

Breakout 4, Rapporteur

Undergraduate International Education Needs in a Period of Rapid Globalization: The Nerve Center for National Security

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Report of the Undergraduate Breakout Group Chaired By Harold Josephson and Elizabeth E. Traxler

The session on undergraduate education needs in international education opened with this question from Dr. Harold Josephson, associate vice chancellor of International Programs at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte:

Why has the undergraduate constituency been the most silent and invisible of constituencies at the venues where strategy and resources for international education are discussed? Compared to the National Resource Centers, undergraduate institutions have been the least heard and the most disadvantaged of all stakeholders in international education. Part of the answer, he suggested, has to do with the fact that the undergraduate community hasn't spoken much at the venues where the reauthorization of the Title VI of the HEA and the Fulbright/Hays programs are discussed. And when undergraduate constituencies have spoken, they have not done so with one voice. Undergraduate institutions have used the Title VI programs, but since they most frequently are written from individual departments such as foreign languages or international studies, they have rarely been the institutionwide resources that the NRCs have been

to their host institutions. Those of us who have had our provosts tell us our institution can't or won't make the 50 percent match required by the Title VI program understand this in our bones.

But part of the answer also has to do with a changing understanding of what the national needs are for international education. Until now, the arguments that have dominated in the reauthorization debates have been those of national security. The presentation by Gil Merckx [Plenary Paper 3] showed clearly that it was national security needs that saved the Title VI legislation when the Nixon and Reagan Administrations attempted to eliminate it. His presentation estimated the number of specialists needed in various fields, and suggested that the specialists now produced may not be sufficient to meet current national security needs.

However, the outcome of the discussion of the undergraduate breakout group suggests that undergraduate education in global literacy has acquired an even greater, and unprecedented, importance. This has happened precisely because the changes brought about by the globalization of the United States have resulted in a much broader definition of national security. In these changed conditions, international education at the undergraduate level may become the nerve center for national security in the twenty-first century.

Continuing and Emerging Needs for International Education

Participants in the undergraduate breakout group were as diverse as the constituents in undergraduate education. This was the largest breakout group at the conference. It included representatives from community colleges, four-year liberal arts colleges, as well as the university undergraduate programs that provide recruits for the nation's graduate programs in international studies.

At first, the group found it difficult to develop direct arguments and rationales for continuing and emerging needs for international education at the undergraduate level. In part, this reflected the diversity of constituents present. Internal issues—such as advising, the linkage of study-abroad programs with curriculum, or the relative importance of Western Civilization courses in general education programs—were more immediate and familiar than were the external environment and the complex reauthorization process. The task was also difficult for this group because its own strong commitment to international education was such that it was difficult to understand why it had to be justified to public policymakers who don't understand the importance of international education.

Ultimately, arguments for the need for international education were presented from two basic perspectives, both of which supported a greater recognition of the importance of undergraduate education in meeting U.S. needs for national security. There seemed to be consensus among the group that the concept of national security needed to be expanded to include not only diplomatic, intelligence, and military concerns, but also the requirements of economic competitiveness, internal cohesion, and the prevention of balkanization—which can interrupt the globalization of the economy—and the needs of an enlightened citizenry.

Arguments for national security and economic competitiveness spoke to the continuing national need for specialists, and for the function of undergraduate institutions as recruiting grounds for graduate schools. These arguments

still hold and remain important. But it has not been possible before now to argue that the population at large—across the country—needs international education for the good of the whole nation. It is this vastly expanded need for global literacy in a number of fields that makes meeting the need a national issue, not simply a state issue.

Examples of the needs for global literacy were suggested for virtually every field of economic endeavor: local business, architecture, education, arts and sciences, public health, social work, secretarial work, engineering, police and security, chemistry, automobile production and other factory work, nursing, medicine, and the management of cultural diversity. Not only have various professional associations in these fields articulated needs for international training and multicultural understanding as they have never done before; major think tank reports also show that the most desirable employees have international skills and that the United States labor force is disadvantaged because it is internationally illiterate and deficient in multicultural skills.

The importance of international education in increasing national capacity and skills to work in multicultural environments was repeatedly cited: as the United States has moved away from the language of the melting pot, heritage cultures and languages have acquired new legitimacy. Understanding the cultures of recent immigrants and the dynamics of global population movements is important to avoid the balkanization of the United States. The study of minority populations and ethnic groups—previously isolated in ethnic studies departments, if present at all in the undergraduate curriculum—has become an integral component of international and global education.

The group agreed that being able to demonstrate and document the globalization of local economies all over the United States is important. By working with state and local economic and social institutions to document the local globalization of their communities, colleges and universities will be able to increase the overall awareness of the importance of international education.

The Role of Higher Education in Meeting Continuing and Emerging Needs in International Education

The role of higher education was assumed rather than addressed directly throughout the discussion of continuing and emerging needs for international education.¹ All of the discussion, however, focused on the ways in which undergraduate programs had contributed to helping local communities meet the new needs imposed by the globalization of the U.S. economy.

