Challenge

This report addresses the need for English language instruction/support on the Clemson Campus, with particular regard to the following two challenges at Clemson:

1. No on-campus English Language instruction or tutoring. Clemson’s international student population does not have access to support for the further development of their English language proficiency. This is of particular concern with regard to using English in their roles as Teaching Assistants and in developing the academic writing skills required of their disciplines and professions.

2. No access to professional training or experience for students aspiring to careers in the Teaching of English as a Second Language.

Findings

Highlights of the Faculty & Staff Surveys on Internationalization

Surveys on internationalization were sent out to Clemson faculty and staff during the Spring of 2014. Lack of English language support was among the top five challenges to campus internationalization and the integration of international students and faculty identified by faculty (behind visa processing, university climate, housing and transportation difficulties.)

The following comments came directly from CU faculty and staff in response to questions about the current challenges facing international populations on out campus.
1. “This is the main reason I decided to complete this survey. The main campus does not have the needed ESL writing courses for our international students. As an instructor of English 314 (Technical Writing), I have had a constant stream of graduate students wanting to audit or sign up for my technical writing course. They are not allowed to do this because the course is reserved for the undergraduate students who are required to take it. The course would not meet their needs anyway because it does not have an ESL focus. This problem seems to have worsened since the university moved its ESL program to Greenville several years ago. One department leader told me that the courses in Greenville are prohibitively expensive. I don’t know if that’s true or not. I also am a regular member of the OTEI Writing Group. Often, foreign students join the group, assuming it will help them with their ESL writing struggles, but they soon drop out because they find out that it’s not that kind of writing group. It seems that the English Department needs to create some special ESL writing classes to help serve this population.”

2. “We have no support for international graduate students in writing English language scientific reports, theses, and dissertations. All the writing services are for undergraduate domestic students. The services and supports for any Graduate Students at Clemson is a major area of neglect (to the advantage of undergraduates) and that fact makes the supports for international graduate students embarrassingly negligent.”

3. “A lack of effective English communication skills and a lack of effective professional US experience in their discipline [is a challenge facing international students, scholars and faculty.]”

4. “Grad students who are TAs must be fluent and easily understood in English to teach, grade labs. Foreign nationals need to be fluent and easily understood in spoken English to lecture classes.”

5. “Most are very poor writers, which limits their contributions, especially graduate students.”

6. “Difficulty of students understanding the international faculty member’s accents.”

7. “Potential graduate students from outside Clemson are less likely to respond to ads for grad positions if the major professor has an Asian last name. So our Asian faculty has trouble finding American students in particular that will study with them. Language support for faculty and grad students with difficult accents or grammar would help make them more approachable for undergrads.”

In addition to indicating challenges, the OGE survey asked respondents to identify the top three initiatives that the university could take to enhance the experience for international populations. Along with themes of cultural training, increasing diversity in international populations and more administrative support, respondents highlighted English language support as a necessary initiative to improve the current situation.

Existing Programs for International Students
Organized services offered to International students at Clemson University are primarily focused on the technical components of studying at a foreign university. Cultural support is offered indirectly through Living-Learning Communities and student clubs and organizations.

Clemson Office of International Services

The Clemson International Services Department primary responsibility is to provide visa and immigration services for international students, scholars, faculty and staff. Services provided by the Office of International Services include: guidance on maintaining international student status (visa, extending status, etc.), assistance in obtaining SC driver’s license, guidance concerning on- and off-campus jobs, advising (forms, documents, status, etc.), and links to online information regarding academics and the city of Clemson.

While it occasionally offers social or cultural support programs, such as the International Student Orientation, International Peer Mentoring Program and the workshop series “Clemson is Global” to increase staff awareness and sensitivity to the needs of international students, the Office of International Services is not adequately resources (staff or budget) to provide comprehensive support of students’ social, cultural and linguistic integration at Clemson. For social or cultural support, international students are referred to various campus organizations and clubs.

English Language School

The English Language School (ELS), Clemson’s partner for English language skill development, was once located on campus, but was relocated to Greenville in 2011. ELS focuses on language instruction for individuals who do not speak English as their first language while also providing support in language testing and assistance in the university admissions process. Although effective in its practices, the isolation of the ELS from main campus activity further isolates students from peer-to-peer English speaking opportunities. SAGE recognizes the need to increase the presence of ELS on campus, whether this is by creating easier transportation to Greenville, or offering instruction on campus, as has been done in the past. This would further provide opportunities to increase English proficiency among international students, act as another resource to support foreign language speakers, and facilitate more international integration with other U.S. Clemson students.

