

International Education Task Force

Final Report

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Background

The International Education Task Force was constituted in the fall of 2011 and charged by Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Sam Minner to address two related goals: (a) increase participation in study abroad (broadly defined), and (b) identify desired student learning outcomes for international education along with the means to assess them in a reliable and valid way. To these goals, we added a third; that is, to examine the structure and function of the RU International Education Center (IEC), with the goal of maximizing its effectiveness. The task force organized itself into subcommittees, each addressing one of the three goals.

Dean Dennis Grady chaired the subcommittee charged with suggesting recommendations to increase participation in study abroad. Professor of English Jolanta Wawrzycka chaired the subcommittee charged with suggesting recommendations to identify desired student learning outcomes and the means to assess them. Dean Katherine Hawkins chaired the subcommittee charged with examining the structure and function of the IEC.

In addition to reviewing relevant extant literature, the task force engaged the services of several consultants to assist us in our work. Our first consultant was Dr. Jesse L. Lutabingwa, Associate Vice Chancellor, Office of International Education and Development, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC. Dr. Lutabingwa visited campus March 1st and 2nd, meeting with a number of different constituencies across campus on a variety of issues related to international education at RU. His final report to the task force appears in the Appendix to this document. The second consultant was Dr. Sean Williams, Professor and Chair, Department of English, Clemson University, Clemson, SC. Dr. Williams has extensive experience establishing a successful English Language Services center at Clemson University. Dr. Williams visited RU April 4th and 5th, meeting with the subcommittee investigating means to increase participation in study abroad at RU. His final report to the task force also appears in the Appendix to this document. Several members of the task force (Hawkins, Grady, King) also conducted a telephone interview with Dr. Uliana Gabara, Director and Associate Provost of International Education at the University of Richmond in Richmond, VA.

The task force chair also engaged students from her graduate class in Applied Communication Research (Coms 605) to support the efforts of the task force. A group of six students (Lauren Miller, Brittany Jeglum, Laura Bonfiglio, Ashley Pidal, John Fitzgerald, John Hillegas) completed an independent research project through analysis and synthesis of relevant research literature, as well as by conducting focus groups of students, faculty and staff at RU. Using the focus group results as a foundation, the group also developed an online survey, to which hundreds of RU students, faculty and staff responded. The results of the students' research are referenced throughout this document. Their final report appears in the Appendix to this document.

Radford University has great potential to pursue a wider university effort in the area of international education. Strengths include: a strategic plan that mentions a focus on international education as a means of preparing RU students to be global citizens, support

from higher-level administrators at the university (including President Penelope Kyle and Provost Sam Minner), many faculty and administrators with a wealth of experience living and studying abroad, deans supportive of expanding the role of international education in their respective colleges, some financial resources available for students and faculty to study abroad (e.g., McGlothin Family Endowment), several academic programs that emphasize the role of study abroad (e.g., International Studies Minor), committed high-energy staff in the RU International Education Center, support in RU Admissions to recruit internationally, presence of exchange programs and other agreements of which RU is a member, as well as Radford's location and status as a safe and attractive location for international students to live and attend the university.

However, even in light of this potential, in recent years, RU has suffered a significant decline in participation in international education, particularly in attracting international students to Radford. For a variety of reasons, there has been a lack of permanent leadership in the IEC, as well as a chronic staffing shortage in the center. The English Language Institute closed. As a consequence, services to international students have suffered, as have our recruiting and assessment efforts. Students' economic circumstances suffered as a consequence of the Great Recession, making it more challenging to find the financial means to study abroad. For example, five planned study abroad classes (to date) have been canceled for Summer of 2012 due to low enrollments. It is to these and related challenges that our recommendations are addressed.

Our recommendations are presented relevant to the three goals articulated above (i.e., increase participation, assessment, IEC structure/function), but are also associated with three different time frames. The first, Phase I, includes steps that could be taken immediately (i.e., by the end of the 2012-2013 academic year), using funds for the most part already available in the system. The second, Phase II, includes initiatives that might be undertaken in the 2012-2013 academic year, but will likely not reach fruition until the following academic year or perhaps two academic years later (i.e., by the end of the 2014-2015 academic year). Finally, Phase III, projects that might require an investment of 3-5 years to see a significant effect on international education (i.e., 2015-2016 academic year and beyond).

The Appendix includes information that might be helpful in providing additional background and context for the recommendations offered by the task force (i.e., reports from the two on-site consultants, graduate student research group final report, report on compensation for those engaged in international education efforts, selected reports on participation in international education, IEC budgets, etc.).

Please feel free to contact the chair of the task force, any of the subcommittee chairs, or any task force member with questions you might have about any of this information.

