option to demonstrate English language proficiency for admission into undergraduate degree programs at SU. No such accommodation has been made for any SU graduate programs. SU graduate programs must collaborate with the ELI to establish defined “Pathways” to bring international students into graduate programs through the ELI as an alternative to traditional TOEFL or IELTS testing. SU graduate programs should achieve enrollment levels of 15 percent international students.

Action Item 5 – Housing for international students is an integral part of any plan for growth in this population. Permanent strategies for housing and residence life for international student populations must be developed, always accounting for the diverse needs of the international student population.

Strategy 2: Increase gross study abroad numbers from 300 to 500.

Action Item 1 – Increase percentage of students studying abroad on semester or year-length programs from 18 to 40 percent. Long-term growth in study abroad participation requires a paradigm shift in attitudes from education abroad toward semester-length programming integrated into the academic curricula from as many majors and minors possible. Checklists, courses and degree progress reports must show how Salisbury Abroad semester programs can be integrated into individual academic majors and minors.

Action Item 2 – Integrate General Education curriculum into existing Salisbury Abroad semester programs for first- and second-year students, particularly for students in degree programs resulting in professional licensure in which third- and fourth-year curricula do not easily allow semester-length study abroad. Students in licensure programs are a substantial percentage of undergraduate enrollment. These students must be empowered to study abroad as freshmen and sophomores.

Action Item 3 – Expand the number of foreign partners for semester-long study abroad programs based on the demonstrated needs of academic programs. New semester study abroad program partnerships that expand access to academic programs underserved by the current portfolio of programs should be prioritized.

Action Item 4 – Increase summer study abroad institutes with partners abroad based on the model of the Salisbury Abroad: Spain summer program with low-costs and without SU faculty leadership. There are abundant opportunities to integrate with existing summer institutes around the world to provide low-cost summer options.

Action Item 5 – Further refine procedures for short-term faculty-led study abroad programs to improve the efficiency in operations for the entire portfolio of short-term programs, insure academic quality, minimize liability and maximize the number of programs offered given limited human resources to manage programs.

Strategy 3: Increase international faculty mobility in both directions with University partners abroad.

Action Item 1 – Incentivize mobility for SU faculty to teach, conduct research and be in residence at SU partner institutions abroad. Incentives may include priority of sabbatical projects and funding from SU Foundation, Inc. for faculty development, etc. Mobility for SU faculty should be focused on SU’s strategic partners abroad above all other international activity.

Action Item 2 – Re-focus J-1 Exchange Visitor Program in the Professor category on faculty from SU partner institutions. Applications to Host J-1 Exchange Visitors in the Professor categories from scholars outside of partner institutions should be subjected to scrutiny at multiple levels of leadership to insure quality of proposals.

Action Item 3 – Establish Visiting International Scholar Chair titles in each of the four academic schools. Priority for applications for the chair should be reserved for faculty from partner institutions abroad.

Action Item 4 – Create faculty development program to promote effective teaching of international students in the spirit of Writing Across the Curriculum. Program will provide stipends for faculty members to complete development activities focused on international students, including observation of English Language Institute classes, sample testing of Institutional TOEFL test and instruction on international student success.

Resources

In the 21st century, universities around the world pursue Comprehensive Internationalization because it is a key element in addressing the broad institutional challenges that face higher education. As such, CI is not a luxury add-on for good economic times. It is central to the academic and financial health of the modern university.

SU must re-allocate resources – human, physical and fiscal – to achieve the broad goals and specific strategies identified in this plan. Such re-allocation is not an investment in international education as much as an investment in the future viability of the University as a whole. For example, SU can no more succeed as an institute of higher learning in the 21st century without investing in its global portfolio than Perdue Farms can succeed in the agricultural industry without investing in its global portfolio. The same global interdependence that SU’s mission statement recognizes as important for our students also is important for SU as an institution.

The investment of fiscal resources in CI in the form of scholarships for international students or for study abroad, or grants for global faculty mobility are very important for the success of the 2014-19 International Education Strategic Plan.

However, human and physical resources are exponentially more important than fiscal resources. Strong human resources in a strategic and empowering physical space on the SU campus will generate returns both financial and academic far in excess of the investment. Even a cursory consideration of American and global higher education testifies to this central truth. If globalization costs more resources than it returns, universities would never do it. The pilot of the SU English Language Institute from 2010-13 is strong evidence that investment in strategic international initiatives can bring new perspective, energy, diversity and revenue to the University as few other initiatives can



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