Cultivating Global Perspectives

Vision and focus:
As a university we are distinguished by the global experiences of our student body and the global dynamics that have shaped the institution’s growth. To succeed in the 21st century, students need to leave the university with a solid understanding of global processes and a humanitarian perspective toward others, both local and global. This would encourage students to take responsibility for affecting positive changes in their communities and in the world as the ultimate goal of their education. This initiative seeks to enhance the global competency of our students so that they gain insight and develop critical perspectives needed to face complex international challenges in productive and ethical ways.

In curricular and co-curricular arenas, the goal of this initiative would be to foster our students’ ability to understand, appreciate, and critically think about the diversity of perspectives and debates about global processes. Students would also be able to apply that knowledge effectively toward leadership for social change, toward sustainability, and in their disciplines/fields. This proposal affords us the opportunity to build upon and enhance coordination among current initiatives that promote students’ global understanding and engagement.

Student learning outcomes:
1. Students will be able to identify and understand contemporary and historic global processes, conflicts, and their ramifications (e.g., globalization, colonialism, and transnationalism).
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the major processes of globalization, the theories about its development, and the critique of those theories.
3. Students will be able to identify global trends affecting their major field of study and analyze how their major field of study reflects and contributes to processes of globalization.
4. Students will acquire the skills of dialogue on contentious issues and will be able to substantively engage one another on topics related to global processes.
5. Students will be able to identify, analyze, and evaluate their own assumptions with regard to cultural difference and identities.
6. Students will be able to compare and contrast alternative perspectives with critical rigor.
7. Students will be able to adapt their core communication skills as needed, with particular attention to different cultural perspectives.
8. Students will demonstrate an enhanced critical awareness of ethical and social challenges facing 21st century leaders.

Possible avenues for implementation:
- Develop common learning outcomes and revise courses offered under Global Understanding in Gen Ed.
- Revise capstone courses to include global topics, concerns, and/or perspectives.
- Provide curricular and co-curricular programs that reveal the variety, range, and sometimes contested nature of disciplinary perspectives of global processes/issues.
- Develop campus-wide dialogues to explore difficult issues.
- Increase development of foreign language education.
- Expand opportunities for study abroad, including increased funding, and integration of these opportunities with curricular and co-curricular offerings.
- Foster the integration and expansion of domestic and international partnerships.
- Build on and connect existing curricular and co-curricular programs that foster global integration and engagement, including the development of living-learning communities.

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