

International Programs

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We recommend that the University launch a major initiative to expand the scope and enhance the quality of international programs. The primary goals of this initiative are: (i) to increase the general awareness and education of our students about cultural diversity, international issues and the global economy, (ii) to significantly increase the number of international undergraduate students on campus, (iii) to expand and formalize study abroad programs for our students, and (iv) to make the University known as a place that strongly promotes international experiences.

Our committee has discussed the recommendations outlined in this document with Ms. Barbara Gill, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, and Ms. Valerie Woolston, Director of International Education Services. Both have been quite supportive of the committee's recommendations. In response to an earlier version of this report, they have provided additional information, Appendices A and B, which include proposed methodology, staffing and budget requirements, and other issues surrounding our committee's recommendations.

The following constitute two specific actions items designed to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.

1. Increase the number of undergraduate international students in the university.

Currently, international students constitute only 2.2% of our undergraduate student population. By contrast, this percentage is 8.2% at the University of Virginia, 9.6% at George Mason University, 9.1% at American University and 12.8% at George Washington University. We feel that by carefully recruiting a larger number of international students, the university will (i) enhance the academic profile of its students, (ii) create a richer and more diverse student body and elevate the awareness of the University community about international issues, (iii) enhance the reputation of the University at the international level and (iv) generate additional revenue. We propose to launch a major effort to increase the percentage of international undergraduates to 5% in three years and to 10% in 10 years. We strongly recommend that the University begin to implement the recommendations outlined here no later than summer 2008. A few specific activities that would help achieve this goal are outlined below.

- a. Establish a concerted effort in the Undergraduate Admissions Office to deliberately recruit talented students from around the world, especially from targeted countries. Focus the recruitment effort on the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, India, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey and United Arab Emirates.
- b. Organize an annual open house for the employees of embassies and other international organizations in Washington, DC, such as the World Bank and

- International Monetary Fund to inform them about the University of Maryland. Use this open house as an opportunity to encourage their children and other relatives to attend the University of Maryland and to get the attendees to spread the word about our university in their respective countries.
- c. Establish a Summer Institute at Maryland program to host international high school students in the University and provide them a range of opportunities and experiences that are likely to be attractive to them, e.g. English language; American culture, literature and politics; science and technology in America; business and entrepreneurship; music and arts. Through these summer programs international students will become familiar and comfortable with our campus and its surrounding and establish relationships and friendships, hence increasing the chance that they decide to pursue their higher education here at our University. The Maryland English Institute (MEI) can be the vehicle to launch some components of this program.
 - d. We need to set aside a scholarship fund, at least initially, for academically talented international students. It is likely that the financial benefits of attracting more international students would significantly outweigh the investment made through scholarships.

2. Increase the scope and sophistication of our international programs.

The number of students who graduate from the University of Maryland with some form of international experience is woefully small. Specifically, in fiscal year 2006, only 14.1% of our students had some form of travel abroad or study abroad experience (see attached Annual Survey of U.S. Study Abroad). In our increasingly global world, the lack of international experience for the other 85% of our students could become a handicap in the years to come.

We propose to establish a number of programs aimed at making the University of Maryland an institution that values awareness of international issues, creates opportunities and experiences for its students to learn about other cultures, languages and ways of life and prepares them to work and succeed in an increasingly global business world. Specifically, we propose to drastically expand the University's study abroad programs aiming to increase the number of students participating in these programs so as to achieve a 25% participation rate for our graduates in three years and continue to expand these efforts toward a 50% participation rate in 10 years. We strongly recommend that the University begin to implement the recommendations outlined here no later than summer 2008.

- a. Establish well-defined and concrete partnerships with a select group of high-quality and reputable universities, companies and NGOs abroad with the purpose of accepting our students (if appropriate, through a student exchange program) for long-term (several months) study or internship abroad programs. Develop a concerted and aggressive effort on campus to promote these programs among our students. We should aim to increase the number of students participating in this program so as to

- achieve a 10% participation rate for our graduates in three years and continue to expand these efforts toward a 20% participation rate in 10 years.
- b. Create a campus-wide International Studies Minor. The requirements for this minor should include: languages study, courses on international culture and business and a study or internship abroad as described in (a). Students who opt for the minor will gain a more in-depth and comprehensive international experience than those who just participate in a study or internship abroad. The University can use its International Studies Minor as an effective tool for student recruitment and to enhance its reputation as an institution that especially encourages international experiences.
 - c. Expand and promote a short-term (several weeks) Study Abroad Program during short periods such as the winter break, a part of summer months or, when appropriate spring break, creating an opportunity for our students to spend a few weeks visiting one or several countries. The program should have an educational component to make the trip a rich learning experience. It is likely that many students who have not had a prior travel abroad experience will find their visit so interesting as to decide to participate in a longer and more formal international experience. As such the program should be strongly promoted among lower-class students (freshmen and sophomores). We should aim to increase participation in this program to achieve a 15% participation rate for our graduates in three years and continue to expand these efforts toward a 30% participation rate in 10 years.
 - d. Replace some of the University Core courses as well as University Honors Seminars with courses that emphasize international issues such as cultural diversity, languages, global economy, international art and music. Since Core courses constitute a requirement for all students, this change will provide more opportunities to our student body to gain exposure to international issues. Honors Seminars will only address the smaller, but very talented, group of Honors students.

Finally, we propose that the University conduct a study for the establishment of undergraduate and graduate programs in International Studies. A working committee, headed by a dean, should be established to report its recommendations to the Provost by summer 2007.

UMD is one of the few institutions in its peer group that lacks such programs. The need is even more significant given student demand and the stated presidential priority on UMD being a leading player in the international arena and in providing both knowledge and experience of the world to its students. Within the past decade or so, many universities have created innovative, interdepartmental and trans-collegiate majors in International Studies, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The preexisting curricular building blocks and personnel that these institutions used to create their programs are present in College Park; and UMD has the added advantage of the unequaled international resources of the greater Washington DC area. Those resources, in turn, will provide UMD graduates unrivaled opportunities for internships while enrolled at UMD and, subsequently, to make use of their degrees.

The most promising structure for both undergraduate and graduate programs in International Studies is flexible and multidisciplinary, with a small basic core of courses

linked to a number of thematic concentrations within the overarching program. Personnel and resources for this core and the various concentrations will be drawn from across the various colleges, schools, and departments of the university.