

Advancing Cornell's International Dimension: A Call to Action

Fredrik Logevall, Vice Provost for International Affairs, October 25, 2013

We live in an increasingly interdependent world, a smaller world, in which borders are more porous. What happens in distant locales is now often known more or less instantaneously, and the global flow of people and ideas has accelerated. Cornell and other universities thus have an urgent task: to produce leaders and citizens of tomorrow who have cross-cultural awareness and who grasp and live the adage that in this global environment, we need to understand each other better.

President Skorton launched Cornell's internationalization initiative in March 2012 when he issued a White Paper with an urgent call to action. Subsequently, a task force comprised of ten faculty members from across the university developed an actionable plan to enhance Cornell's excellence in international studies and international engagement. The experience of serving on the task force brought home to me just how much great international work we're doing at Cornell – and how much more we have to do. Only if we excel in international teaching, research, and engagement can we prepare our students – and by extension the university as a whole – to flourish in this increasingly interconnected world. Only by doing so can we reach our objective, as articulated forthrightly in the 2010 university strategic plan, to be a top 10 research university in the world.

As Vice Provost for International Affairs (VPIA), I will work with all parts of the campus community to strengthen Cornell's global dimension along the lines laid out in President Skorton's White Paper¹ and the Report of the Task Force on Internationalization (TFI).² In particular, I will focus on five priority areas:

- Internationalizing the student experience by expanding and enhancing the number and quality of student opportunities for meaningful international experiences; creating new freshman foundation courses; ensuring broad access to foreign-language instruction; considering the creation of a new interdisciplinary Global Affairs major; and cultivating enhanced exposure to international students.

¹ Published as Appendix A of the Report of the Task Force on Internationalization (see <http://www.cornell.edu/provost/docs/101212-internationalization-taskforce-report.pdf>).

² See <http://www.cornell.edu/provost/docs/101212-internationalization-taskforce-report.pdf>. The report was submitted on October 11, 2012.

- Supporting internationally engaged faculty by strengthening the Einaudi Center and its existing area studies, development, and thematic programs, and by introducing an Internationalization Fellows Program to attract the best young faculty to come to Cornell and to retain recently tenured faculty who are at risk of being poached by other institutions.
- Enhancing Cornell’s international presence by cultivating, sustaining, and expanding international partnerships, and by considering the establishment of “consulates” in select countries around the world.
- Mobilizing funding for internationalization by generating endowed resources to sustain Cornell’s internationalization activities and to facilitate the acquisition of international grants.
- Creating central university coordination, facilitating infrastructure improvements, and providing supportive leadership to achieve and sustain comprehensive internationalization at Cornell. The participation of all stakeholders is reinforced through the creation of an Internationalization Council with representatives of all colleges and other relevant units, as well as an External Advisory Council on Internationalization.

Together, we should endeavor to make “Global Cornell” a vibrant and multi-faceted reality by educating globally competent and culturally sensitive students; by fostering cutting-edge research within and across national boundaries; and by engaging in development activities and public service to enhance the lives and livelihoods of our students and others around the world.

1. Internationalizing the student experience

Internationalizing the student experience must figure prominently in Cornell’s global strategy. All undergraduate colleges are urged to internationalize the curriculum, provide ample opportunities for foreign language instruction, and facilitate enhanced exposure to international students. In addition, every effort should be made to meet David Skorton’s target of 50% of Cornell undergraduates having a meaningful international experience during their course of study.

Action 1:

The Internationalization Council (IC) will work with the VPIA and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (VPUE) to assist the colleges in identifying college-specific ways to internationalize the curriculum and developing timetables for their implementation. They will be encouraged to develop internationally-oriented “gateway courses” for freshmen (and potentially sophomores) and more generally to expose freshmen to international course offerings within each college. In addition, attention will be given to the development of certificate programs

within individual colleges and schools, as well as the creation of a Global Affairs major open to students from several undergraduate colleges.

Action 2:

To reach our goal of ensuring a meaningful international experience for 50% of Cornell's undergraduate population, efforts will be made to strengthen Cornell Abroad and to expand the number of summer opportunities available to students. In addition, the VPIA and Einaudi Center, in collaboration with Cornell Abroad, EL+R, and the Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives (OADI), will convene a workshop in February 2014 to engage the campus community in conversation about what constitutes a "meaningful international experience" and to explore options for student participation.

Action 3:

To increase support for undergraduate, professional, and graduate student travel, grants will be made available on a competitive basis through the Einaudi Center. The Center will develop a review process as needed to define the parameters for these grants. It is expected that undergraduate funds will not be used for traditional study-abroad experiences, but instead will be used to support international experiential learning opportunities and individual research.

Action 4:

To address the pressing matter of language study, a Language Education Council, co-chaired by the VPUE and a senior associate dean of the Arts College, has been formed. This group will assess the current state and future trajectory of Cornell's language programs, and consider methods to track trends in language diversity and enrollments. Recommendations received earlier this summer from the Provost's task force report on languages will inform the disbursement of the funds allocated to languages in the TFI report.

Action 5:

Interactions with international students are an important aspect of the student experience at Cornell. In consultation with academic deans and the relevant university offices, the IC will explore various strategies, among them new and expanded exchange programs, to enhance the academic and social interactions between Cornell's international and domestic student populations.

Action 6:

The VPUE and the dean of the Graduate School will review relevant policies to insure that all international learning opportunities for Cornell's students (undergraduate, graduate, or

professional) are considered part of the educational curriculum, even if no credit is given for some of the activities, and that efforts be made to facilitate equal access.