Summary of Task-Force Recommendations

Phase I—Immediate (by the end of the 2012-2103 academic year)

- 1.1.1. Add additional staff member or train an existing staff member in the LARC in ESL.
- 1.1.2. Focus promotional materials on programs (especially graduate) and location (safe, rural, attractive).
- 1.1.3. Modify existing recruitment information to an international audience; incorporate different languages and international themes.
- 1.1.4. Make a concerted and organized effort to inform in-coming freshmen of the international education opportunities available to them starting with admission's materials, through Quest, and continuing through UNIV 100 and major advising.
- 1.1.5. Educate students and parents on the real cost of semester (or longer) study abroad opportunities to address the issue of the perceived expense.
- 1.1.6. Use current and recent former international students to recruit from home high schools/universities; so-called boomerang recruiting.
- 1.1.7. Provide incentives for faculty engaged in international travel to recruit in targeted areas and settings.
- 1.1.8. Recognize RU students who have engaged in study abroad.
- 1.2.1. Program-specific learning outcomes should be clearly identified and assessed using rubrics and surveys that trace students' progress towards achieving those learning outcomes.
- 1.2.2. All study abroad courses designed by RU faculty should be reviewed and approved by the appropriate department Curriculum Committee and department chair/school director before submission for consideration by the International Advisory Committee of the IEC.
- 1.2.3. Career Services should offer programming to students to enable them to better articulate how the learning outcomes from their study abroad experience have "added value" to their educational experience and made them more attractive to potential employers.
- 1.2.4. Articulate learning outcomes for services offered by the IEC, as well as reliable and valid means to assess them.
- 1.3.1. Hire a permanent Executive Director for the IEC with a salary commensurate with her/his education and experience.
- 1.3.2. Hire a permanent Associate Director for the IEC with a salary commensurate with her/his education and experience.
- 1.3.3. "Buy-out" two faculty members on a part-time basis to assist with the operations of the IEC.
- 1.3.4. Enhance the IEC website by providing a prominent hyperlink from the RU main website, as well as by increasing the IEC website's navigability.
- 1.3.5. Increase senior leadership preparedness for an IE emergency through training and simulated emergencies.
- 1.3.6. Protect safety of faculty and students studying abroad.

Phase II--Short-term (by the end of the 2014-2015 academic year)

- 2.1.1. Explore the possibility of contracting with English Language Services or a similar group to recruit qualified students into RU programs.
- 2.1.2. Establish an English Language Institute (ELI) on campus.
- 2.1.3. Target international student recruitment to specific countries: China, India, S. Korea, Brazil, Turkey.
- 2.1.4. Offer a variety of international experience options from semester/year-long experiences, to short-term faculty led trips, to international internships, service learning, alternative Spring Break programs, and research abroad options.
- 2.1.5. Negotiate additional partnerships for exchange programs for both students and faculty.
- 2.1.6. Encourage and support faculty and graduate students to apply for Fulbright and similar exchanges.
- 2.1.7. Work with departments to facilitate the transfer of credit into degree programs from international institutions.
- 2.1.8. Create disciplinary specific courses with an international angle to prepare students for international experiences.
- 2.1.9. Create opportunities to enhance international education through the use of social media.
- 2.1.10. Allow most, if not all, study abroad programs to qualify as meeting the “Global Perspective” core curriculum requirement.
- 2.1.11. Insure collaboration between the Provost’s Office and the Office of Financial Aid such that the Office of Financial Aid serves to facilitate study abroad.
- 2.2.1. QEP standards should be used to articulate expectations for enhanced global/international awareness to be demonstrated by all students participating in study abroad.
- 2.2.2. Designers of all free-standing study abroad courses should be encouraged to include a capstone assignment (e.g., portfolio or other summative assignment) that provides students an opportunity to reflect upon their study abroad experience.
- 2.3.1. Hire a permanent Assistant Director for the IEC with a salary commensurate with her/his education and experience.
- 2.3.2. Increase the IEC operating budget from its current level of \$29,000.

Phase III--Longer-term (2015-2016 academic year and beyond)

- 3.1.1. Build inventory of international expertise on campus.
- 3.1.2. Examine 2+2 undergraduate degree programs wherein students take the Core Curriculum at native institutions and major courses at RU to receive the RU degree.
- 3.1.3. Consider modifying current Graduate College rules on “conditional admissions” to allow more time for international student to meet their conditions.
- 3.1.4. Work with University Advancement to develop need-based scholarship programs to allow all students regardless of family situation to participate in study abroad.
- 3.1.5. Create “Global Scholars” program modeled after the original Kirk/Global College Scholars program.

3.1.6. Consider establishing a student fee for “international education” that could be used to support small grants for students studying abroad.

