

International Program Review

April 15, 2005

This report summarizes the issues and recommendations identified by three subcommittees established to conduct a thorough review of issues related to international programs and students at the University of Maryland. The three subcommittees worked on issues related to undergraduate students, graduate students, and special international instructional and research programs and initiatives that did not fall easily into the first two categories.

Each subcommittee was asked to identify the most important issues to be considered and then to make recommendations for any actions that could be taken by the University that would advance the quality, reach, and reputation of our international programs to the benefit of current and prospective students and other customers. Because the purview of the three subcommittees overlapped in many areas, similar conclusions and recommendations have emerged from more than one subcommittee on some issues.

Supporting these subcommittee reports are the results of a survey of faculty on a number of issues related to international programs, included in the Appendix.

Introduction

The University's Mission Statement affirms that, in keeping with the legislative mandates of 1988 and 1999, Maryland "is committed to achieving excellence as the State's primary center of research and graduate education and the institution of choice for undergraduate students of exceptional ability and promise. While the University has already attained national distinction, it intends to rank among the very best public research universities in the United States. To realize its aspirations and fulfill its mandates, the University advances knowledge, provides outstanding and innovative instruction, and nourishes a climate of intellectual growth in a broad range of academic disciplines and interdisciplinary fields. It also creates and applies knowledge for the benefit of the economy and culture of the State, the region, the nation and beyond."

The "International Program Review" was charged with addressing both the "beyond" dimension as it impacts the Campus and the role the University plays and should develop internationally. A basic premise of the University's mandate is the creation of an open-minded, well-educated global citizen, who possesses the analytical and critical skills required to function in an open and increasingly complex world. This, in turn, requires that the University as a whole capitalize on its achievements and strive for excellence as it addresses its standing and role within the State, the nation, and in its international relations.

For UM students, an international experience will mean not just a rewarding and life-changing experience – a sufficient reason in itself; it will also translate into better preparation for advanced studies and for career advancement. By attracting first-rate international students to Maryland, College Park transforms itself into a diversified and challenging global community; it strengthens collaboration with faculty overseas through their graduate students; it provides the Campus with a substantive measure of our competitiveness among US institutions; and it heightens Maryland's international recognition and presence.

As institutions and the pursuit of knowledge become increasingly linked beyond physical borders, universities are being evaluated and ranked by their international partnerships and substantive collaborations. And these allow the University to become even stronger as it competes for top scholars and students from around the world. To be a top institution in the United States does not suffice in the current global market; Maryland has to be among the leading universities in the world. To be stronger, therefore, means that the University of Maryland must be more international.

International Undergraduate Student Issues

The subcommittee understands that international activities, experience, and education will increasingly play a significant role in the University's success and prestige. Accordingly, to move the University forward, international activities must have a more central and strategic place in our mission. To achieve that goal, it recommends the following actions:

1. Establish a Web-based "Maryland Center for Undergraduate International Education" within the Office of International Programs (OIP) to collect, disseminate, promote, document, and integrate information regarding international educational experiences available for undergraduates and faculty teaching undergraduate classes. Services provided by the Center would include:

- Providing information to help students find international educational experiences that match their needs.
- Providing timely information so that unique international educational opportunities such as visiting speakers, exhibits, performances, and symposia can be integrated into class curricula in a way that encourages or requires student participation.
- Coordinating with University Marketing and Communications to promote undergraduate international opportunities and activities. These would be linked directly (e.g., through the UM home page) to the "President's Promise."
- Collecting and disseminating data on the number and demographics of students involved in study abroad, in campus international activities, in on-campus curricular programs with an international (real or virtual) component, and in international student organizations.
- Providing information on individuals available to enhance undergraduate international educational experiences (i.e., Fulbright fellows, visiting scholars, returning study abroad faculty and students).
- Providing linkages to UM international alumni clubs and student groups.

2. To move UM into the top 20 universities in study abroad activity,¹ Study Abroad must be given a higher place in our strategic priorities. The subcommittee recommends that the University:

- Relocate the Study Abroad office from Mitchell Building to a student-accessible and more inviting location (i.e., Holzapfel Hall, thus physically linking it to OIP and MEI) and provide an enhanced infrastructure (size, staffing, financial support) to sustain growth in programs.
- Motivate with financial and other support for faculty and academic units the development of more high-quality semester study abroad programs and more

¹ Of UM's peers, UCLA ranks 2nd, UNC 7th, and Illinois 10th. UM may break into top 20 after the current academic year.

short-term study abroad programs, especially (1) to new locations,² (2) from non-traditional disciplines, and (3) with innovative formats. (For three years, align the Office of Undergraduate Studies' Improvement of Instruction grant program with this priority.)