Representatives from the four-year and community colleges emphasized the work their institutions were doing in bread and butter labor force training and preparation for work in U.S. communities across the nation: the secretaries, the factory line workers, the Pizza Hut managers, the few agricultural commodity workers, the bankers, real estate brokers, dry cleaners, gas station attendants, green grocers, K-12 teachers—each of which deals with local aspects of the global economy.

Community colleges—responsible for more than 50 percent of the country's population in higher education—have been extremely active in international grant getting and program planning in last few years. For example, Elizabeth Traxler, director of the SCIEC Title VI-A grant at Greenville Technical College in North Carolina, pointed out that aggressive efforts by South Carolina to court international firms to bring factories to the state are complemented by training programs offered by the community colleges. Their programs prepare people for factory and clerical work in multilingual and multicultural environments. In Virginia, undergraduate international studies programs have contributed to state programs to develop exports of products

1. It may be presumed that the role of higher education in meeting the nation's needs for economic development and economic security is as critical and as recognized now as it was at the time of the passing of the Morrill Act in 1865. That act recognized the need for a very different kind of education than then offered to the elite leadership at institutions such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. The Land Grant institutions were established to open technical and agricultural education to the whole population—to meet the nation's need for economic growth and security.

ranging from apples to pollution control devices, as well as to state and national CDC public health programs for the Mexican laborers upon whom Virginian agriculture depends.

The implications that were identified for future planning in higher education were as follows: The specific roles of undergraduate education in developing local and national labor forces needs to be disaggregated very carefully. Many of the occupations and professions that undergraduate institutions train people for require degrees of international literacy, and many will soon require international accreditation. The role of community colleges has been even more neglected than that of undergraduate education in the Title VI debates of the past. This needs to be remedied. Most of all, undergraduate higher education needs to be recognized as the nerve center for international education across the United States.

The Role of Title VI in Meeting Continuing and Emerging Needs in International Education

Presentations by Merckx, Drobnick, and Brecht earlier in the day had demonstrated the effectiveness of Title VI programs of the past in meeting national needs for specialists in area studies, professional training, and foreign languages, especially the less-commonly taught languages. The evidence in McCarthy's paper [Plenary Paper 2] is that Title VI has been enormously successful in undergraduate education, as well.

Therefore, the consensus of this group was that the reauthorization for Title VI should recognize the undergraduate area as a discrete and essential piece in a national strategy for international education. The needs of different kinds of undergraduate institutions should be seen as complementary, and not competitive. Overall funding should be increased, and Title VI programs should be strengthened and shaped to encourage much greater articulation between all levels of the international education enterprise.

The group affirmed that undergraduate study is a highly effective and efficient place to acquire knowledge about the world and to learn foreign languages. It affirmed that faculty development programs ought to be designed that are appropriate to the needs of different institutional pat-

terns: community college faculty work year-round, and programs designed around a summer break can't help them. The group affirmed the importance of developing competency-based foreign language instruction, and the importance of greater linkage to the outreach responsibility of the NRCs.

The group recognized limits to the involvement of the federal government. For this reason, it emphasized that the Title VI programs of the future need to place a greater emphasis on evaluations and the demonstration of accomplishment. The Title VI program can be an effective and efficient mechanism to develop and demonstrate the best projects and to help disseminate exemplary projects. Other international education organizations can also help with program dissemination at national conferences and workshops and by publishing teaching materials and descriptive abstracts on the Internet.

The group further agreed that international education would be strengthened by a program that would:

- be flexible enough to allow longer commitments to support some projects of a more ambitious nature;
- encourage the development of interdisciplinary curricula, instruction in the less-commonly taught languages, and in non-European studies;
- foster the development of partnerships with the private sector, government, and other stakeholders in the strengthening of international education at the undergraduate level. This collaboration could be especially productive in the sharing of technology, in joint economic development projects, and in internship programs;
- recognize the centrality of faculty development to the success and sustainability of an

internationalized curriculum, and facilitate the participation of faculty in appropriate development activities;

- require institutional cost-sharing in order to promote institutional commitment and increase the likelihood of a residual “established” funding base for continuance after the grant funds expire. Encouraging private-sector cost-sharing can foster more widespread and long-term participation of local business and other organizations as primary stakeholders in the outcome of these important initiatives;
- recognize that internationalization is a long-term enterprise. A single grant doesn't do it, and is often a springboard for more imaginative approaches;
- provide clear guidelines to help in planning programs and preparing proposals.

There was no consensus on the meaning or utility of a two-year foreign language entry or graduation requirement for assessing the commitment of an institution to international education.

In sum, with greater clarity about the importance of international education at the undergraduate level, and a clear understanding of different kinds and levels of need for different localities and institutions; with more insistence on the evaluation and demonstration of the accomplishments of Title VI grants at undergraduate institutions; with more cooperation and integration among the NRCs and other graduate programs; and with the selection and dissemination of exemplary projects and curricula, Title VI can be more effective than ever before—and it can meet the international education needs of the United States in the next century.