3.2.1. QEP standards could be used to articulate expectations for enhanced global/international awareness to be demonstrated by all RU students.

3.2.2. Administer surveys to gather feedback from RU alumni 3-5 years after graduation with respect to the longer-term impact of their international/global experiences while at RU.

3.3.1. Create living/learning communities for RU and international students.

Expanded Task Force Recommendations

Phase I—Immediate

(to be completed by the end of the 2012-2013 academic year)

Goal #1: Increase participation in international education

1.1.1. Add additional staff member or train an existing staff member in the LARC in ESL.

While decisions are contemplated about a permanent solution to the challenge of providing basic English language instruction to international students, the Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) will need at least one staff member with English as a Second Language (ESL) training to support the tutoring needs of this population.

1.1.2. Focus promotional materials on programs (especially graduate) and location (safe, rural, attractive).

Marketing educational programs for an international audience is different than for a domestic audience. Clemson, Richmond and Appalachian consultants opined it is easier to market graduate programs than undergraduate programs for very pragmatic reasons. Available data support the conclusion that international students often pursue post-baccalaureate study abroad after completing undergraduate degrees in the home country. Graduate programs are typically self-contained within a department (as opposed to undergraduate programs involving many different departments across campus) with specific admission requirements and programs of study. This makes it both easier for international students to understand admission requirements and more efficient in progressing through the program to degree. Master's level programs were suggested as especially attractive since most can be completed within two years. The size of the campus and its rural location were also offered as very desirable characteristics of an American campus from an international student perspective. The safe and rural nature of the RU campus should be front and center in appealing to an international market. In addition, RU offers competitive assistantships to support graduate students.

1.1.3. Modify existing recruitment information to an international audience; incorporate different languages and international themes.

International students search for potential colleges much the same way as domestic students – on the Internet. So, while students may be facile in English, their parents who are likely paying for the education may not be. This is more likely to be true for undergraduate, as opposed to graduate students. To make the University attractive to non-English speakers, translating promotional materials and selected websites into languages spoken in the targeted countries would be a low cost, high impact recruitment strategy. Further, showcasing services and opportunities for international students on web sites and other promotional materials demonstrates how accommodating the campus is to the international student community. This is critically important, as providing these services insures positive “word of mouth” advertising, which has been demonstrated to be highly influential in international students’ decision making.

1.1.4. Make a concerted and organized effort to inform in-coming freshmen of the international education opportunities available to them starting with admission’s materials, through Quest, and continuing through UNIV 100 and major advising.

There is a consensus among RU faculty and students that little awareness exists regarding the opportunities for study abroad at RU. If RU is to achieve a significant increase in IE participation among students, the expectation for a global experience while at RU needs to be integrated into every message the University sends. It needs to be part of the campus culture and needs to be introduced as soon as a student first learns about the Radford experience. This message needs to be communicated by admissions counselors, faculty, administrators, student affairs professionals, and especially by Resident Assistants in the residence halls.

1.1.5. Educate students and parents on the real cost of semester (or longer) study abroad opportunities to address the issue of the perceived expense.

When students plan their programs of study, focus group and survey data indicate that students believe that study abroad is an expensive option. This is especially true when thinking about a more immersive experience such as a semester or year-long experience in a foreign institution. The table below provides a current dollar comparison of three heavily subscribed faculty-led study abroad programs with comparable semester-long destination sites offered either through a formal exchange or an affiliate program (all costs included are for an in-state student). Two comparative figures are provided. In terms of the cost per credit hour (assuming 6 hours for the shorter term experience and 12 hours for the semester long experience), faculty led experiences are certainly less expensive on a per credit hour basis. However, looking at cost per day across the three options, the semester long experiences are easily the best value.

Study Abroad Program Cost Comparison - Per Credit Hour		
Summer Programs	Semester Exchange Programs	Semester Affiliate Programs
<u>6 credits</u>	<u>12 -15 credits</u>	<u>12-15 credits</u>
RU FACULTY LED		
Australia - 7,982	<u>ISEP EXCHANGE -17,426</u>	<u>Globalinks - 27,725</u>
PER CREDIT HOUR COST = 1330	PER CREDIT HOUR COST = 1452	PER CREDIT HOUR COST = 2310
16 days = 498.88 per day	120 days = 145.22 per day	120 days = 231.04 per day
France - 6,263	ISEP EXCHANGE - 17,426	CIS - 20,100
PER CREDIT HOUR COST = 1044	PER CREDIT HOUR COST = 1452	PER CREDIT HOUR COST =1675
31 days = 202.03 per day	120 days = 145.22 per day	120 days = 168 per day
London - 7,725	ISEP EXCHANGE - 13,751	Globalinks - \$21,015
PER CREDIT HOUR COST = 1288	PER CREDIT HOUR COST = 1452	PER CREDIT HOUR COST = 1751
22 days = 351.14 per day	120 days = 114.59 per day	120 days = 175.13 per day

1.1.6. Use current and recent former international students to recruit from home high schools/universities; so-called boomerang recruiting.

