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CHAPTER TWELVE

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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American institutions of higher education universally recognize their fundamental role in preparing students to engage responsibly and productively in a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent. Global society is constantly and dramatically being reshaped by “scientific and technical innovations, global interdependence, cross-cultural encounters, and changes in the balance of economic and political power” (National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise, 2007, p. 2). The very sustainability of the planet’s shared resources is in serious question. Ours is also a world that is threatened by the global spread of communicable disease and terrorism. Local problems—including hunger and homelessness, unequal educational opportunity, crime, and lack of accessible health care—are repeated in cities and communities around the world (Chisholm, 2003). There is virtually nowhere in the United States without an immigrant population. This country is itself an international culture, and nearly all Americans constantly interact with individuals of widely varying backgrounds, cultures, customs, and beliefs. It is therefore essential to educate students to be global citizens who are prepared “to understand, live successfully within, and provide enlightened leadership to a richly diverse and increasingly complex world” (Wilson-Oyelaran, 2006).

In this context, higher education is confronted with the challenge of educating global citizens who can engage with one another to address this dizzying array of factors, including others

that emerge regularly. This chapter offers principles to consider in designing initiatives for students to learn about and practice civic engagement internationally. It then provides three general approaches to international civic engagement and programmatic examples. It concludes with a discussion of the barriers and challenges of global civic engagement and steps institutions can take to address them.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR INTERNATIONAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCES

X In 2003, the International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leadership (IPSL) issued its “Declaration of Principles” that outlined essential elements for structuring effective international service-learning programs (Brown, 2006). The principles are equally effective for developing, implementing, and assessing other opportunities for students to learn about and practice civic engagement in international and intercultural settings. These principles are paraphrased and supplemented with explanatory text here.

Principle 1: There is reciprocity between the community and the college or university

The relationship between the community or organization served and the institution of higher education must be built on mutual respect, trust, and esteem. Reciprocity implies that the partners seek to address goals that are shared or, at least, compatible. Participants in partnerships founded on agreed-on values and vision are viewed as members of a common community that they seek to improve for the sake of their own and each others’ benefit (Torres, 2000). Frequent and open communication also characterizes relationships based in reciprocity. When students work in settings based on reciprocal partnerships, they gain “a sense of mutual responsibility and respect between individuals” (Kendall, 1990, p. 22). In a reciprocal relationship, students do things *with* others rather than *for* them and learn to respect and work productively with others across differences.

Principle 2: The learning is rigorous, sound, and clearly connected to the civic engagement activities

It is essential that civic engagement initiatives, whether in the United States or abroad, uphold the highest standards of academic rigor. As is true of all experiential learning, the academic and the field experiences must be thoroughly integrated. Student learning outcomes should be clearly stated, integral to the design and implementation of the program, and communicated to all parties involved. Academic content and pedagogies should be selected to achieve the desired outcomes, and the degree of students' achievement of the outcomes should be regularly assessed. The civic engagement experiences in which the students participate should be designed to enhance learning, and in turn, the academic content should inform students' practical experiences.

Principle 3: The studies should not offer foregone conclusions

In the spirit of academic inquiry, students should be exposed to various points of view, theories, and ideas. They should be asked to critically examine those ideas and their civic engagement experiences to reach their own well-considered conclusions. Given the vast complexities of global civic and social issues, students must be able to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.

Principle 4: The service is truly useful to the community or organization

The general principle of service-learning that states that the community or organization is best qualified to define what is useful applies equally to all civic engagement experiences, local and global (Brown, 2006; Jacoby, 1996). The time and quality of student participants' contributions must be sufficient to offset the time spent by members of the community or organization. Anything less amounts to exploitation of the very people that the service intends to assist (Brown, 2006). It is critical to avoid placing students into local or international settings based solely on desired student learning outcomes or on providing services that perpetuate a state of need, rather than seeking and addressing the

root causes of the need (Jacoby, 1996). As is the case for student learning, outcomes for community participants and organizations should be clearly stated and addressed.

Principle 5: The experience should be appropriate for the developmental and academic levels of the students, and support services should be provided

To foster student development and to ensure that community needs and expectations are met, it is important that activities are appropriate for the student participants. It is critical that students be well prepared for their experience abroad in terms of culture, academic background, and practical issues. Support services should be readily accessible throughout the experience. Of equal importance is supporting students' reentry to U.S. culture. Students return filled with new ideas and views that can enrich the rest of their college experience and that of their peers. On the other hand, they can also return with a sense of futility in light of the extent and intensity of human suffering that they may have confronted.

Principle 6: Structured opportunities for personal and objective reflection should be built into the program

Structured reflection that is intentionally designed to enable students to achieve the desired learning outcomes is essential. Reflection also allows students to examine their values and beliefs, to consider their own values in the context of different ideas and belief systems, and to put it all into the context of understanding what it means to be a socially responsible global citizen.

