

**Identification of Strategies  
to  
Internationalize Academic Programs  
at  
Clemson University**

**A report  
sponsored by an Innovation Funds Award Committee grant  
by  
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## **Executive Summary**

The Committee on International Priorities offers the following report in summary of its efforts to identify obstacles and to provide solutions to internationalization at Clemson University. Results of two surveys -- one of the faculty and one of business leaders with international interests -- indicate a unified conviction that internationalization should be a major University priority. The support and leadership of these two influential constituencies is essential to the development of successful international initiatives.

Six major recommendations are offered for a multidimensional approach to internationalization, with emphasis on involvement by all aspects of the Clemson family -- faculty, administration, students and alumni.

The Committee's overriding recommendation is the promotion of cross-cultural understanding. This is the keystone to the success of internationalization.

The Committee urges immediate action to lend credence to the University's commitment to internationalization. In addition, the Committee recommends that the first step be expansion of the existing Committee to include students, administrators and business leaders, to direct Clemson toward creation of a unique "Clemson model" of internationalization. The Committee recommends the following sequential steps toward internationalization:

- Declare promotion of cross-cultural understanding as key goal.
- Strengthen international services to all constituencies.
- Create incentives for internationalization.
- Establish international higher education partnerships.
- Charge curriculum committees with internationalization.
- Develop unique Clemson University model for internationalization.

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# **Identification of Strategies to Internationalize Academic Programs at Clemson University**

## **Introduction**

In August 1997, the University Ad Hoc Committee on International Priorities, representing all five colleges, presented a report to the Commission on the Future of Clemson University that identified four priorities to help the University internationalize its programs. This Committee recommended internationalizing the curriculum, providing financial support for students and professors undertaking innovative study or research projects abroad, establishing higher education partnerships with foreign institutes or study centers abroad, and creating a standing University-wide committee to plan and coordinate international activities.

This report, a result of a Clemson University Innovation Fund grant to the authors, identifies strategies for internationalizing Clemson University's academic programs. It represents a continuation of the Committee's efforts to identify roadblocks and opportunities for the implementation of an internationalized curriculum.

In the course of this grant period, the Committee investigated and utilized a number of different sources. Apart from the frequent meetings among the authors themselves, the Committee participated in the following activities:

- Attended the Language and International Trade Conference at Clemson University in October 1998.
- Attended the International Town Meeting at Clemson University in January 1999.

- Attended and led a discussion on what it means to internationalize an academic curriculum at the Fifth Annual South Carolina International Studies Conference in Columbia, SC, in February 1998.

- Participated in a workshop sponsored by President Deno Curris and given by Dr. John G. Van de Water, Dean of International Programs at Oregon State University.

- Developed a questionnaire for faculty that identifies current strengths and weaknesses from the internationalization point of view in the student body, the faculty, the academic programs and the University infrastructure. The Committee analyzed the results of this questionnaire.

- Developed a questionnaire for members of the Commission on the Future of Clemson University, to obtain their points of view on what they consider to be important international activities for Clemson University to pursue. This questionnaire was conducted with the help of Mr. David Stalnaker, Special Assistant to President Curris.

- Worked closely with Provost Steffen Rogers to ensure the relevance of the Committee's activities.

The recommendations that conclude this report are a synthesis of all of these activities. These recommendations represent a composite view of what the Committee considers actions that will best prepare students, faculty and alumni to be successful in the global environment.

Master copies of this report and supporting data are on file in the office of the provost and in the faculty senate office.

## **Section I.**

### **Internationalization at Clemson University**

The term "internationalization" means many things to many people. This became obvious to the authors during discussions held with peers at the Fifth Annual South Carolina International Studies Conference. Therefore, it is necessary to define internationalization for use in this report.

"Internationalization" is defined as meeting four components that are designed to advance the University's prestige in the world and the global marketplace. First, the University's graduates must possess the ability to solve problems of both local and global importance and to work effectively in other cultures. Second, the faculty as a whole must produce knowledge beyond the narrow boundaries of their disciplines to assure that this work will benefit humanity independent of culture or creed. Next, the faculty and administration must work together to create an environment for learning. This environment must be able to nurture all participants regardless of origin. Finally, the University must be a repository for the kind of thinking that produces leadership in solving all problems -- including local ones -- from a global perspective. These components link together and will allow Clemson to help shape the future for South Carolina, the nation and the world..

As the first step, then, internationalization of Clemson University involves the development of programs that improve the ability of its students, faculty, staff, alumni and other constituencies to work and develop effectively in an increasingly global environment. This implies communicating effectively and comfortably with citizens of other cultures.