Consultants observed that the strongest recruitment strategy is “word of mouth” from current and recent international students back in their home country. This underscores the critical need to provide a positive learning experience for our current international students; that is, so that the accounts of their experiences at RU are highly positive. The University of Richmond has a specific program that supports their international students to visit their native schools to talk about the Richmond experience. They refer to this as “boomerang” recruiting and are very satisfied with its results.

1.1.7. Provide incentives for faculty engaged in international travel to recruit in targeted areas and settings.

Since RU faculty are already traveling overseas for study abroad and research trips, providing support for them to spend additional time (one or two days) visiting foreign schools and meeting key leaders and potential students is a low cost way to get the University better known abroad. This would need to be coordinated with the International Education Center to account for the additional work and expense. The University of Richmond has this program and believes it is effective.

1.1.8. Recognize RU students who have engaged in study abroad.

Honor cords should be given to graduating students who have studied abroad (already initiated). Upon successful completion of study abroad, RU students have been given a specially designed high-quality RU T-shirt identifying her/him as someone who has studied abroad. The IEC has begun to issue T-shirts in advance of study abroad, as well, as a means of advertising the program. RU should rotate “study abroad success stories” with other student success stories on the RU main webpage, as well as the IEC main webpage.

Goal #2: Identify learning outcomes and enhance assessment efforts

1.2.1. Program-specific learning outcomes should be clearly identified and assessed using rubrics and surveys that trace students’ progress towards achieving those learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes and assessment in RU faculty-led study abroad programs and semester-abroad programs are program-specific and are designed by: (a) program directors of short-term programs (e.g., Wintermester, Maymester, Summer Sessions), and (b) by supervising faculty of semester-long study abroad programs. These outcomes and assessment plans should be reviewed on a regular basis by Assessment Office staff to insure the outcomes are articulated in an appropriate form and the assessments are reliable and valid.

1.2.2. All study abroad courses designed by RU faculty should be reviewed and approved by the appropriate department Curriculum Committee and department chair/school director before submission for consideration by the International Advisory Committee of the IEC.

Currently, if a course is offered under a “Travel Study,” “Special Topics,” or related course number, that course does not always undergo departmental review before submission to the IEC International Advisory Committee for their review. Inconsistencies in the articulation of learning outcomes and assessment methods sometimes result. Requiring all study abroad courses to be reviewed by the relevant department/school curriculum committee should reduce these inconsistencies, resulting in greater clarity in articulating student learning outcomes and increased reliability and validity of assessment of the extent to which students have achieved those learning outcomes.

1.2.3. Career Services should offer programming to students to enable them to better articulate how the learning outcomes from their study abroad experience have “added value” to their educational experience and made them more attractive to potential employers.

Research conducted with RU students indicates they do not understand, nor can they effectively articulate how their international experiences translate into enhanced employability. Appropriate programming offered by RU Career Services early in students’ careers could assist them in recognizing and later being able to demonstrate that added value.

1.2.4. Articulate learning outcomes for services offered by the IEC, as well as reliable and valid means to assess them.

Very recently, responsibility for the provision of international student services was moved to the IEC from the Office of Student Affairs. It is not entirely clear what services should be offered by the IEC, versus what services should be offered by other administrative offices currently on the RU campus or by new administrative entities yet to be developed (e.g., a new version of the English Language Institute). A faculty-led group should be created to identify appropriate learning outcomes for services provided by the IEC and determine a means to assess them in a reliable and valid way. The critical importance of providing a positive learning experience to RU’s current international students cannot be overstated.

Goal #3: Structure and function of the IEC

1.3.1. Hire a permanent Executive Director for the IEC with a salary commensurate with her/his education and experience.*

The IEC Executive Director should report directly to the Provost (or his/her designee) and be the “face” of RU international education, both on and off campus. S/he should have a terminal degree in her/his discipline and hold senior rank in a tenured position at the university. S/he should be expected to travel extensively to represent the university in negotiations with exchange partners, affiliate programs, and so on. S/he should be responsible for international education advocacy, strategic planning and

assessment. S/he should be expected to engage in pursuit of significant external funding in support of the IE effort, including working with University Advancement and the RU Foundation to provide additional student scholarships for study abroad. Other duties should include chairing the IE Advisory Board and serving as the IEC contact person for risk management.