OPTIONS FOR GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This section provides an overview of three general approaches for international civic engagement. There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these approaches.

As more and more colleges and universities offer opportunities across the globe for their students to learn about and practice civic engagement, many are turning to the programs offered by organizations, sometimes called third-party providers, or other higher education institutions. The International Partnership

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for Service-Learning and Leadership offers fifteen undergraduate programs that combine formal academic study at a university abroad with substantive volunteer service in the local community, plus a master of arts degree in international service (see <http://www.ipsl.org>). Cross-Cultural Solutions offers a wide range of non-credit volunteer programs in partnership with sustainable local community initiatives around the world (see <http://www.crossculturalsolutions.org>). The School for International Training offers field-based study abroad programs for undergraduates as well as master's degree programs and certificates. Each of its semester-long programs is built on a theme, including ecology and conservation, culture and development, peace and conflict studies, gender issues, and the arts (see <http://www.sit.edu/about.html>).

A second option for international civic engagement experiences is to encourage students to enroll in the programs of other colleges and universities. For example, the Center for Global Education at Augsburg College in Minneapolis and Arcadia University in Glenside, Pennsylvania, accept students from other institutions into their wide-ranging and well-established international programs. The Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA) is a consortium of seventeen colleges and universities that provides its programs to all qualified students. Its offerings include courses combined with internships and other types of experiential learning around the world as well as in the United States, with a focus on urban affairs and social justice issues (see <http://www.hecua.org>). Similarly, Amizade, through an academic partnership with West Virginia University, offers international service-learning programs for educational credit that focus on academic coursework and meaningful cross-cultural service opportunities (see <http://www.amizade.org>).

The third option is for an institution to design and operate a program for its own students. The examples in the next section describe a variety of these programs. The advantages to the first two approaches include relying on structures that are already in place and that have been created by experienced personnel who have established international partnerships; they do not require a minimum number of students or a lengthy start-up period. Because the range of possibilities is wide, well-informed advisers can assist students in selecting a program that meets their academic and

personal goals and is also appropriate for their developmental level (Chisholm, 2003). On the other hand, when an institution puts the requisite level of effort into the design and implementation of a program to meet institutional and student goals, it has more control over the degree to which desired learning and community outcomes are likely to be achieved. However, the start-up time can be considerable, and the amount of effort significant, both initially and over time. Another disadvantage is that students in an institutionally sponsored program may tend to spend most of their time as a group, limiting their interaction with the people and the culture of the foreign country (Chisholm, 2003).

INSTITUTIONAL EXAMPLES OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This section offers brief descriptions of several examples of international civic engagement initiatives at a range of higher education institutions. While they represent only a small number of programs, they provide a glimpse of the many different possibilities that allow students to learn about and practice civic engagement in international settings.

ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE: ILULA ORPHAN PROGRAM

The Ilula Orphan Program at St. Michael's College in Burlington, Vermont, is a combination of a classroom-based interdisciplinary course in journalism and political science on HIV/AIDS in East Africa and a three-week experiential segment in rural Tanzania. Although the course is designated as a service-learning course, it does not involve traditional service. The faculty and students worked with the Ilula Orphan Program to create a Web site, a film, and grant proposals for the program to document its work with orphans and in community development. In the process of researching and designing these products, the students learn about the critical factors that affect the cycle of HIV infection and poverty, including devastating water shortages, gender inequality, lack of educational opportunities, and environmental degradation. The Web site elaborates on these factors, how they are related, and how the Ilula Orphan Program works to break the cycle. The Web site,

film, and grant proposals describe the program's outstanding work, its governance by community volunteers, and its needs for additional support. Following the time the students spent in Tanzania, they continued to work on the project back at the college (see http://www.ilulaorphanprogram.org/PROGRAMS_HOME.html).

HAVERFORD COLLEGE: SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Center for Peace and Global Citizenship at Haverford College in Haverford, Pennsylvania, sponsors and supports several initiatives that involve liberal learning, critical reflection, and social action. The center encourages interdisciplinary collaboration and focuses on social justice. Its summer internship program supports students from freshmen through seniors while they spend four to ten weeks volunteering with and learning from social service organizations around the world. Since the internship program was established, the center has sent students to work in more than thirty countries. Interns have worked with a variety of organizations, from large international development agencies to small community-based groups. They have addressed a wide array of pressing social issues, including postconflict peace initiatives, education, fair trade, environmental degradation, sustainable development, cultural preservation, and the arts. Interns' contributions include conducting research, helping develop networks and fundraising, providing English-language instruction, and collaborating with local colleagues to carry out grassroots programs in communities. Many internships have led to continuing relationships between Haverford students and their host countries, with interns going on to work on international public policy issues, research, education, journalism, and in the nonprofit sector (see http://www.haverford.edu/CPGC/programs/internships_about.htm).