2. Supporting internationally engaged faculty

The faculty of the future will need to be adept at working in an international context, in their research as well as their teaching, no matter what the field. Enhanced and sustained support for internationally engaged faculty across the university will be an integral part of our efforts. At the same time, it is vital to contribute to faculty recruitment and retention and to create incentives for faculty members to become more involved in international activities.

Action 1:

While in recent years the Einaudi Center and many of its programs have deepened their engagement with broader campus constituencies (e.g., the natural and applied sciences and engineering), more should be done. The scope of the Center's international programs should be expanded to create connections to, and in some cases provide resources for, an increased number of international academic and engagement programs within the university. In addition, the Einaudi Center will undertake a thoughtful and strategic expansion of the Comparative Muslim Societies Program. The National Resource Center status of Cornell's area studies programs will remain an important designation, and strengthening interdisciplinary activities should enhance future NRC applications.

Action 2:

A new Internationalization Fellows Program within the Einaudi Center for newly hired or newly tenured faculty will be established, in order to enhance faculty recruitment and retention; to expand the scope of Einaudi Center programs; and to enhance the connectivity of internationalization across campus. College deans, working with their representatives on the Internationalization Council, will be asked to nominate one or more individuals. Current funding will allow the appointment of 4-5 fellows per year; the ultimate objective is to raise this figure to 10 per year. Each fellow will have a three-year appointment, and the fellowship will come with a research stipend as well as modest salary offset to the home college.

Action 3:

Existing resources in support of faculty research and curriculum development in international studies, including the Einaudi Center's seed- and small-grant program, will be expanded.

3. Enhancing Cornell's international presence through partnerships and "consulates"

The University will explore ways to strengthen and maintain international partnerships and expand Cornell's international presence, among other things by building a select number of "consulates" in strategic regions of the world.

Action 1:

The Cornell-in-China Committee recommended the establishment of a "Cornell Consulate" in China as pilot program. This is currently under consideration. A costs-benefit analysis will be undertaken in hopes of producing a plan by end of the academic year 2013/14. Experiences gained from a potential China consulate would inform the VPIA about the viability of similar programs in other cities abroad. Alternative ways to establish a Cornell presence, including links to ongoing Cornell initiatives and affiliations, will also be considered.

Action 2:

Funding will be made available to cultivate, sustain, and expand international partnerships, especially those that serve the research and educational needs of faculty and students across campus. The Einaudi Center will administer these funding opportunities via a small grants competition. The review process of proposals will include key stakeholders such as EL+R. As in the past, the freedom of individual colleges to pursue partnerships on their own will be affirmed.

Action 3:

In consultation with the Internationalization Council existing international research and educational partnerships will be reviewed, and new opportunities for collaboration will be explored.

4. Mobilizing funding for internationalization and monitoring impact

The president's internationalization funds are important in allowing support of the most urgent needs. Efforts to secure new funds for international activities through Alumni Affairs and Development (AAD) and international grants will be an essential component of the university's strategy to strengthen its international dimension both in the colleges and centrally. The progress and impact of the internationalization activities of the colleges and the university will be monitored to secure the most efficient and effective allocation of scarce resources.

Action 1:

The VPIA will allocate the president's internationalization funds in support of the most urgent needs within the approved recommendations in consultation with the IC and other key stakeholders.

Action 2:

A full-time senior gift officer, to be positioned within Alumni Affairs and Development, will be appointed to play a key fund-raising role. This individual will work closely with the VPIA and the Internationalization Council to develop strategies that will generate endowed resources in support of the university's and colleges long-term internationalization efforts.

Action 3:

The VPIA will develop a sound financial internationalization plan and will encourage the colleges to follow suit. Members of the IC will establish an identifiable budget and corresponding fundraising goals in their college to support internationalization activities in conjunction with strategic goals and plans. The VPIA will collect and analyze the internationalization financial information at the level of the central university (including the VPIA office and the Einaudi Center), and other faculty and student services (Engaged Learning + Research, Cornell Abroad, ISSO) in order to prepare a sound financial plan to strengthen international activities at Cornell.

Action 4:

Every effort will be made to monitor the progress and impact of the internationalization activities of the university and its colleges. The IC (or a subset) will determine measurement and assessment tools and contribute to the data collection.

Action 5:

The implications of the new budget model for internationalization activities will be examined, and opportunities for accepting international research grants with low indirect cost rates without compromising operations will be explored.

5. Creating central university coordination and facilitating infrastructure and provide supportive leadership

Cornell's interests will be well served with strong leadership from the top, effective coordination among university leaders, and meaningful interaction with alumni who are concerned about the university's international dimension.

Action 1:

Adjustments to the organizational structure of the central offices responsible for leadership and administration of international programs are now underway. As of July 2013, the title of Vice Provost for International Relations has changed to Vice Provost for International Affairs, reflecting a broader range of responsibilities in the post's portfolio. In addition to the oversight function, the VPIA and his team will enable and support Cornell's internationalization efforts by facilitating the infusion of international perspectives into teaching, research, and engagement across campus. With the movement of Cornell Abroad to the VPUE (with a dotted-line reporting line to the VPIA), modification to the organizational structure of central offices with international program reports is already underway.

Action 2:

An Internationalization Council (IC) comprised of faculty with leadership roles in their college or school has been formed. In collaboration with the VPIA, IC members, who will play a critical role in guiding Cornell's international strategy, and will consult with colleagues in their respective college/school about the viability of incorporating internationalization objectives into their strategic plans. Each IC member will serve as the internationalization coordinator within his or her college or school.

Action 3:

An External Advisory Council on Internationalization is being formed to provide high-level advice and support to the Provost and VPIA for the overall direction of Cornell's internationalization activities. It is composed of current and past members of the Cornell University Board of Trustees, prominent members of private and public institutions, and alumni and friends of Cornell who have extensive international experience and knowledge.