1.3.2. Hire a permanent Associate Director for the IEC with a salary commensurate with her/his education and experience.*

The IEC Associate Director should report directly to the IEC Executive Director. This person should have at least a baccalaureate degree in her/his discipline, as well as substantial experience in international education. This person should be an A/P faculty member. S/he should serve as the “designated school official,” as well as supervise the IEC Assistant Director and IEC Administrative Assistant. S/he should plan and deliver orientation sessions for faculty and students preparing to study abroad, as well as provide support for RU faculty planning proposals for study abroad programs. S/he should assist the IEC Director with maintaining contact with internal and external constituencies, and be expected to engage in some travel in support of the IE effort (e.g., Linden Tours, visits to international advising centers). As a consequence of his/her role as “designated school official,” s/he should not participate in international student recruiting.

*Note: See compensation study in the Appendix to this document for details. In addition, if possible, it is desirable for those holding the positions of Executive Director and Associate Director to have complementary skill sets. There is a broad range of functions that must be satisfied by just two people. Given that, redundancy in skill sets would not necessarily be helpful in this case.

1.3.3. “Buy-out” two faculty members on a part-time basis to assist with the operations of the IEC.

Costs would be limited to two adjunct lines for each faculty member for each semester; that is, 2 X 2 X 2 X \$2,700, plus FICA, or \$23,253. These two faculty members, both of whom should have extensive experience in advising international students and preparing students for study abroad, should serve as liaisons with RU Admissions and the RU Graduate College in facilitating admission of international undergraduate and graduate students to RU, as well as provide much needed orientation services and ongoing support for international students (e.g., develop RU student mentor program for international students). They should also assist in maintaining contact with RU faculty and RU alumni engaged in recruiting for international education. They should share responsibility for advising study abroad students with other RU faculty and staff who advise students (e.g., developing program-specific advising sheets, identifying course equivalencies, planning individual programs of study), as well as for compiling and maintaining a study abroad “transfer course equivalency list” to facilitate advising for students studying abroad. They should work with the QEP director to assist in facilitating the incorporation of service learning and other high-intensity student engagement activities into study abroad, where appropriate. They should assist students with identifying sources of financial support for study abroad (e.g., arrange financial planning workshops for freshmen and sophomore students).

1.3.4. Enhance the IEC website by providing a prominent hyperlink from the RU main website, as well as by increasing the IEC website’s navigability.

Research conducted with RU faculty, staff and students indicates that they find it extremely difficult to find information about IE on the RU website. They report they become discouraged from pursuing study abroad or other international experiences as a consequence. The lack of a hyperlink to the IEC website from the RU main website contributes to the prevailing perception among RU faculty, staff and students that IE is not important at RU.

1.3.5. Increase senior leadership preparedness for an IE emergency through training and simulated emergencies.

There currently exists no formal policy or procedures for managing international education emergencies at RU. The draft plan has been submitted to senior administration, but there has as yet been no response to the plan. In addition, Academic Affairs Leadership Team members need to receive training in international education emergency management, including participation in a simulated emergency exercise.

1.3.6. Protect safety of faculty and students studying abroad.

This can be accomplished through all of the following: extensive pre-departure safety training for faculty leading study abroad, developing “continuity of operations” plans for all studies abroad, providing GPS units to all faculty leaders of study abroad, providing pre-paid international cell phones to all faculty leaders of study abroad, providing pre-paid bank cards for faculty use in the event of an emergency while leading studies abroad. RU should offer ongoing faculty development on issues of health and safety abroad. Some of these initiatives are already underway.

Phase II--Short-term
(to be completed by the end of the 2014-2015 academic year)

Goal #1: Increase participation in international education

2.1.1. Explore the possibility of contracting with English Language Services or a similar group to recruit qualified students into RU programs.

Both of the consultants to the IE Task Force strongly urged Radford to consider contracting with a third party provider like English Language Services (ELS) to enhance the recruitment of international students to the campus. Clemson University is hosting an ELS site near its campus and reports significant improvement in its recruiting process as a result. Clemson further reports that they receive payment from ELS by providing space for the company’s activities at the Clemson site. Appalachian State University is also an affiliate of ELS but with a different relationship. Instead of offering a site, Appalachian State offers “conditional admission” to ELS students (for visa purposes) who successfully attain a predetermined level of language proficiency in several of its graduate programs. While the Clemson experience has proven to be especially successful, the Appalachian State relationship is too new to be instructive according to staff there.

2.1.2. Establish an English Language Institute (ELI) on campus.

Several years ago, RU had an ELI functioning on campus. Through staff turnover and fiscal exigencies, the ELI was disbanded. Most Task Force members believe that some form of ELI is necessary to support the needs of international students matriculating to RU. What form an ELI might take is somewhat dependent upon the decision to partner with a third party vendor like ELS. Clemson found an ELI redundant to the services that ELS provides and has eliminated its ELI program. Appalachian State sees an ELI as a necessary correlate to their relationship with ELS since they do not host ELS on its campus. While there is consensus that some language support is necessary if we are to grow international student numbers, what form that support takes is contingent on other decisions Radford University chooses to make.