Emeritus College CESP Test Prep Support

The Clemson English Speaking Proficiency (CESP) test is required of international students before they can commence duties as a Teaching Assistant. These students have already met the language requirements for admission, but the State of South Carolina requires that the institution have a system in place to verify that non-native speakers of English who deliver course content have the English competence to do so. Clemson uses the CESP test to comply with that regulation. Currently, volunteers from the Emeritus College administer the CESP test, using a series of questions to facilitate a casual dialogue. Topics covered in the CESP test range widely and require conversational agility and American cultural knowledge rather than proficiency in technical explanations from material within the applicant’s field of study. The Emeritus College also provides some tutoring services to assist students as they prepare for the test. While a beneficial service, the availability of mentors is limited and the tutoring is not necessarily informed by best practices in TESOL.

International Peer Mentoring Program

The International Peer Mentoring Program, facilitated by the Office of International Services, is designed to assist international students as they transition into their new environment. It aims to assist new international students with gaining familiarity with the town and the university, respond to general inquires, and build networks at Clemson. There are typically two are three mentees assigned to each mentor, and the direction and details of the program are left to the mentor and mentees.
Living Learning Communities
Living-learning communities are themed on-campus residential communities, which plan activities relevant to the theme of the community. The two internationally themed living-learning communities are WORLD and the Cultural Exchange Community. WORLD focuses on gaining knowledge of religious, spiritual, and ethical traditions from around the world. Its primary goals are cultural understanding and learning. In the Cultural Exchange Community students are paired with a student of another culture. The students learn about each other’s cultures through daily interactions, events, and social outings. These living-learning communities only serve the undergraduate population. The large population of international graduate students is not impacted by the LLCs.

Clubs and Organizations
Student clubs and organizations are another source of social and cultural support for Clemson’s international students. Graduate and undergraduate student clubs and organizations are operated separately.

Graduate:
Culture Specific Organizations: The general goals of these organizations include serving as network for students from the specific culture and promoting awareness of the culture on campus. Most culture specific organizations are open to students not of that culture but who have a desire to learn about the culture. Existing cultural organizations include: Bangladesh Association Clemson, Chinese Students and Scholars Association, Clemson University Iranian Graduate Student Association, Clemson Indian Students Association, Clemson Russian Speaking Community, Clemson University Iranian Graduate Student Association, Nepalese Student Association, Taiwanese Students And Scholars Association, and the Turkish Student Association.

Intercultural Dialogue Club: The international dialogue club promotes communication, tolerance, friendship, and cross-cultural understanding among the members of Clemson community who are from different cultural backgrounds, without any discrimination of race, ethnicity, gender, or faith.

International Students Association: The International Students Association promotes relationship building and understanding among all Clemson University students, staff, and faculty. It also seeks to represent the interests of international students at various levels in the University system.

Undergraduate:
Language/Culture clubs: Language/culture clubs are primarily to provide a community with which undergraduate language-learners can gain practice using their target language as well as explore the culture/s to which the languages are indigenous. Language/culture clubs are available for German, French, Italian, and Spanish.

Bridges International: Bridges International seeks to provide international students with service activities, social networking, and spiritual resources.

Culture Specific Organizations: The cultural specific organizations available to undergraduate students are: Asian Student Association, African and Caribbean Students Association, Indian Cultural Exchange, Japanese Cultural Association at Clemson University, Latinos Unidos @ Clemson University, Clemson Dholna, and the Bollywood fusion dance team.

Reality of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in the United States
Nearly one in ten working-age U.S. adults—19.2 million persons aged 16 to 64—is considered limited English proficient. Two-thirds of this population speaks Spanish, but speakers of Asian and Pacific Island languages are most likely to have LEP. The vast majority of working-age LEP adults are immigrants, and those who entered the United States more recently are more likely to be LEP.
Working-age LEP adults earn 25 to 40 percent less than their English proficient counterparts. While less educated overall than English proficient adults, most LEP adults have a high school diploma, and 15 percent hold a college degree.

