

# Going Global



by Marilyn Gilroy

**A**lmost every college or university says on its Web site and in its catalog that it is providing education for today's global environment. But what does it really mean to be a global institution?

Last fall, *Newsweek* attempted to define "global" when it issued its first-ever ranking of the world's 50 most global universities. As usual, the methods and criteria of selection raised questions, but the overall attempt to define and quantify globalization in higher education is probably overdue. Despite the controversy about which colleges rank in what order, there is merit to examining the common characteristics of truly global colleges and universities.

At the most basic level, global institutions attract international students for research and study, they encourage their American students to study abroad, and their faculty members globalize the curriculum through a variety of means, including the technology of the Internet and distance education.

The most important component of a global college is the makeup of the student population. To be truly global, an institution must seek and welcome students from around the world who bring different cultures and values to campus. This is essential at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, with international students becoming part of the fabric of campus and classroom life.

Institutions attracting large numbers of foreign students range from the

venerable Harvard University (No. 1 on *Newsweek's* list) to public institutions, including community colleges.

## "Mini-U.N." at UCSF

For example, the University of California-San Francisco (UCSF), ranked ninth on the *Newsweek* list, has 1,403 foreign students and scholars from 78 countries. This is a substantial increase from 1986, when the total number of foreign students and scholars was 797. Other universities in the *Newsweek* rankings boasted higher numbers, but UCSF officials say that international students have a huge impact on the campus. Indeed, they characterized some basic science laboratories at UCSF as "a mini-United Nations," with graduate students passing through from Peru and Pakistan, Jordan and Japan.

Professionals from other countries also come to UCSF for short periods of training. Recently, two Fogarty Fellows from the University of Zimbabwe School of Pharmacy arrived at UCSF to learn in vitro methods used in the evaluation of herbal drug interactions. At the same time, the School of Dentistry's Center for Craniofacial Anomalies hosted a surgeon from Jiujiang University who trained with UCSF's multidisciplinary craniofacial team.

The international flow goes both ways. UCSF School of Medicine offers grants to medical students to work on health-related programs around the world. It has sent students to conduct clinical research in such countries as Vietnam, where they studied anti-malarial drugs for children and compared Western and Vietnamese pharmaceutical care. These programs are an acknowledgement that everyone benefits from the exchange of ideas and medical information.

"We are very proud of UCSF's global impact," said David Kessler, M.D., vice chancellor for medical affairs and dean of the UCSF School of Medicine. "Our faculty and students not only take their work around the world, but UCSF classrooms, clinics, and laboratories welcome students, researchers, and patients from every continent. This is essential if we are going to be able to prevent and treat the diseases that most affect human health."

But what about institutions that did not make *Newsweek's* list but are heavily involved in global learning?

## FDU's Global Virtual Faculty

Such is the case with Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) in northern New Jersey. It's been making impressive strides in implementing global education for close to 40 years. FDU hosts approximately 1,000 international students from 80 countries, encourages study abroad, and has a campus in Wroxtton, England.

Its philosophy of global education goes far beyond exchange programs and international campuses; it reaches to the core of the curriculum, requiring all students to complete a course in cross-cultural perspectives. The university has made a deep commitment to provide knowledge and understanding of the world through the eyes of others and to teach students how their actions can affect people in other countries.

One of the cornerstones of global education at FDU is the Global Virtual Faculty (GVF) program, featuring scholars from around the world who teach courses in partnership with FDU faculty to deliver new perspectives and viewpoints to students. The program is funded by a \$100,000 grant from AT&T.

Dr. Elise Salem, associate provost of global learning, has been a leader in fulfilling the university's global mission. She also is a professor of English who has taught courses that reflect FDU's approach. Salem used Syrian poet Dr. Mohja Kahf as a Global Virtual Faculty link in her course on Arab women writers. Her class read Kahf's book of poetry and communicated with her online through the GVF program.

"The rigors and empathetic exchange between professors and students, between Arabs and Americans, was inspirational at every level," Salem said.

Likewise, teaching a course in Nobel literature at the American University in Beirut, Salem linked with FDU's Dr. Walter Cummins' course of the same title.

"We both taught a novel by Egyptian Naguib Mahfouz which generated a very interesting Q & A e-mail exchange between the American and Arab students," said Salem.

FDU encourages faculty to use interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to break down barriers in studying human issues. For example, the global education staff worked with faculty members in putting

together a mega-symposium on human rights and conflict resolution, held last fall. The presentations tapped into the disciplines of nursing, criminal justice, business ethics, Middle East studies, African studies, women's studies, international affairs, and environmental sciences. More than 1,000 people, mostly FDU students, attended.

