

The Global Leader

Preparing students to be tomorrow's global citizens.

BY DR. SCOTT D. MILLER AND DR. MARYLOUISE FENNELL



EXCEPTIONAL LEADERS ARE able to find the best in themselves and, in turn, inspire, engage, and mobilize others, even in the most demanding circumstances. The current global financial crisis and subsequent economic downturn have ratcheted up the pressure on leaders already grappling with a world in transformation, says Dominic Barton, managing editor of the *McKinsey Quarterly*.

"Everyone needs to get into the same kayak in the same whitewater rapids that truly are the global economy," emphasizes Senior Consultant Richard Skinner of Harris IIC Partners, Washington, DC.

As our campuses increasingly compete for students with universities worldwide, globalization can provide a competitive advantage. This means educating students who think globally; are prepared to thrive in a volatile, pluralistic culture; and who understand the trends driving international change.

In a major research effort, McKinsey has identified five global forces that are rewriting the list of business opportunities and challenges. They include the rise of emerging markets as centers of consumerism and innovation, the imperative to improve developed-market productivity, ever-expanding global networks, the tension between rapidly rising resource consumption and sustainability, and the increasingly larger role of government as a business regulator and partner.

In 1994, we founded the InterAmerican Consortium composed of six U.S. colleges and 11 international institutions as a means of globalizing American higher education and meeting the requirements of international trends. This concept goes well beyond the typical semester or study-abroad year to place preparedness of U.S. students on a level plane with their international contemporaries.

We suggest:

- **Initiating globalization across the curriculum.** Many institutions have formed campus-wide task forces with representation from a broad range of academic disciplines to foster global awareness and cultural sensitivity. Such interdisciplinary integration can extend beyond business, language, and social sciences courses into disciplines such as the humanities, the physical sciences, and nursing, creating a truly campus-wide focus. In addition,

we recommend appointing a faculty position focusing on global initiatives to provide further impetus.

- **Engaging faculty and staff.** Creating and extending articulation agreements with domestic and international colleges and universities, as we have done through the consortium, can constitute a helpful first step in moving students and other members of the college community beyond their initial comfort zones. Faculty and staff exchanges among institutions as a way of fostering global awareness and education also represent an attractive recruiting vehicle, and a means of bringing faculty on board with the entire concept of globalizing American education.
- **Creating global awareness through opportunities other than study abroad.** International and travel abroad may not be feasible for all students, including nontraditional learners balancing employment with family responsibilities. Establishing articulation agreements with domestic colleges and universities and service-learning opportunities in other parts of the U.S., however, can broaden students' intercultural awareness.
- **Taking incremental steps.** Even small first steps, such as monthly brown-bag lunches on hot topics relating to global awareness, can extend involvement and growth to students and faculty who haven't previously participated in international initiatives. As a former colleague noted, "Rather than making just one big splash, we've been instrumental — along with others — in helping change the climate on campus."

Today's students are as likely to come from Singapore as from San Diego, and our alumni as likely to work in Mumbai as in Minneapolis. It behooves us, therefore, to prepare students to be tomorrow's global citizens. ■

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