2.1.3. Target international student recruitment to specific countries: China, India, S. Korea, Brazil, Turkey.

Given the reality of limited resources, Radford University must choose a modest number of geographic regions on which to concentrate its efforts. Countries with emerging middle-classes and insufficient higher education resources are especially attractive in that regard. Consultants recommended China, India, S. Korea, Brazil, and Turkey as opportunity targets for that reason. Several countries (e.g., Brazil) also have student support programs to assist their students in matriculating in U.S. universities. In a related vein, U.S. universities report mixed experiences working with paid independent agents to recruit international students. Given this, RU should use caution in determining whether the use of paid independent agents for recruiting international students would be appropriate or not.

2.1.4. Offer a variety of international experience options from semester/year-long experiences, to short-term faculty led trips, to international internships, service learning, alternative Spring Break programs, and research abroad options.

Once communicated as an expectation for the RU student, a wide variety of international experience options must be made available to students. Students learn differently and are individually constrained by time and finances. With few exceptions, the current opportunities for study abroad are faculty led, short duration trips as part of a course. Consultants emphasize that longer term, semester length, immersions in a foreign culture are more impactful and transformative. However, not all students can afford such an experience. Therefore, it is necessary for faculty and administrators to be more creative in developing different types of international experiences from which a student may choose that fits her/his particular circumstances.

2.1.5. Negotiate additional partnerships for exchange programs for both students and faculty.

As has been noted, research suggests that perceived cost is a major barrier to RU students contemplating study abroad. However, with the exception of travel to/from the host country, the cost of participation in an exchange program is roughly comparable to the cost of studying at RU. Given that, RU should enhance its exchange program offerings to RU students, as that may offer the highest probability of increased participation in the short term.

2.1.6. Encourage and support faculty and graduate students to apply for Fulbright and similar exchanges.

RU should solicit at least one Fulbright application each year from every college, with a goal of having 2-3 faculty and 1-2 graduate students serving as Fulbright scholars each year. Regarding the latter, the Fulbright program annually sponsors a number of English Language Teaching Assistants abroad. Participation in such a program could be appropriate for students in several programs on campus (e.g., MA/MS in English). Also, RU needs to identify the support necessary to ease faculty exchanges with existing/new international university partners. First, RU faculty may need assistance finding and paying for appropriate housing abroad. Second, depending on their home country, international faculty may need cost of living offsets, office space, assistance with housing options, and transportation. For example, all international exchange agreements at Appalachian State University include the following clause: “The host institution will provide adequate living accommodation for exchange faculty or staff...” This means ASU provides housing for visiting international faculty/staff members from partner institutions and vice versa. Housing availability makes it more attractive for faculty to travel abroad for longer periods (e.g., a semester).

2.1.7. Work with departments to facilitate the transfer of credit into degree programs from international institutions.

One of the main reasons expressed by students in the focus groups for not studying abroad was the fear that coursework taken at a foreign institution would not transfer back toward their degrees. While accepting transfer credit is properly within the purview of academic departments, the University could develop articulation agreements among institutions to automatically accept course equivalents just as we do for courses taken at domestic universities. In addition, departments could structure their curricula to allow for a sufficient number of elective hours to accommodate international transfer credits. Departmental “advising check sheets” could be created that incorporate a study abroad option in each curriculum’s four-year plan.

2.1.8. Create disciplinary specific courses with an international angle to prepare students for international experiences.

Virtually every discipline at RU can mold one or more courses within the existing curriculum to have an international focus/theme/flavor. If the University should decide to focus more closely on certain cultures and countries, these courses could prime the students’ interest in exploring further those cultures to which students had been exposed in an on-campus course. Any such courses should be included in an inventory that RU students can access online. International students, both those currently attending RU and those studying in their home countries, should be invited to participate in co-curricular activities with students enrolled in these classes. Electronic media forms such as teleconferencing and “tele-presence” could be used to support such efforts.

2.1.9. Create opportunities to enhance international education through the use of social media.

An increasingly common mode of communication for both native and international students is through social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). An added advantage of social media is that it is essentially free to the end-user, given that so many people have access to email and the Internet via cell phones, iPods, iPads, laptops, and similar electronic devices. The international content of courses taught at RU could be enhanced through incorporating Facebook and Twitter and other forms of social media to increase communication between U.S. and international students (e.g., re/common instructional foci or common research activities). Appropriate training should be provided to RU faculty to enable them to take advantage of social media as an instructional tool.