3. To fulfill the international mission and goals of the University, charge academic units to develop and implement strategic plans for this purpose.

- Develop specific international education program goals and action plans at college and department levels.
- Create University capacity to obtain Title VI and other international grants.³ This requires collaboration across college lines to strengthen area expertise in select regions of the world. Current and/or developing faculty strengths point to Latin America, Middle East and China as regional priorities.
- Add study abroad and other international goals to fund raising priorities.
- Establish an annual "President's International Award" that recognizes and rewards (\$5,000 plus) the unit on campus that best exemplifies innovations and commitments to enhancing international educational experiences for undergraduates. This award might be presented by the President at the Fall convocation or other suitable high visibility campus event.
- Promote the development of internationally focused course offerings (e.g., hybrid courses that include a study abroad experience during spring break, courses on and in non-traditional areas, short-term exchanges with foreign universities and students, online curricular collaborations with foreign universities, faculty and students).

² In 2003-2004, 61% of UM students went to Europe, 21% to Latin America and from 1% to 8% to the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Oceania.

³ Among UM's peers, Illinois has 5 Title VI Centers, Michigan 5, UNC 4, Berkeley 7 and UCLA 7.

International Graduate Students: Issues and Recommendations

The Committee's objectives were to find out about the special issues that affect international students, to review the concerns that graduate program directors have about recruitment and retention, and to make recommendations that might improve the experiences of international students at UM and that would assist in remaining competitive for the most highly talented graduate students on a world-wide basis.

A poll of international graduate students (629 responded out of 2354 polled) and graduate directors (61 responded out of 128 polled) indicated that, overall, these students are very pleased that they are here. Overwhelmingly they respond that orientation programs are well structured and helpful, and that they enjoy and take advantage of the many cultural opportunities in the area. 93% say they would recommend UM to other students. The percentage of international students earning the Ph.D. in ten years is about 8% higher than the University average. A similarly higher completion rate is found for international students in master's programs.

Several areas of concern remain and need to be addressed:

1. The decline in applications and enrollments. The number of applications for admission to the Graduate School from international students for Fall 2004 was 36% lower than for the previous year. To date, applications for Fall 2005 are down 5% over those received by this time last year. These drops are consistent with declining applications nationwide. Graduate enrollment declined slightly in Fall 2004, dropping by about 2% vis-à-vis 2003.

The subcommittee recommends:

- Providing references to national rankings on its Web site since this, along with faculty reputation, is an important factor in attracting international students.
- Faculty should make every effort to cultivate international colleagues as referral sources for students; enhanced recruitment is the most important action the University can take to reverse the decline in international applications.⁴ The "Faculty Partners Program" may be a good model for developing international recruitment activities.
- The University should consider targeting 1-3 top universities in each of the countries from which we currently enroll graduate students, or from which we should have more students, and organize a systematic recruitment effort.

2. Financial support. The number one issue for the students is the size of their stipends, and the subcommittee concurs that the minimum stipend cannot be considered a living wage. While domestic students can find work outside of the University and apply for student loans, these sources of additional revenue are not available to international students due to visa restrictions and banking practices.

⁴ Only 168 out of 629 responders indicated that they were recruited by the University, and only 55 said these recruitment efforts were important in their decision to come to the University.

Recommendations:

- Increase the minimum 9.5-month stipend to at least \$14,000 and the 12-month stipend to \$17,000. In particular, students would be better served by having fewer fellowships that were well funded. Without raises such as these, the University is in danger of not being able to issue immigration documents for incoming students. Until the University has the resources to increase stipends to these levels, at a minimum international students should be offered support for 12 months to ensure that they have adequate resources to meet visa requirements.
- The University must persist in its efforts to find banks that will make loans to international students.
- The Graduate School should provide all graduate directors with an accurate assessment of the financial constraints faced by international students, including the cost of rent, taxes, books, etc., and encourage them to offer more than the minimum stipend, if possible, or to assist those international students who encounter financial difficulties to find supplemental work on campus, such as teaching summer or winter term or working part time on campus.
- The Graduate School should inform international students and graduate directors that OSFA offers emergency loans of \$500 to graduate students.

3. Graduate housing. The limited University-sponsored graduate housing, combined with the low stipend, makes finding affordable housing a serious problem.

- Recommendation: Affordable housing for graduate students on campus, or within walking distance, should be the University's most important priority in the construction of additional student housing. Recommendations to be issued as a result of a survey being conducted by the Division of Student Affairs should be considered carefully.