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY: CONNECTING EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES

Developed as a community-based learning course, Connecting Educational Communities was organized by a Spanish instructor in response to a request from Guatemala's Liaison for Indigenous Communities. The idea and connections for this course

originated in 1997 when the instructor worked in Guatemala City with an advocacy organization for forgotten street children. In the summer of 2003, she returned to Guatemala with another faculty member and fourteen students to pilot a program that would form an ongoing partnership between three Maya communities and Portland State. The students brought funds they had raised and fourteen suitcases of donated educational supplies. They did substantial work on three schools and returned with their suitcases full of crafts purchased from their Guatemalan partners to be sold to provide a source of sustainable funding for the materials needed for the program. The partnership is effective because it allows an American university to contribute resources, energy, and ideas to help marginalized communities survive in the global economy, while providing opportunities for students to learn from indigenous people important lessons and skills in such areas as authentic collaboration and consensus building (Sanders and Wubbold, 2004). Connecting Educational Communities has developed into an eight-credit program that combines campus-based Spanish courses and three weeks in Guatemala. While they are in the rural Maya areas, students work on projects and study Spanish and Guatemalan literature and culture with local teachers and experts (see <http://www.guatemala.pdx.edu>).

KALAMAZOO COLLEGE: K-PLAN

In 1962, Kalamazoo College in Michigan developed the K-Plan, a liberal learning curriculum enriched by experiential, international, and multicultural dimensions. Currently, 85 percent of Kalamazoo's students study abroad, and 88 percent of those are in programs that last at least two academic quarters. Recognizing the developmental nature of the undergraduate learning experience, the college's Mary Jane Underwood Stryker Institute for Service-Learning structures service-learning opportunities in a sequence that offers students progressively more responsible service-learning and leadership experiences in culturally diverse settings over four years. Many students are introduced to service-learning in first-year seminars; others participate in cocurricular volunteer programs. These introductory experiences often motivate students to enroll in an academic service-learning course that links their experiences

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to larger socioeconomic and political contexts. During the sophomore year, students have the opportunity to assume greater responsibility in selecting the nature of the programs in which they participate and the level of leadership they assume. Sophomore-year projects anticipate study abroad, as students immerse themselves in local immigrant communities. After selecting their study abroad sites in the winter quarter, sophomores can opt to participate in the Kalamazoo Project for Intercultural Communication or to begin to develop their integrative cultural research project, which will comprise a significant portion of their study abroad experience. Students participate in a predeparture course that exposes them to the basic principles of intercultural communication, engage in a series of writing assignments while abroad, and as returning students, take a course that encourages reflection on the international experience and how they will be leaders who function effectively in an increasingly interconnected world. Through the senior individualized project and other components of the K-Plan, students are encouraged to extend the depth and breadth of their study abroad experiences to engage further in the work of social justice and community transformation (Wilson-Oyelaran, 2006).

STANFORD UNIVERSITY: OVERSEAS STUDIES ACADEMIC QUARTER PROGRAM IN CAPE TOWN

In the 2005–2006 academic year, students from Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, spent winter quarter in Cape Town, South Africa. Their coursework consisted of three related seminars: community reconstruction and development in postapartheid South Africa, public health and primary health care in a changing community context, and history and politics of South Africa in transition. In addition, students worked on service-learning projects with a nongovernmental organization and also engaged in community-based research. Students participated in one of two group community health assessments with the option of also carrying out their own individually designed research project. The research projects became the academic core of the Cape Town experience. Students found the issues to be complicated and compelling. Their research enabled them to view township life, to

meet and engage with residents and service providers in ways that otherwise would have been impossible, and to contribute in modest ways to improve health in the township. The students organized two community forums at which they gave oral presentations of their work. At the end of one forum, the community residents burst into song to express their thanks. In reflection on the experience, the faculty member who organized it recommends that future experiences include a strengthened predeparture orientation, short-term homestays as part of the program, and support from student affairs staff (Stanton, 2006).

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON: BRINGING IT HOME

The University of Washington in Seattle offers a comprehensive three-credit course, *Bringing It Home*, to students who return from immersion experiences in international settings. The course provides a forum for reflecting on students' experiences, processing reverse culture shock upon returning to the United States, and clarifying values related to the meanings of diversity within the global and local communities. In addition, the class addresses issues of power and privilege, social justice, the differences between tourism and travel, community service versus engagement, and what it means to be civically engaged on the local and global levels. Students in the class volunteer in a community-based organization in Seattle that is connected to their individual interests and career goals.

