



AIEA PROVOST PERSPECTIVES

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Making Local to Global Connections for a Sustainable Future

Lori Stewart Gonzalez • *Appalachian State University*

Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor





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Time served as Provost: 3 academic years (as of August 2014)

Located in Boone, North Carolina, Appalachian State University is a master's-level university of over 18,000 students and offers more than 150 undergraduate and graduate majors. The mission of Appalachian is to prepare students to lead purposeful lives as engaged global citizens who understand their responsibilities in creating a sustainable future for all.

Provost Gonzalez assumed the role in 2011. Previously, she spent 20 years at the University of Kentucky in a number of roles including dean of the College of Health Sciences. At Appalachian, she has led the strategic planning process and focused on student success initiatives. She is a strong advocate for internationalization of the campus.



Given all of the demands and constraints facing higher education today, why did your institution decide to internationalize?

Internationalization of higher education is an imperative today. At Appalachian State University, providing global learning opportunity has become part of the fabric of who we are as a University. Our graduates will live, work, and make their contribution to society as global citizens. Additionally, today's problems and challenges will be solved by individuals working together across many different countries and cultures. We want to make sure that we provide our students necessary global competency skills to be able to engage with the world as global citizens. At Appalachian, we define global citizenship as a moral and ethical disposition through which our students might understand local and global contexts and their responsibilities within different communities. We have operationalized this in two of our General Education's goals: "Making local to global connections" and "Understanding responsibilities of community membership." From our perspective, internationalization is essential for 21st Century higher education.

In the 1990s, when an increasing number of faculty members from several academic departments were organizing summer study abroad programs for their students, Appalachian began to build momentum and create a cultural shift making internationalization central to the University. At the same time, the University started to integrate international performance criteria into its standard cycles of strategic planning and annual performance reporting. For example, individual faculty reports and each college report included evaluations of specific international activity.

The presence of a centralized international office - in place since 1976 - helped the campus to build a strong support for internationalization. The commitment of various chancellors and provosts to support early internationalization efforts was instrumental in highlighting the importance of developing stronger international education programs on campus and providing financial support for those programs. In the mid-1990s into the 2000s, Appalachian started to build stronger curricular and co-curricular programs with a global focus, including several language programs and majors with global focus such as international economics and international business. As such, when the current Associate Vice Chancellor for International Education and Development arrived on campus in 2006, there was a strong foundation upon which he could help expand and deepen global learning opportunities and engagement. Since then, Appalachian has seen an increased number of students studying abroad. For example, during the 2013/14 academic year, more than 1,000 students studied abroad for academic credit. In contrast, 5 years before, 680 students studied abroad.



As discussed in further detail below, Appalachian State University provides more than \$120,000 annually to support faculty and staff to travel abroad for different purposes, and between 20 and 25 international visiting faculty members are hosted annually at Appalachian to teach in various academic programs. Appalachian State University also has 70 very active partnerships with universities abroad. Located on almost every continent, the partnerships afford students, faculty, and staff opportunities to travel in traditional and non-traditional geographic locations around the world.

Has the role or importance of internationalization at your institution changed over the past five years? If so, how?

Over the last five years, internationalization has gained in importance. As part of reaccreditation, global learning was chosen as the focus of our quality enhancement plan. Internationalization was also one of the five priorities in our capital campaign. Our new Strategic Plan has several initiatives and activities focused on internationalization. Examples include:

- Support for a general education program that prepares all students for effective communication, critical and creative thinking, knowledge of the diverse world, and understanding of the responsibilities of community membership.
- Provision of diverse experiences on campus and abroad to increase students' knowledge of global issues, regions and cultures; improve their intercultural skills; and, develop attitudes that cultivate global citizenship.
- A diverse academic curriculum that prepares students to become engaged global citizens who understand the responsibilities of community engagement.
- A commitment to excellent graduate education and scholarship that address the changing landscape of global, national, state and local needs.

The Office of International Education and Development at Appalachian is tasked with engaging other units on campus to operationalize these initiatives into programmatic activities.

Additionally, when the University revised its mission and vision statement, it introduced an internationalization focus: Thus, the mission states that “Appalachian State University prepares students to lead purposeful lives as engaged global citizens who understand their responsibilities in creating a



sustainable future for all,” while the vision statement describes Appalachian State University as aspiring

to be the destination institution for dedicated students who seek challenging academic programs and co-curricular experiences, engaged faculty and a vibrant campus culture that will shape them into engaged, responsible global citizens.

To support the mission and vision, our restructured General Education Program includes a perspective focused on helping students to make local-to-global connections.

Looking to the future, we anticipate a deepening and maturing of internationalization at Appalachian. The curriculum will be more internationalized and students will be participating in more global learning opportunities both on campus and abroad.

To these ends, Appalachian provides training opportunities for faculty members on how to infuse global issues into their courses as well as how to use technology to connect their classes with similar classes at partner institutions abroad. At the same time, the University is increasing the number of visiting exchange faculty members from our partner institutions coming to teaching at Appalachian for short time periods or a semester. Appalachian is also providing financial support for faculty members to travel abroad for short periods of research or to teach or research at partner institutions. Then, upon their return, they incorporate into their courses materials and lessons learned while abroad. Additionally, the University is financially supporting newer faculty members interested in leading study abroad programs to work closely and be mentored by seasoned faculty members who have led programs abroad, including traveling abroad on their programs.