4. Assessing English proficiency at a distance. A third of the surveyed international students indicated that they had difficulty with English, and some graduate directors feel unable to assess English proficiency based on the data that they receive from TOEFL and TSE.

Recommendations:

- Raise the minimum writing score of the TOEFL from 4 to 5 and recommend that programs look for a minimum score on the TSE of 50 for all graduate applicants, not just for those who will be teaching assistants.
- All programs offering TA support should conduct a phone, videoconference, or in-person interview prior to offering the TA position.
- The role and funding of the Maryland English Institute (MEI) – including hard budget funding for activities directly related to UM students, through Academic Affairs to replace its current self-support status – should be reviewed to ensure its continued viability as a partner in the education of the University's international graduate students.
- MEI should involve the graduate directors more closely in the evaluation of potential TAs and in introducing a category of approval for teaching

responsibilities with minimal lecturing responsibilities, an intermediate category between pass and fail.

5. Application process. International students complain that they must fill out detailed financial information on the application form, even when they would be able to accept an offer of admission only if it were accompanied by full financial support. Several students contrasted our practices with those of other universities and suggested that it discouraged applications.

- Recommendation: the Graduate School should consider requesting financial data only if the applicant is not requesting full financial aid.

6. Publicizing services/organizations for international students. A third of the students who responded to the survey were not aware of the existence of international graduate student organizations.

- Recommendation: the Graduate School should post a list of international student organizations on its Web site. It should provide a list of the international student organizations and contact information to graduate directors so they can direct students whom they are interested in attracting here to the appropriate organizations for information. When international students arrive, these international student organizations can assist in making the transition to campus life.

7. International Education Services (IES). While most comments from students and Graduate Directors were quite positive, 62% of the international students felt that IES could be more helpful to them. Some of the concerns are outside IES's purview (e.g., affordable housing, financial problems), but some need to be addressed, e.g., long time lags in receiving from IES forms to obtain entrance visas and difficulty scheduling appointments in a timely manner. The subcommittee noted that demands on IES in the new era of increased scrutiny are significant. Coupled with budget constraints and the need for additional staff, service to students appears to be negatively affected to some degree.

- Recommendation: consider a review of IES activities, priorities, and budget to address these problems.

Special International Instructional and Research Programs and Initiatives

This subcommittee addressed issues related to degree and non-degree programs offered abroad, non-degree programs offered to international audiences on campus, and research programs conducted abroad by UM faculty, staff, and students. An initial review of potential items to be discussed yielded the following list: issues related to degree and non-degree programs abroad, on-campus non-degree programs, international research programs, and faculty and general issues.

It should be noted that international special programs generate funding to support faculty and departments; they also provide teaching opportunities for faculty and international exposure for them and the University. International research efforts allow UM faculty to apply for large grants on issues that range from HIV/AIDS to terrorism and climate change. They generate international teams of scholars, thus raising visibility for UM at home and abroad, while expanding research opportunities and allowing for gathering social data available only in other locations.

1. Quality standards for special international programs.

Recommendations:

- The quality of the institutional partner must be consistent with UM's reputation.
- All international programs must follow University guidelines for approval.
- The quality of academic offerings must be consistent with on-campus courses.
- Issues regarding internal country politics must be considered.
- UM should provide a consistent and coherent approach within a region/country through a consistent set of administrative and support services.
- All international programs should be listed on the UM portal for professional degree/certificate programs and under international programs.
- A campus committee composed of representatives from the Graduate School, OIP, OIT, and OPS, the Registrar, and other appropriate offices should determine, oversee, and provide uniform and coordinated academic and administrative services. Academic advising must be ensured.
- The campus Finance Committee should review and approve the budget for the program.
- International programs offered online must follow campus guidelines for online programs.

2. Coordination of special international programs.

To build a strong international presence, the Campus needs to provide a coordinated approach to the administration of international programs. There needs to be a central point of information/coordination of international activities. Appropriate resources should be allocated for this purpose.

Recommendations:

- All international agreements that are to be signed by deans must be vetted in advance with OIP and the Provost.
- Offices that are primarily international in focus should be under the same organizational structure (OIP). Currently OIP includes IES and IGCA; consideration should be given to folding MEI into OIP, as it serves the entire campus community.
- A campus committee chaired by OIP could identify the combination of regions and/or functions upon which the Campus would strategically focus. The committee would seek approval of this approach from the Provost and appropriate others. Such selected approaches would be folded into the Campus's strategic plan and serve as an important focus for funding initiatives.

3. Faculty participation. To encourage faculty to become more involved in international efforts, UM should institute a series of activities and events, as well as guidelines, that demonstrate the importance of these efforts to Campus leadership.