Thus, internationalization goes beyond learning to speak a foreign language, visiting another country for a vacation or attending a professional conference outside the United States. To learn to work and collaborate across cultural

and national boundaries, faculty and students must spend time working and living for extended periods of time in other cultures and nations. This requires that they adapt to different languages, customs and even philosophical and political concepts.

The phenomenal growth in the interdependence of the global community demands that Clemson University in the 21st century dramatically increase its reach beyond South Carolina. To do so, it is essential that Clemson faculty and students experience other cultures firsthand and that the University provide a welcoming, supportive environment for visiting faculty and students whose presence enriches the University intellectually and culturally.

## **Section II.**

### **Results of the Surveys of Faculty and Members of the Commission on the Future of Clemson University regarding International Priorities at Clemson**

The Committee prepared questionnaires for Clemson faculty and selected members of the Commission on the Future of Clemson University to determine their perspectives on internationalization priorities at Clemson. The Faculty survey was distributed through the Provost's office to all Clemson faculty. The survey for the selected Commission members was conducted through the assistance of Mr. David Stalnaker. Thirty commission members were selected for participation by Mr. Stalnaker. About 25 percent of the faculty and 65 percent of the Commission members responded.

The faculty survey questions were categorized as follows:

- Perception of the importance of Clemson University internationalization
- Essential elements of an international curriculum
- Perception of current status of Clemson University in the process
- Current faculty resources for internationalization

The survey for the commission members contained essentially the same categories excluding, naturally, the section on Faculty Resources.

The following constitute a synopsis of the important findings, including the results of both the surveys.

### **General Comments**

- Internationalization of the University Is A Priority.

The business community and the faculty agree on this point. Respondents in both groups indicated that they believe knowledge and experience about the international setting is increasingly relevant to students, faculty and the University.

- Effective Communication in A Foreign Language Is Essential.

Business leaders and faculty agree that one of the most important factors in internationalization is the ability to effectively communicate in languages other than English. While English is the current worldwide language of business, it is increasingly important that students and graduates have the ability to communicate in at least one other language. The surveys indicated that Spanish and Japanese are at this time the two top languages of importance for Clemson students, faculty and graduates.

- Faculty are willing to learn a foreign language.

Seventy percent of the faculty respondents indicated a personal desire to learn a foreign language. This commitment to improving international communication skills is valuable to the University. An environment in which many students and faculty are fluent in other languages facilitates international contacts and can be perceived by visitors from other countries as a particularly welcoming and comfortable atmosphere.

- Geographical areas of current importance are Western Europe, Mexico and Central America, South America, and Japan.

Both faculty and business leaders indicate that the most significant geographical areas at the current time for students and the University are Western Europe, Mexico and Central America, South America, and Japan. Both groups rated the Middle East as the least important geographic area.

- Time and money are major roadblocks.

The main roadblocks that inhibit the faculty from further developing international programs are time and money. Travel expenses and accommodations are only the initial costs incurred. Faculty with families report that the expense of maintaining family life abroad can be an extreme challenge. This often results in avoiding international experiences.

- The environment at Clemson for international visitors, students and professors is often not perceived as welcoming.

Often a single faculty member hosting an international visitor may be solely responsible for making that person feel welcome. Limitations of time and other resources may prevent proper courtesies being extended to the guest. These issues and the current climate appear to support skepticism among faculty that the University administration is committed to internationalization.

## **Section III. Current Climate**

### **Lack of Support Structure and Incentives**

- **Faculty**

Numerous faculty members travel internationally each year to provide teaching, research, public service and consulting. The faculty member is required to file information on the purpose of international travel. Currently there is not an organized plan to utilize this information. This and other information can be used to form a comprehensive data base to help other faculty identify international contacts and opportunities. Such a data base would help faculty already involved internationally as well as others who wish to develop international programs.

- **Students**

Both undergraduate and graduate students have access to study-abroad programs, either through college-managed programs or through International Services and Diversity Programs. Students involved in independent study-abroad activity generally are required to make their own plans, including academic schedules, accommodations, and travel arrangements. Students are also responsible for either financing their study abroad or identifying potential sources of funding. Summer study-abroad opportunities compete with domestic work experiences and internships, which allow the student to earn money for the next academic year and receive valuable on-the-job training. Such domestic opportunities can be especially attractive, even necessary, for students in the business, science, engineering and technology disciplines.

- **Visiting Faculty**

Clemson University welcomes visiting faculty without providing adequate support. Most of the arrangements for visiting international faculty are left in the hands of the individual department heads or colleagues. These faculty must manage the details of housing, transportation and daily living, provide orientation to the campus and academic structure and ensure that the visiting faculty member has a meaningful professional experience. This assignment becomes a burden without adequate support from the University administration.