Global learning opportunities for students on campus include courses with global content, “Cultures and Languages across the Curriculum” (CLAC) courses that employ foreign language resources in a non-foreign language class, utilizing international students and scholars as guest speakers in different classes and residential halls on campus, courses taught by visiting exchange faculty members from partner institutions, the Annual Appalachian Global Symposium, the Annual Diversity Celebration, and the Annual Global Opportunities Conference.

Opportunities abroad include increased study abroad for a semester or year, faculty-led study abroad programs, internships, research, clinical observations, student teaching practicums, and service abroad.



What were some of the main challenges you and your institution faced in pursuing internationalization? What are some of assets you and your institution drew on for this work?

In many ways, Appalachian is a unique institution. Our faculty, staff, and students have been globally engaged for a long time. There has not been much of a debate as to the importance of internationalizing our campus.

I think the challenge for us as an institution has been trying to deepen and broaden the many global activities our faculty and staff are doing. The Internationalization Review conducted by Appalachian through the American Council on Education's Internationalization Laboratory in 2009 revealed that the University was "engaged in a great deal of activities; however, these activities [were] fragmented, disjointed, and not widely reported to others within the University and sometimes within the same department." We continue to work with the campus community to address this challenge. One of the ways in which we are addressing it is through the annual Appalachian Global Symposium started two years ago.

The Symposium highlights global learning and engagement activities across the campus. Through concurrent sessions scheduled during the Symposium, faculty, staff, and students share the different global activities they are engaged thematically in teaching, research, creative endeavors, student global experiences, and co-curricular activities.

What is an example of an internationalization effort on your campus that was not completely successful? Why was that the case, and what did your institution learn from it? Conversely, please discuss an example of an initiative that did work, and why.

Certainly the Global Learning Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is one of the most successful initiatives for internationalization of our campus (<http://qep.appstate.edu/>). Appalachian has sought to use the re-accreditation process to further enhance its internationalization efforts. The QEP is one of the two documents in the re-accreditation process required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The QEP required not only the creation of specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) related to global learning, but also articulation of a set of programs to achieve the SLOs, and a process of assessment in order to measure progress toward attainment of these outcomes. The development and implementation of the QEP has involved many segments of our campus. At Appalachian, we have really embraced the concept of comprehensive internationalization whereby the University leadership, faculty, staff, students, and all academic service and support units



are involved some aspects of implementing the Global Learning QEP. We see the success of the QEP as a shared responsibility of everyone on campus not because our accreditation depends on it but because there is a shared understanding that this is important for our campus.

The focus of Appalachian's QEP is global learning in which students will engage in multiple and varied diverse learning experiences at home and abroad to increase their knowledge of global issues, regions, and cultures; improve their intercultural skills; and develop attitudes that cultivate global citizenship. To achieve these goals, the QEP includes an array of coordinated actions organized into three areas: Curricular Actions, Training and Development Actions, and Assessment Actions. Curricular actions include: Institutionalization of Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum program; support of targeted programs to serve as models of global learning; creation of 4th hour instruction for difficult to acquire languages; and expansion and institutionalization of the Global Connections Certificate Program.

Training and development actions include: Providing workshops on techniques for infusion of global content; providing workshops on global friendly technologies; education abroad training for faculty and staff; and creation and expansion of faculty/staff "Global Opportunities" clusters.

The assessment actions include: Creation and implementation of Global Learning Opportunity (GLO) designation for courses; annual evaluation of products of learning for GLO courses; administration and evaluation of annual global learning essay and global learning survey; and program assessment that tracks multiple and varied global learning opportunities.

Who are the most important stakeholders you work with regarding internationalization at your institution?

The most important stakeholders for internationalization at Appalachian are faculty, department chairs, deans, and staff in co-curricular programs. We seek to infuse more global content into the curriculum and to provide more global learning opportunities for our students; consequently, we are investing resources in supporting various efforts by faculty members. The support of the deans and department chairs is critical to our success. We also understand the importance of co-curricular activities in providing global learning opportunities for the students. As such, many units in student development/student affairs are also involved in supporting the internationalization effort. Additionally, our institutional partners abroad have been invaluable in working with us to move forward in the direction that we have charted for Appalachian.



What are some of the key ways in which senior international officers can help individuals in your role advance internationalization at their institutions?

I believe that senior international officers (SIOs) need to develop a campus-wide vision for internationalizing their campuses. This could be achieved by the SIOs convening a small but representative group of faculty and staff to brainstorm the strategic direction the university should take or to focus on a given stage of internationalization on campus. The involvement of an International Education Committee/Council that is representative of the campus community is also important in helping to operationalize the strategic direction developed by a small group. This could be achieved by tasking the International Education Council/Committee to develop the university's internationalization strategic plan. It would be important for the SIO to co-chair the International Education Council/Committee and provide leadership for this body.

Once the vision is developed, SIOs should engage their campus communities in realizing the vision. They should also provide data to support what is taking place on their campuses as part of the ongoing process documenting and sharing the scope of campus internationalization efforts.

Is there anything else you would like to share with senior international officers or fellow chief academic officers?

In order to be successful, internationalization of a university cannot be the responsibility only of the international offices or a few individuals on campus. Efforts must be made to involve many segments of the campus in both academic and non-academic units. While the leadership for internationalization can come from the university leadership and senior international officers, the engagement of various stakeholders on campus is absolutely essential.



The **Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA)**, a membership organization formed in November 1982, is composed of institutional leaders engaged in advancing the international dimensions of higher education. The purposes of the Association are to:

- Provide an effective voice on significant issues within international education at all levels,
- Improve and promote international education programming and administration within institutions of higher education,
- Establish and maintain a professional network among international education institutional leaders,
- Cooperate in appropriate ways with other national and international groups having similar interests.

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