2.1.10. Allow most, if not all, study abroad programs to qualify as meeting the “Global Perspective” core curriculum requirement.

All RU students are expected to meet the “Global Perspective” requirement within the core curriculum yet most study abroad programs do not qualify as meeting that requirement. This is an obvious disincentive to students. Once the University has agreed upon the learning outcomes from study abroad experiences, any experience meeting those learning objectives should be counted toward satisfying that core requirement.

2.1.11. Insure collaboration between the Provost’s Office and the Office of Financial Aid such that the Office of Financial Aid serves to facilitate study abroad.

Focus group and survey data indicate that students are not clear regarding the availability of financial aid when studying abroad. It is imperative that the International Education Center and the Financial Aid Office work collaboratively in facilitating financial support for eligible students who wish to study outside the U.S. Relevant information needs to be shared with students early in their studies at RU. Residence Life programming would be an ideal opportunity to share this information, as would sessions organized during Quest, or workshops offered through University 101. In addition, the following should be undertaken: (a) cross-training between offices of financial aid restrictions, deadlines, and processes and explore streamlining of forms required for students, (b) written guidance and forms for students prepared by the Financial Aid Office – not the IEC, and (c) joint meeting of Student Accounts, Financial Aid and the IEC to increase efficiency and collaborations, as well as to ensure comprehensive sharing of necessary information between offices.

Goal #2: Identify learning outcomes and enhance assessment efforts

2.2.1. QEP standards should be used to articulate expectations for enhanced global/international awareness to be demonstrated by all students participating in study abroad.

Currently, there are no university-wide learning outcomes that speak to students’ enhanced global/international awareness that should result from study abroad. A faculty-led group should be created to identify such learning outcomes and determine a means to assess them in a reliable and valid way. In the meantime, a pilot study will be undertaken

this summer to test the following learning outcomes for study abroad experiences: (a) students will be able to describe the similarities and differences between the US and their host country in one or more of the following areas: economic, political, environmental, health care, religion, education, values, beliefs, customs and/or practices, (b) students will be able to explain how academic or professional fields are practiced within the host country, and (c) students will reflect upon their study abroad experience by expanding upon how the experience enriched their life, articulate their thoughts on what it means to be a global citizen, and describe how the experience has challenged their world view.

2.2.2. Designers of all free-standing study abroad courses should be encouraged to include a capstone assignment (e.g., portfolio or other summative assignment) that provides students an opportunity to reflect upon their study abroad experience.

Currently, not all free-standing study abroad courses incorporate a capstone assignment that encourages them to reflect upon their study abroad experiences. As a consequence, students are not as able to understand and articulate the value of their studies abroad to their educational experience as they could be. Incorporating a capstone assignment such as a portfolio could offer students this opportunity, as well as provide a valuable artifact for assessment purposes. Note: In summer of 2012, two summer study abroad programs will pilot e-portfolio projects based, in part, on three general overarching drafted study abroad learning outcomes (see Recommendation 2.2.1. above).

Goal #3: Structure and function of the IEC

2.3.1. Hire a permanent Assistant Director for the IEC with a salary commensurate with her/his education and experience.*

The Assistant Director, who would take over the responsibilities of the two part-time faculty members on bought-out time, should report directly to the IEC Associate Director. This person should have at least a baccalaureate degree in her/his discipline and 3-5 years of experience in international education. S/he should serve as the primary liaison with RU Admissions and the RU Graduate College in facilitating admission of international undergraduate and graduate students to RU, as well as provide much needed orientation services and ongoing support for international students (e.g., develop RU student mentor program for international students). S/he should assist in maintaining contact with RU faculty and RU alumni engaged in recruiting for international education. S/he should have responsibility for advising study abroad students, as well as working with faculty and staff who advise students (e.g., developing program-specific advising sheets, identifying course equivalencies, planning individual programs of study), and for compiling and maintaining a study abroad “transfer course equivalency list” to facilitate advising for students studying abroad. S/he should work with the QEP director to assist in facilitating the incorporation of service learning and other high-intensity student engagement activities into study abroad, where appropriate. S/he should assist students with identifying sources of financial support for study abroad (e.g., offer financial planning workshops for freshmen and sophomore students).

NOTE: See compensation study in the Appendix to this document for details. Also, as the number of study abroad programs and the population of international students grows,

it may be necessary to split the IEC Assistant Director position into two Assistant Director positions, with one focused on study abroad and one focused on services for international students.