- **Visiting Students**

Foreign students are referred to International Services and Diversity Programs, where they receive assistance in obtaining visas, as well as orientation to student activities and the community. However, for visiting foreign exchange programs, faculty are responsible for academic advising and may assist students in determining that the academic programs they pursue while attending Clemson will be acceptable by their home universities and ensuring that these students receive proper credit for their studies. Faculty are also called upon to assist with arrangements for housing and help the student to assimilate into the Clemson community. The University must provide for a supportive framework to help share some of this workload.

These issues are not insurmountable. To internationalize, it is first necessary to understand the current situation and identify reasonable goals. Then a plan can be developed and executed.

## **Section IV.**

### **Roadblocks, Solutions and Recommendations**

The following tables represent specific areas of concern expressed by faculty members in their responses to the written survey. Faculty members were asked to comment on what they considered to be significant obstacles to internationalization, to suggest possible solutions and to offer specific recommendations for ways in which solutions could be accomplished.

The information in the right-hand column of each table was taken from the anecdotal “Comments” section of the survey and is representative of numerous responses. Thus, the intent represented in individual faculty members’ responses has been paraphrased into one representative statement for each proposed implementation measure.

Table 1: Internationalization Needs of Clemson Students and Faculty

Table 2: Internationalization Needs of Clemson Faculty

Table 3: Internationalization Needs of Clemson Students

Table 4: Internationalization Needs of International Students and Faculty

**Table 1: Internationalization Needs of Clemson Students and Faculty**

<b>Roadblocks</b>	<b>Solutions</b>	<b>Proposed Implementation Measures</b>
Foreign language skills	Use academic resources to improve foreign language skills of both students and faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the assistance of the languages department, develop a program for increasing fluency, perhaps through Innovation Fund grant.</li> <li>• Provide intensive courses, tapes and other resources that faculty and students could access prior to trips abroad.</li> <li>• Develop and maintain a data base of language resources, such as names and phone numbers of those fluent in various languages.</li> </ul>
Scarce financial resources	Identify funding sources to assist faculty and students in international activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a consistent financial policy regarding tuition to encourage development of exchange programs and subsequently short-term student exchanges.</li> <li>• Identify or generate sources of funding to provide travel grants to students and faculty for international exchanges.</li> <li>• Direct capital campaign funds toward this major university priority.</li> </ul>
Inexperience/insecurity abroad	Provide opportunities for students and faculty to become adept/comfortable with the details of international travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For students, encourage short-term study abroad experiences attended by Clemson faculty who are experienced in international travel.</li> <li>• For faculty, encourage international exchanges, both short-term (four to six weeks) and longer stays, for teaching, research or service activities. Although participation in foreign conferences or meetings is critical to the professional development of the faculty, this does not replace participation in more extended international activities.</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Internationalization Needs of Clemson Faculty**

<b>Roadblocks</b>	<b>Solutions</b>	<b>Proposed Implementation Measures</b>
Time constraints	Evaluate current scheduling and evaluation procedures as well as work loads to place greater emphasis on internationalization.	

**Table 3: Internationalization Needs of Clemson Students**

<b>Roadblocks</b>	<b>Solutions</b>	<b>Proposed Implementation Measures</b>
Time constraints	Evaluate current curriculum to ensure that the international experience provides an equivalent educational experience and is properly rewarded with appropriate credits toward graduation and to ensure that the international experience does not add to the requirements for graduation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the international experience and determine how this experience can be used to meet the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General education requirements in the humanities</li> <li>• General education requirements in the Social Sciences</li> <li>• Elective requirements in the major</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Table 4: Internationalization Needs of International Students and Faculty**

<b>Roadblocks</b>	<b>Solutions</b>	<b>Proposed Implementation Measures</b>
English language skills	Provide local assistance to improve English language fluency skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language database can provide resources for tutoring and interpretation assistance.</li> <li>• Increase resources for assistance with English as a second language.</li> </ul>
Visa Assistance	Evaluate current procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize on-campus assistance</li> </ul>
Social Security Assistance	Evaluate current procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize on-campus assistance</li> </ul>
Housing	Identify or create appropriate housing sources for short-term international visitors (both students and faculty.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For students, provide an international dormitory that would provide housing for one semester or more for international students and U.S. students who would like to have a foreign student as a roommate.</li> <li>• For faculty, convert a portion of the 7th floor of the Clemson House to low-cost, short-term housing for visiting faculty and scholars (up to one semester.)</li> </ul>
Transportation	Explore public transportation options and possibilities of other local transportation assistance.	<p>Provide information and meaningful orientation about public transportation options; consider a university-community committee review of possible volunteer transportation support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to Redfern on a sliding scale fee basis for short-term international students.</li> <li>• Provide information regarding local private health care options and insurance for both faculty and students.</li> <li>• Provide transportation to health care facilities if needed.</li> </ul>
Health Care	Identify viable options for both international students and faculty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to Redfern on a sliding scale fee basis for short-term international students.</li> <li>• Provide information regarding local private health care options and insurance for both faculty and students.</li> <li>• Provide transportation to health care facilities if needed.</li> </ul>