English proficiency is an essential gateway to economic opportunity for immigrants in the United States. Yet access to acquiring these skills is persistently limited by a lack of resources and attention. Increasing investment in adult English instruction—through more funding, targeted outreach, and instructional innovations—would enhance the human capital of immigrants, which could lead to more productive work and better outlooks for their children. Given the large number of LEP workers in the United States and the fact that virtually all of the growth in the U.S. labor force over the next four decades is projected to come from immigrants and their children, it is in our collective interest to tackle this challenge head on. (Brookings Report)

International Student Recruitment and Retention

University-run language programs boost both diversity and generate revenue from the study body by recruiting and supporting international students. An initial investment in personnel and time are far outweighed by the benefits gained and the increasing number of successful eligible international students. The lack of ESL on the Clemson campus put the universities International recruitment and retention at risk in a number of ways, including:

- Challenges to existing students’ success in their degree programs, research and teaching activities.
- Inability to recruit highly qualified international students who require ESL support or conditional language acceptance.
- Limited access to potential students on sponsored programs that require that the host institution have an intensive language program on campus.
- Inability to access the growing number of English Language students that provide a diverse student body and potential revenue.

According to the IIE Open Doors Report, 5% or nearly 40,000 international students in the USA in 2013 were primarily studying English language. The 2011-2012 academic year saw a 20% increase in students enrolled in Intensive English Programs to prepare them for entrance into U.S. universities. Connecting with these populations as early as possible and providing an environment for continued language support will help Clemson University recruit better-prepared individuals from the applicant pool.

The Need for Training in Teaching of English as a Second Language

Neither the Education nor the English program provides course in the teaching of English as a Second Language at the undergraduate, continuing education or graduate level. TESOL is a stable if not growing field and offers potential career path for our students with an interest in languages, intercultural communication and global engagement. And, South Carolina’s schools are expected to see an increasing need for teachers with experience in bilingual education and second language acquisition. Currently, students interested in exploring a career in TESOL must seek their training outside of Clemson’s curriculum, usually through an institute like English for Life (operating in several locations in SC) or an overseas program that combines teacher training with experience. The Study Abroad office sees frequent inquiries from students about these programs. We believe that Clemson is missing an opportunity to train students in TESOL.

A peer-tutoring program, which matches native English speakers with LEP persons, would provide professional development opportunities at the undergraduate level. In addition to tackling the problems
of LEP, the SAGE ELI will support domestic undergraduate students in earning certification for EFL, gaining relevant skills, gaining experience in a potential career field and working with various clients and stakeholders from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. Such a rare program would make participating domestic CU students more competitive for international teaching fellowships and scholarships, such as the Fulbright program.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Clemson establish an English language program on campus. This program should:

- At a minimum provide continuing education/support in academic English designed to support the success of Clemson’s current degree seeking students, including preparation for the CESP test, training for Teaching Assistants, academic and professional writing, and accent reduction.
- Provide academic English for students seeking enrollment, for the family of international students and faculty,
- Offer training and certification for instructors of ESL.

INTERIM RECOMMENDATION—SAGE English Language Initiative

Recognizing that the establishment of an English Language program will take time. The Clemson University Student Ambassadors for Global Engagement (SAGE) propose the following English Language Initiative (ELI), a set of interventions to provide immediate, if limited, support for ESL on campus implemented in collaboration with other stakeholders such as, the Emeritus College, English Language School (ELS) in Greenville, Office of Teaching Effectiveness and Innovation, Academic Success Center, Graduate School and the Office of Global Engagement. The ELI will combine a number of strategies including: a weekly conversation hour, peer tutoring program, TESOL certification courses and CESP test prep support to support English language learners and teachers.

1. A weekly conversation hour for International Graduate Students organized by the undergraduate students in SAGE after training from English for Life in basic TESOL skills and strategies.
2. Peer tutoring program coordinated through the International Student Organizations and the Emeritus College.
3. TESOL certification courses.

CESP Test Prep Support

The Clemson English Speaking Proficiency (CESP) test is administered through the Emeritus College and serves as a qualification for international graduate students looking to participate in Teaching Assistantships (TAs) in various departments. Before an international student (who has already been accepted into the CU academic program at the masters or PhD level) can teach undergraduate courses, he must pass the CESP.

Topics covered in the CESP test range widely and require conversational agility and American cultural knowledge rather than proficiency in technical explanations from material within the applicant’s field of study. The SAGE ELI, coordination with the CESP test administrators and English language assistance, seeks to better prepare prospective international graduate TAs to pass this test as well as improve students’ English speaking abilities for the position in the classroom, in compliance with South Carolina law.
SAGE English Corner
English Corner is a weekly, casual conversation meeting in which English language learners from the university and community can meet in a social setting for semi-structured conversation opportunities with native English speakers.