2.3.2. Increase the IEC operating budget from its current level of \$29,000.

The IEC budget has not been increased in at least five years. Increasing the center's annual budget will allow them to more effectively market study abroad and other international education efforts, as well as to enhance much-needed international student services. Regarding the latter, when responsibility for providing international student services was moved to the IEC, no permanent funding was moved to support that function. Given that, a permanent increase in the base operating budget for the IEC seems appropriate. The new Executive Director should be given the responsibility of developing a realistic operating budget consistent with her/his vision and the university's goals to enhance international education.

Phase III--Longer-term
(to be completed by the end of the 2016-2017 academic year)

Goal #1: Increase participation in international education

3.1.1. Build inventory of international expertise on campus.

Use discretionary funding to support travel of RU administration, faculty and staff to countries from which RU would like to recruit international students and/or to which RU would like to send its students on study abroad. For example, funds could be used to assist faculty and staff to secure passports, as well as to subsidize travel and/or educational expenses. Over time, the number of faculty and staff with experience traveling and studying abroad who come into direct contact with RU students on a regular basis should increase. This should help to establish a norm for international education at RU.

3.1.2. Examine 2+2 undergraduate degree programs wherein students take the Core Curriculum at native institutions and major courses at RU to receive the RU degree.

Appalachian State University has just begun this program with universities in Viet Nam and Thailand to increase the number of international undergraduates on its campus. One of the barriers they see in growing that population is the fairly complex core curriculum program for the native undergraduate. To overcome this barrier, ASU faculty members have agreed to engage in a pilot articulation agreement with a foreign university modeled on a traditional 2+2 agreement with state community colleges.

3.1.3. Consider modifying current Graduate College rules on “conditional admissions” to allow more time for international student to meet their conditions.

Current rules require students to meet all of the conditions associated with their admission within one semester. Given that international students may have significant deficiencies from their home institutions because of the misalignment in curriculum

structures, they may well need two semesters to meet all requirements before attaining good standing as a student.

3.1.4. Work with University Advancement to develop need-based scholarship programs to allow all students regardless of family situation to participate in study abroad.

All Radford University students should have the opportunity to participate in study abroad regardless of financial circumstances. Finding private sources of support for this program should be a priority for University Advancement. A deliberate, focused, and well-planned campaign should be mounted devoted to this specific program. College deans and program chairs/directors could be invited to participate in such a campaign.

3.1.5. Create “Global Scholars” program modeled after the original Kirk/Global College Scholars program.

To enhance exposure for RU in the area of international education, a small number of students would be identified and invited to apply during the admissions process for the Global Scholars program. In addition to their academic major, this group of students would complete a common set of internationally-themed elective courses during their first two years on campus. At the end of their second year, the Global Scholars cohort would complete an RU-supported short term or semester study abroad program specifically designed for the purpose, with a focus on a specific theme and/or geographic region.

3.1.6. Consider establishing a student fee for “international education” that could be used to support small grants for students studying abroad.

Some universities have voted to charge a small fee (e.g., \$5.00 or \$10.00 per semester/student) to support the creation of a fund to assist students in studying abroad. For example, modest travel grants could be offered to deserving students to pay for the cost of travel to/from an exchange program site, thereby effectively reducing the marginal cost of study abroad to nearly zero.

Goal #2: Identify learning outcomes and enhance assessment efforts

3.2.1. QEP standards could be used to articulate expectations for enhanced global/international awareness to be demonstrated by all RU students.

Currently, there are no university-wide learning outcomes that speak to enhanced global/international awareness on the parts of *all* RU students that would result from instruction in any program at RU, whether students study abroad or not. A faculty-led group should be created to consider whether it’s appropriate to create such university-wide learning outcomes at RU. Should the group decide it’s appropriate to do so, they should identify such university-wide learning outcomes and determine a means to assess them in a reliable and valid way.

3.2.2. Administer surveys to gather feedback from RU alumni 3-5 years after graduation with respect to the longer-term impact of their international/global experiences while at RU.

Such an undertaking is beyond the capacity of the IEC. However, it could be possible to enlist the support of the RU Alumni Association in gathering these data, which would be very helpful in assessing the longer-term positive outcomes associated with study abroad and other internationalization efforts at RU.

Goal #3: Structure and function of the IEC

3.3.1. Create living/learning communities for RU and international students.

Findings from the research conducted by the graduate student group indicated RU students would be more aware of the services provided by the IEC if it were more prominently featured on the RU campus. One way to achieve that would be to create a physical presence for an international living/learning community on the RU campus for interested students. For example, an existing dormitory could be transformed into such a space in much the same way that space has been provided on the RU campus for the RU Honors Academy. International students could reside in the facility alongside RU students from the U.S., thereby increasing the frequency of interactions on a daily basis. Doing so would have the effect of enhancing language abilities for both groups of students, as well as familiarizing each group of students with each other's culture(s).