Recommendations:

- Annual recognition luncheon similar to the “rainmakers” event.
- Letters from the Provost to faculty who teach and participate in training as part of an international effort.
- Inclusion of international activities on annual activity reports with a view towards recognition of such work in APT considerations.
- Set a minimum for participation in international teaching and training efforts (e.g., \$5,000 per course and \$800 per day for training). This will minimize variation across campus and encourage units to pursue only those activities that can generate sufficient revenue to pay at these levels.
- Barriers to paying faculty overloads in their own department should be eliminated.
- For programs that have net positive revenues, provisions to reward those who are instrumental in creating the programs and securing funding should be considered.
- International partner institutions should have complementary research programs to facilitate interaction with ongoing research by UM faculty.
- Negotiations leading to collaborative agreements should include building relationships with the appropriate government research entities, as needed.
- A portion of net revenues might be used to support research related to the focus of the educational program.

4. Financial model to be considered for degree and non-degree educational programs for international customers, on and off campus.

Recommendations:

- Consider for adoption, with appropriate modifications, the recently approved set of rules governing entrepreneurial programs offered by campus units.

5. Support of international research programs

Recommendations:

- Recruit internationally competitive faculty (who may not necessarily come from US-based graduate schools). Consider candidates who have the ambition, talent and proven record to seek out or manage large research projects of “international” character (those that address multi-disciplinary issues, are sponsored by international organizations, or are conducted overseas).
- Increase support for proposals. Namely:
 - a. Support team: For each large-scale proposal, assemble a team of volunteers with significant experience in proposals in this field, of this scale, and with the funding agency being approached, to advise the PI and his/her team on substantive issues vis-à-vis the sponsor, proposal strategy, resources, and Campus obstacles/solutions. The team’s function is to facilitate, and the success is measured in winning proposals, not in implementing campus policies. ORAA, OGCA, deans and others will continue to have their respective responsibilities.
 - b. Financial support: Each proposal selected for focused effort (few per year) would be allocated funds to prepare a high quality proposal for presentation to the sponsor. The funds could bring partners here, fund PI’s and others to work elsewhere on the proposal, etc.
 - c. Selection criteria: Potential faculty empire builders need to be coaxed back onto Campus (those who currently run projects through other non-campus entities) or coaxed out of their current comfort zone of smaller, more self-centered research support efforts.
- Increase support for projects. Large projects and multi-departmental projects present different challenges on Campus. For this reason, projects need to hire and direct-bill administrative burdens to the maximum extent possible. Support can be provided in the following ways:
 - a. Allocate staff part-time from a campus administrative unit to join the project team and support the PI (e.g., someone from grant and contract accounting or from sponsored programs). This function might be co-funded out of campus resources and project resources.
 - b. Increase DRIF returns to PI’s who take on projects with greater campus externalities.⁵
 - c. Increase outreach support for active projects by enhancing the wider view of the University as an internationally competitive place. Campus-supported projects should include an outreach plan to be developed by the PI with the campus communications staff.

⁵ Ignoring the sensitivity of the DRIF status quo, it seems that as DRIF is allocated among campus units on multi-departmental projects, there is little left-over incentive for the entrepreneur. If an extra-departmental allocation could be made to reward the PI who takes on leadership of projects of a certain size, or having multi-departmental characteristics, the PI could use these funds to support the project with students or administrative staff, to work on the next proposal, or to do related work that is not funded by the sponsor.

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND PROGRAMS

Subcommittee on International Graduate Student Issues

Ann Wylie - Chair, Assistant President and Interim Dean for Graduate Studies
Isabell Cserno, Graduate Student
Johnetta Davis, Associate Dean, Graduate Minority Education
Mac Destler, Professor of Public Policy
Bill Hodos, Professor of Psychology
Cherie Scricca, Associate Dean, MBA Programs, School of Business
André Tits, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Val Woolston, Director, International Education Services

Subcommittee on International Undergraduate Student Issues

Donna Hamilton - Chair, Associate Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies
Spencer Benson, Director, Center for Teaching Excellence
Jane Fines, Director of Special Programs, School of Engineering
Robert Krapfel, Associate Professor of Marketing
Annette Mitchell, Undergraduate Student
Phyllis Peres, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies
Michael Ulrich, Advisor, International Education Services

Subcommittee on International Special Programs and Initiatives

Bill Destler - Chair, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Judi Broida, Dean, Office of Continuing and Extended Education
Chas Cadwell, Director, IRIS Center
Saúl Sosnowski, Director, Office of International Programs
John Steinbruner, Director, Center for International Security and Studies at Maryland
Charles Wellford, Chair, Dept. of Criminology and Criminal Justice