For Spring 2015, English Corner will be held Mondays 4pm - 5pm in the 1941 Studio for Student Communications on the bottom floor of Daniel Hall. This high-tech but unstructured space will provide a relaxed environment for English conversation and instruction.

Community Outreach
In addition to supporting current and potential CU students, the SAGE ELI will support international community integration. Partnership with Clemson Area International Friendship (CAIF) will expand our impact to affect spouses and children of international faculty and students, contributing to overall family cultural adaptation and lower turnover of their family members at the university.

The South Carolina Upstate is also a growing international climate with industry from Europe, Asia and South American flowing steadily into the I-85 corridor...International students enrolled in SC universities contributed 121.8 million to the state economy during the 2011-2012 academic year. This figure doesn’t even take into account the money these students are spending on housing, groceries and other goods.

Credit-bearing TESOL Certification Course
TESOL certification is a training and preparation program that provides a foundation in both theory and practice of English language teaching. A TESOL certification course is recognized internationally and teaches students a multifaceted and professional approach to classroom or private instruction, which assists them in diverse learning environments worldwide. By bringing TESOL certification to Clemson, it would allow students to learn an applicable skill, receive their certification and also earn Clemson credit for their efforts. Not only is this beneficial for individual professional development and global career opportunities, but it also creates trained tutors and teachers for international students at Clemson.

SAGE has partnered with English For Life (EFL) in Greenville to begin professional English language instruction support for native English speakers.

Peer Tutoring Program
The peer-tutoring program will provide training to undergraduate and/or graduate students to tutor English 1-on-1, and in small group settings. Non-native English speakers will not only receive tutoring but they will connect with Clemson students, further exposing them to American culture. This peer-to-peer learning is essential in the development of English skills, especially at a graduate level, as many students aspire to become TA’s, and their interaction with undergraduate native English speakers in a relaxed environment will provide them the opportunity to practice communicating with the demographic that they will be teaching.

Action Plan
The proposed action plan of ELI incorporates our CI plan as well as long-term goals for the SAGE and OGE to promote globalization topics in support of the university mission and goals.
### Activity | Spring 2015 | Fall 2015 | Spring 2016 | Fall 2016 | 2017
---|---|---|---|---|---
**CESP Prep** | Campaign for collaborative effort among departments in need | Create solid outline of program initiatives across all departments | Work with departments to create a single, cohesive program best suited for grad students | Implement plan to combine efforts met the departments, utilizing TESOL students and/or volunteer faculty | Continued offering of CESP test prep, include more student mentors
**English Corner** | Meet with first group of graduate students and establish their needs and create a lesson plan for the semester | Work with same graduate students and recruit more, take lessons farther after TESOL training | Incorporate more “out of class” activities. Role-play scenarios, group projects, etc. while balancing student needs | Establish different levels of need based on student abilities, break off into smaller groups. | Review what is working and what’s not. Give student surveys to see if they’re learning
**TESOL Course** | Begin first phase of student training with partners with English for Life. Trial run of ELI programs with this training, recording data | Send in proposal for course credit through the university including the study abroad trip. Advertise across depts. | Continue training and change direction based on results with Language Corner. Advertise course and study abroad. | First semester of TESOL Course | First summer abroad with English for Life in Ecuador | Continued offering of TESOL Course | Investigating international field opportunities for this course
**Peer Tutoring Program** | Campaign for ASC/Graduate School/ misc. department to house a tutoring program | Establish rapport. Outline structure to be followed by mentors and prepare for mentor sessions | Take on graduate students from Language Corner, take on/advertise more volunteers for mentoring | Publish program “constitution”. Advertise positions student volunteers. Confer with faculty across departments to volunteer? |  

### Results

The ultimate goal of implementing English language support through ELI and SAGE is to increase the internationalization of Clemson University on campus, and the global presence of Clemson overseas. The measurement of success will be primarily focused on the qualitative measurement of skills improvement of non-native English speakers. However, each program implemented will be monitored in a different
manner, with the hope of improving the support for international students, developing cultural awareness and enhancing English speaking ability.

The CESP Test
By working with the Emeritus faculty, we hope to:

- Facilitate increased collaboration among faculties, and generate faculty support
- Develop a standardized and culturally sensitive method of testing
- Create a system of preparation so that students are able to study and practice for the test
- Offer support and assistance to those students who do not pass the CESP test

The measurement of success in terms of CESP testing will be in the achievement of the aforementioned goals. Ultimately, the success surrounding the CESP test will be measured in the increased presence of international TAs in the classroom, and their subsequent level of success teaching in the American learning environment. We suspect that upon reform of the CESP test, that there will be increased number of students passing the test, and successfully entering the classroom setting.