## **Section V.**

### **General Recommendations**

The results of the survey indicate there is significant skepticism among the Faculty that the University administration is serious about the process of internationalization and that the current efforts will amount to much. This being the case, the Committee strongly urges that the administration initiate immediate action based on a multidimensional strategy to stimulate and coordinate activities for internationalizing the University.

Concrete commitments to such a strategy should be made at an early date. This will allow the time to build support among and between all relevant constituencies -- administration, students, faculty, international visitors (long-term international students as well as short-term international visitors), and concerned international business persons. The surveys upon which this report is based point toward more specific recommendations, which constitute essential elements of such a multidimensional strategy. These are given below.

#### **Overall Strategy: Promote cross-cultural understanding.**

- This is the touchstone infusing all elements of the multidimensional strategy for internationalizing the University. In an increasingly interdependent world, Clemson graduates and faculty must be able to work and effectively communicate across cultural barriers. The Clemson undergraduate, for example, would be exposed to many more internationally-oriented activities on campus and opportunities for interaction with international students. Study-abroad opportunities would be given priority and more directly integrated into the major; and foreign language learning would be part of a broader effort to enhance cross-cultural awareness and place the major in global perspective.

**Recommendation # 1: Expand the International Priorities Committee into a standing, University-wide committee of professors, students, administrators and business leaders to plan and coordinate international activities of the University.**

- This should be the first priority. This body would report to the senior administration and would assure continuing student, faculty and alumni input into and hence support for a multidimensional strategy for internationalizing the University. Ultimate design of the multidimensional strategy would occur through this committee.

**Recommendation # 2: Strengthen services provided to all constituencies engaged in or planning international activities.**

- The most effective international programs would be driven by professors, students and international visitors. Existing structures should be strengthened to service these needs. The University should refrain from using limited resources to add more administrative personnel to accomplish this.

**Recommendation # 3: Create incentives for students and faculty to support internationalization.**

- This should include:
  - (1) a grant program for students and professors for undertaking innovative study or research projects abroad
  - (2) recognition of the importance of international activities by professors in the promotion and tenure processes as well as raises.

**Recommendation # 4: Establish higher education partnerships with foreign institutes and/or comprehensive student centers in selected regions.**

- Immediate attention should be given to coordinating and strengthening existing programs in the Americas, Europe and Japan. However, the University

should start developing such partnerships with institutes in Asia and elsewhere as appropriate opportunities arise. An early investment in such areas at the ground level will yield significant benefits to the University as their populations gain economic prosperity and expand their focus on higher education.

**Recommendation #5: Charge the appropriate curriculum committees to take further steps to internationalize the curriculum.**

- This should include how best to integrate the study of foreign languages and foreign cultures with other internationally oriented subject matter into training for the various disciplines. The Committee recognizes that some efforts along these lines are under way but some visible action is needed to signal to the University constituency that internationalization is a high priority.

**Recommendation # 6: The University must develop its own unique model for internationalization that reflects its own ideologies, the uniqueness of its past, and the culture of its surroundings.**

- Other institutions that have been successful in internationalization can serve as models for Clemson's development of its international initiative. However, no particular model meets all of the University's objectives. "The Global University of the 21st Century," prepared in 1997 by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, contains a great deal of information that can be of value to Clemson in developing its own programs.

The following chart illustrates implementation based on the order in which the recommendations above are prioritized. This comprehensive and logical plan of action provides a meaningful model for internationalization.

## **Sequential Implementation of Multidimensional Strategy for Internationalization at Clemson University**

Declare Promotion of Cross-Cultural Understanding as Key Goal



Establish Committee with Representation of Key Constituencies



Strengthen International Services to All Constituencies



Create Incentives for Internationalization



Establish International Higher Education Partnerships



Charge Curriculum Committees with Internationalization



Develop Unique Clemson University Model for Internationalization

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