Course objectives are designed to enable students to sharpen their critical-thinking skills so they can reflect more deeply on their own international experience within the context of global, national, and local social justice. Students acquire language to help them make explicit connections between their experiences and the principles of community, social capital development, democracy, and diversity. They are encouraged to articulate in a complex and thoughtful manner the ways in which the international and the local community service experiences have affected their values, skills, abilities, and career opportunities.

The course is targeted to graduating seniors, advanced undergraduates, and graduate students seeking a more structured, formal, and supportive environment to process their overseas

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experience and to think deeply about how it will affect their future choices. Class meetings include lectures, seminar discussions, student presentations, and guest speakers (see <http://courses.washington.edu/bithome>).

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO GLOBAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The scope and variety of the opportunities to learn about and practice civic engagement internationally described in the previous section attest to the value and viability of such labor- and resource-intensive programs. However, there are a number of challenges that remain for U.S. colleges and universities that seek to create these opportunities for their students.

The first challenge involves the lack of administrative integration at the campus level to support global civic engagement. Often offices that support study abroad and civic engagement or service-learning exist in separate silos, even as most students that both offices serve are seeking more opportunities to learn about and practice civic engagement internationally. Successful international initiatives involve cross-campus collaboration. They also involve working closely with other offices that have essential knowledge and services, including financial aid, risk management, and fund-raising.

As more and more institutions are adding to their mission statements a strong commitment to education for global citizenship, there are often academic requirements and expectations that restrict or render impossible student participation in international civic engagement. These include majors, notably in engineering and the sciences, that allow little or no flexibility for electives or experiential learning far away from the campus. In addition, some faculty members may believe that international civic engagement experiences are not academically rigorous or that they do not contribute sufficiently to the student's major to warrant the time and distraction from the academic core. In other cases, faculty and advisers steer students into U.S.-based internships over international civic engagement because they believe that the former more readily lead to postcollege employment. Global civic engagement programs should be designed in partnership with faculty and with these concerns in mind. In addition, opportunities

should be provided to educate faculty and advisers about the academic and career development benefits of international study and experiences.

The mismatch between academic calendars and the needs of international partner organizations creates a further challenge. Although traditional study abroad has generally focused on semester- or yearlong programs, there is increasing student demand for short-term international experiences, including spring and winter break experiences that range from one to three weeks in length. The potential upside of this trend is that more students may be able to participate in the shorter experiences. However, a significant downside is that many of the international partners' needs do not lend themselves well to short visits. As stated in the principles in the beginning of this chapter, it is critical that colleges and universities ensure that their partners in international community organizations and government offices do not end up spending more time and resources trying to organize for short-term volunteers than they receive back in benefits.

A final challenge is the narrow demographic range of undergraduate students who engage in international programs. The typical U.S. student in many international programs is a white, upper-middle-class female, in her very early twenties, who attends a small, independent liberal arts college or university. In contrast, many college students are older, work, and have family responsibilities. Minority and first-generation students, as well as those who attend community colleges or who transfer between institutions, are far less likely to participate. It is important for institutions to allow a broader range of their students to have international experiences by helping them overcome financial as well as family or cultural barriers.

CONCLUSION

Research conducted by the International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leadership indicates that global service-learning is a more radical educational experience than conventional study abroad and is more likely to have a long-term effect on participating students. Students in such programs develop significant leadership qualities, including adaptability and resourcefulness, the ability to apply fresh approaches to old problems, and the ability

to recast familiar issues in light of broader experiences (Tonkin, 2004). For institutions, the same study found that international service-learning programs are most successful in colleges and universities with a campuswide commitment to experiential learning and civic engagement. On the other hand, large institutions with a weaker tradition of civic engagement and a stronger adherence to traditional pedagogy are less likely to be successful in developing international initiatives. Successful initiatives depend heavily on creative leadership, careful planning, creation of accommodating administrative structures, and buy-in from faculty and administrators at all levels across the institution (Tonkin, 2004). These findings are directly applicable to global civic engagement initiatives other than service-learning.

In conclusion, international opportunities for students to learn about and practice civic engagement belong at the core of undergraduate education because they enable students to develop the very qualities to which liberal education aspires: understanding of our complex and interconnected world, reflection and critical thinking, problem solving, communication, tolerance for ambiguity, appreciation of diversity, and respect for the views of others. Despite the challenges of undertaking it, global learning should be a primary means for higher education to achieve its goals for students, not an add-on. As Kevin Hovland (2005) articulated, "Global learning . . . must challenge students to gain deep knowledge about the world's people and problems, explore the legacies that have created the dynamics and tensions that shape the world, and struggle with their own place in that world. . . . At its best [it] emphasizes the relational nature of students' identities—identities that are variously shaped by the currents of power and privilege, both within a multicultural U.S. democracy and within an interconnected and unequal world. . . . Global questions require students to connect, integrate, and act" (p. 1). Likewise, global questions require institutions to connect, integrate, and act to provide opportunities for their students to be responsible global citizens.

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