English Corner
The measurement of success for the English Corner will be two-fold. First, there will be a focus on the international students, their attendance rate, and measurement of satisfaction with the English Corner program. There will have to be a qualitative survey and interview process at the end of the Spring 2015 semester, in order to measure the success of the English Corner in terms of both cultural integration, as well as the development and enhancement of English speaking ability.

The second measurement of the English Corners success will be in the local students perception of the program. There will have to be a qualitative measure of satisfaction with the program among English Corner volunteers, and a determination as to whether or not their goals have been achieved by participating in the program. This is important, as we hope that this program will be altruistic in nature, allowing for Clemson students to enhance their global perspectives.

TESOL Certification
The TESOL certification will require a measurement of success based upon three levels of completion. First, we must work to implement the test at Clemson University. This will involve working with English for Life, in order to carry out the program, as well as the registrar’s office, in order to make sure that students who receive their TESOL certification also receive course credit for their work. Second, there will be the measurement of student success in the program, determining whether or not students are satisfied and feel as though they can teach English. Finally, there is the measurement of success of students in the classroom. This will be determined through the English Corner and the Peer Tutoring Program, and will help to determine whether or not the TESOL certification was able to give students the skills and confidence to teach English.

We suspect that we will receive a positive response in all three aspects of TESOL certification, as the opportunity for unique professional development is intriguing to many students, and the TESOL certification has proven to be successful in the past and is one of the most reputable programs worldwide.

Peer Tutoring Program
The Peer Tutoring Program will provide an altruistic way of teaching, meaning that we hope to have international students teaching local Clemson students, as well as local Clemson students teaching international students. Not only does this provide preparation from international graduate students who
hope to become TAs, but it also ensures that they receive the help that they require for their own programs, as there is currently no assistance provided from the Clemson Academic Success Center.

The data used to measure the success of this program will have to be collected from both international students, as well as local Clemson students. We will use qualitative data to understand student satisfaction with the program, as well as quantitative analysis to gage whether or not there has been a rise in students academic performances.

We expect that there will be a high success rate for the Peer Tutoring Program, as local Clemson students will be TESOL certified, and they should be confident teaching English and working with international students in their areas of study. Furthermore, most the international students that are participating in the program aspire to become TAs at Clemson, and henceforth, will have a good understanding of teaching and tutoring.

The return on investment in the aforementioned ELI programs will be demonstrated by the increased internationalization of Clemson’s campus, which will not only support inbound international students, but also outgoing Clemson students. Increasing the process of internationalization will support Clemson in a multitude of ways, however, it will primarily work to: increase innovation, provide increased educational and learning opportunities, grow international funding to Clemson, prepare students to work in an increasingly globalized world, create a hospitable and welcoming environment for international students at Clemson, and improve Clemson’s international educational presence.

Resources
SAGE ELI will utilize university and business partnerships, Creative Inquiry funding and CU infrastructure to implement the components of our initiative.

CU Resources
Office of Global Engagement
International Services
Creative Inquiry Program
Emeritus College
1941 Studio for Student Communication
Clemson Area International Friendship
Math Department
Education Department

Industry Partners
English Language School - current provision of English language instruction for CU students off campus
English for Life - contracted training workshops and events

Conclusion
Student Ambassadors for Global Education seek the support of university administration in creating a comprehensive and sustainable English Language Program to succeed our ELI.

SAGE is looking for partnership in our English Language Initiative and our global education program in order to foster a community of global leadership at Clemson University. We are primarily seeking
university support of the proposed initiatives, as support of global education is imperative, and is a *revolutionizing* trend in many post-secondary institutions, especially with increasing marketplace globalization. The aforementioned initiatives that work to enhance the global learning environment are a proposal for university support, with the long-term goal of having programs instituted, with the backing of Clemson University.

We believe that increased partnership at a student, society and administrative level will assist in the implementation of programs that seek to further global education and internationalization. Partnership is not only important for ELI and the perpetuity of global education at Clemson, but it is also vital in linking together partners, and subsequently, connecting aspects of Clemson’s learning environment that are not currently connected. Partnership among different cohorts of the university becomes imperative in addressing our goals to facilitate this international learning environment, and further Clemson’s global image both locally and internationally.