

**International Education**  
**15 October 2009**  
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**Abstract:** This paper builds on several reports that were the result of studying international education and study abroad in particular in 2008-2009. These reports are listed as appendices for the purpose of context. This paper as a result formulates certain proposed ideas and frames them as questions for the campus to consider. There are resource consequences of these ideas and it is vital to seek campus buy-in.

**Introduction:** Rochester Institute of Technology has always been a leader in developing and delivering innovative education programs in support of creative and technical careers. RIT has identified global education as a vital part of its vision and strategic plan. Indeed, the RIT Vision statement reads: “RIT will lead higher education in preparing students for innovative, creative, and successful careers in a global society”

Yet, while RIT has made progress towards a global education for its students with its international sites, study abroad office, international students, and international co-ops, it has not fully achieved a robust reputation. In fact, RIT lags many of its aspiring universities in key metrics that define international education.

How can RIT move forward and make a more concerted and systemic effort to provide a meaningful global education for our students? We put forward the following questions and ideas as a way of providing substance to this effort.

**Develop student learning outcomes for international education:** While RIT has included global education in its vision and mission as well as in the general education (‘University Foundations’) learning outcomes, it has not clearly articulated what outcomes we want to see from a global education. In particular, what skills and knowledge do we want our students to demonstrate as a result of international education? As a starting point, the American Council on Education suggests the following categories of outcomes:

- *Knowledge:*
  - Understands his[/her] culture within a global and comparative context (that is, the student recognizes that his[/her] culture is one of many diverse cultures and that alternative perceptions and behaviors may be based in cultural differences)
  - Demonstrates knowledge of global issues, processes, trends and systems (that is, economic and political interdependency among nations, environmental-cultural interaction, global governance bodies and nongovernmental organizations).

- Demonstrates knowledge of other cultures (including beliefs, values, perspectives, practices and products).
- *Skills:*
  - Uses knowledge, diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to think critically and solve problems
  - Communicates and connects with people in other language communities in a range of settings for a variety of purposes....
  - Uses foreign language skills and/or knowledge of other cultures to extend his[/her] access to information, experiences and understanding.
- *Attitudes:*
  - Appreciates the language, art, religion, philosophy .....of different cultures
  - Accepts cultural differences and tolerates cultural ambiguity
  - Demonstrates an ongoing willingness to seek out international or intercultural opportunities

Proposed: A representative group of faculty should propose a clear set of learning outcomes that are aligned with those within the general education framework. In addition, a set of metrics or assessment strategies should be developed in support of these outcomes.

**Co-locate various components of international education in the new Global Village:**

The new Global Village complex under construction near Cross Roads presents a perfect opportunity to establish a ‘1-stop’ experience for students, faculty and staff seeking assistance with global education. In particular, the following components should be conveniently located in a ‘concierge-type’ environment:

- *Study Abroad*
- *International Co-op*
- *International Students support services*
- *Multi-cultural studies space*
- *International alumni network*
- *International RIT campuses*
- *International Education advisors*
- *International partnerships*
- *International research support*
- *Faculty exchange program*
- *Support for curricular integration of international education*

Proposed: The Vice Presidents of the appropriate divisions should collaborate to plan and develop 4000 sq feet in the new Global Village to aggregate these components.

**Make international education a serious criterion for curriculum and programs:** If RIT is to make serious progress on a global education vision, any new program or any

program that is to be revised should address how it will provide opportunities for students to achieve the International education learning outcomes. Specifically:

- Future curriculum reviews should include an assessment of the global content of each course.
- Degree requirements for selected programs should include overseas work/study and/or language proficiency.
- Students in degree programs offered overseas should be required to take at least one quarter at an overseas campus as the transition can be made virtually seamlessly.
- The language department in the College of Liberal Arts should be expanded.
  - A survey of student interest needs to be undertaken to determine which languages should be offered.
  - CLA can then work with other colleges to determine appropriate language degree requirements for graduation.

Proposed: A faculty taskforce should be formed to propose these requirements and changes to Academic Senate for approval.

**Develop memberships that would enhance international education at RIT:** RIT should become a member of a consortium like the Global E<sup>3</sup> in order to enhance the opportunities for engineering students to study/internship abroad. The Global Engineering Education Exchange provides the opportunity for engineering students at member institutions to study in one of 18 countries around the world and receive credit at their home university.

**Adopt a vast majority of the recommendations contained in the Winkworth Study on Study Abroad:** While the entire recommendations can be viewed in the appendices, the key recommendations are:

- Set up a viable office to direct and promote RIT's strategic initiative to globalize. This office should be uncoupled from the honor's program and it should be located in a much more visible and accessible space.
- Work with Deans Council to establish policies regarding the use of study abroad experience for tenure and promotion, and to encourage global research.
- Add or assign international specialists for research, teaching and learning services, online learning and any other offices, which can contribute to increasing international awareness of faculty and international focus in RIT's curriculum.
- Use study abroad as a recruiting tool: put advertising on the homepage of the RIT website, and make sure those engaged in recruiting are aware of Study Abroad Options, especially at ACMT.
- Appropriate funds to subsidize professor salaries so that professors can teach a partial load at ACMT and do research in the region.
- Make policies about pricing study abroad at ACMT

- Create a Provost's award for faculty members and advisors with outstanding participation in Study Abroad

Proposed: Charge the Study Abroad Office to propose these changes through the budgetary process.

**Develop a strategic plan with goals, metrics and targets:** Goals, metrics and targets could include:

- Number of RIT students studying abroad: 260
- Number of RIT students with international co-op: 190
- Number of international students at RIT: 1550;
- Number of students at international sites: 1300
- Number of students at international sites studying at RIT Henrietta: 100
- Measure achievement of international education learning outcomes: (TBA)

Proposed: Several goals have been established (see above).

**Conclusion:** RIT has clearly identified international education as a priority and a corner stone to its mission and vision. However, the institution lags behind from its competitors when presenting a concerted effort to support global education. This proposed components outlined in this paper are offered to establish a meaningful global education experience for the next generation of RIT students.