"The symposium was such a success that it mobilized students to form new chapters of Amnesty International, to subscribe to human-rights groups, and to become volunteers and activists in some new ways," said Salem.

In partnership with the United Nations, FDU's Office of Global Learning runs multiple events that include lectures by various ambassadors, followed by dinner with students and faculty. The social setting often transcends academic barriers and produces a more informal exchange of ideas.

"These are very special events that allow our students to become personal with a foreign dignitary, who then usually lets down his/her barriers in this comfortable setting," said Salem.

FDU uses technology to maximize its global reach. Through the dedicated Web site, Global Issues Gateway, students and faculty find up-to-date information, news, and articles on global aspects of culture, economics, ethics, politics, and science. The site features Global Dispatch, with exclusive firsthand commentaries by scholars and experts from all over the world. Under the direction and guidance of Salem, the FDU Office of Global Learning has established an ambitious agenda for the year that includes sponsoring more international scholars and promoting African and Middle East studies programs.

"We are now hoping to put on another big conference next year on sustainable development and the environment," said Salem. "We can

think of nothing more global and more essential for all of us."

## Community Colleges, Too

It is not only large universities that experience the impact of globalization and influx of foreign students. Community colleges are finding them-



"The rigors and empathetic exchange between professors and students, between Arabs and Americans, was inspirational at every level."

Dr. Elise Salem, associate provost of global learning, FDU

selves in the midst of an international student boom. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) says that 85,000 international students attend community colleges, but other sources estimate there might be twice that many. AACC has held recruitment fairs in Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America, emphasizing the many opportunities that community colleges offer for technical and vocational education.

International students are attracted to community colleges for the same reasons as American students – low cost, ease of transfer, and wider variety of programs. But they also find more support systems in two-year colleges, which have extensive ESL programs and offer smaller class sizes, usually 20-35 students. Most have special counselors and advisors for international students.

Campuses have gone beyond the token “international students association” and now have clubs for students from one particular region or country, such as the Asian club, Latino/a student association, or Eastern European culture club.

Many community colleges are encouraging faculty to incorporate global-learning themes into the curriculum and requiring students to complete diversity and/or cross-cultural course requirements. These institutions also are part of organizations such as the Community Colleges for International Development (CCID), a consortium of U.S.-based and foreign institutions. CCID was founded in 1976, when few community college leaders believed that international education should be a significant part of the curriculum or services. But times have changed.

According to Andrea Siebenmann, CCID program coordinator, interest in international education and, subsequently, the organization’s membership, have been rising steadily in the last five years. CCID recently merged with the American Council on International Intercultural Education, which means more services and programs for members.

Two-year colleges are attracting attention with their global education efforts and are receiving new funding from a variety of sources. Of particular mention, says Siebenmann, is the recent award from the Department of State, the “Community College Summit Initiative” grant targeting community colleges as core deliverers of technical education to a cohort of international students from six countries.

“The presence of international students at the community colleges is not a new phenomenon,” she says. “In fact, a great number of community colleges have been doing a wonderful job in educating international students for many years.”



“South Florida is really a melting pot of ethnicities and cultures.”

Dr. David Moore, associate VP for international education, Broward C.C.

### Broward C.C. Ventures

Broward Community College (BCC) in Florida is one of the nation’s most popular destinations for international students. Currently BCC has 600 students on F-1 visas, and thousands more who were born outside the U.S. live and study there, according to Dr. David Moore, associate VP for international education. The college has accredited branches in India and Singapore, and affiliates in Ecuador, Sri Lanka, and México, where students study for associate’s degrees. Broward has focused on this segment of higher education for 28 years. Its location is one of the contributing factors.

“South Florida is really a melting pot of ethnicities and cultures,” said Moore. “Perhaps, given our multicultural setting, our boards and presidents have recognized the value of international relationships and encouraged the development of ties to other cultures and nations.”

Moore says faculty recognize that the diversity of the student body adds to the educational experience of everyone at the college.

“Just last week, one professor was describing his class to me, which included students from Jamaica, Colombia, and Panama,” said Moore. “Faculty accept that these students bring a richness to the classroom.”

Broward’s latest venture is providing the “next step” for students who earn an associate’s degree from BCC in a foreign country. In that

regard, the college is partnering with the University of South Florida and the Center for American Education in Singapore for a classic 2-plus-2 program, in which students in Singapore will be able to stay in their country and pursue a bachelor’s degree. It isn’t an easy venture.

“Working out the legal, financial, academic, administrative, and cultural hurdles conspires to make this process highly complex,” said Moore. “But if it succeeds, it is quite possible that our other affiliates could then open their doors and create similar 2-plus-2 arrangements.”

