

Revised Assessment Plan
Division of International Programs
January 17, 2012

HISTORY

Formerly known as the Division of International and Special Programs, International Programs has a 43-year history at NIU as one of the oldest centralized university offices for international activities in the nation. Because all areas of effort in the Division attempt to increase mobility across national boundaries, and thereby to increase understanding across cultural boundaries, we believe locating these efforts in one administrative unit increases synergy and effectiveness.

After the retirement in the early 1992 of the first and only Dean of the Division to that point, the University reviewed the organization of the Division and removed certain programs to other units, including the Center for Black Studies, University Resources for Women, and others, leaving two study abroad offices, the International Student & Faculty Office, and the Office of International Training & Development. The two offices handling programs abroad were later combined into one ("Study Abroad Office") and the International Training & Development Office was renamed "International Training Office". The position of Dean was recast at that time as Executive Director, and a national search resulted in filling that position in 1993. In 2002 that Executive Director retired and a successor was hired after another national search; later the position was retitled again, becoming Associate Provost for International Programs.

Reporting to the Provost, the Associate Provost leads the Division with three Directors, each leading an area of effort: the International Student & Faculty Office (ISFO), the International Training Office (ITO), and the Study Abroad Office (SAO). Staff members in all areas of effort share an overarching commitment to helping members of the NIU community expand their horizons beyond national boundaries. International Programs occupies the fourth floor of Williston Hall.

Although NIU was a very early adopter in the model of a centralized international office, anecdotes from the early years of International Programs suggest that efforts toward internationalization did not extend far beyond the Division and the academic home of its founders, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. With the arrival of the first Executive Director, Manfred Thullen, the question of infusing global perspectives throughout the academic offerings of the institution became significant, mirroring developments in the field through several professional associations, including the American Council on Education, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, and the Association of International Education Administrators. At the writing of this revised plan, the initiative of comprehensive internationalization (bringing global information and perspectives to all areas of the institution's efforts, including teaching,

research and engagement) has become the organizing prime for NAFSA, and other organizations such as the Association of American Colleges & Universities have also focused significant attention on this project.

MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mission Statement

The Division of International Programs leads Northern Illinois University toward comprehensive internationalization by increasing the flow of faculty, students, staff, and ideas across national boundaries.

Goals

The members of the Division of International Programs seek to strengthen global activity and cultural learning at NIU. For that reason they have the following goals:

1. Maximize students' international and intercultural exposure.
2. Maximize international and intercultural exposure for faculty and staff.
3. Infuse the campus culture with international and intercultural perspectives and ideas.

Objectives For Each Goal

1. Maximize students' international and intercultural exposure (GOAL)
 - A. Study Abroad Office
 - a. Increase number of NIU students participating in study abroad programs by 4% per year (OBJECTIVE)
 - count number of NIU students who study abroad each year (Phase I TARGET)
 - provide excellent service to students in the SAO so that 75% of all students responding to the student satisfaction survey cite "good" or "excellent" overall service (Phase I TARGET)
 - improve level of students' intercultural learning after study abroad (Phase I TARGET)
 - improve students' learning in orientation (create short post-test about each different section). (Phase II TARGET)
 - b. Increase the number of promotional efforts of the Study Abroad Office to recruit participants in study abroad programs (OBJECTIVE)
 - count total number of promotional efforts done each year (Phase II TARGET)
 - c. Support faculty-led programs abroad with excellent service in the Study Abroad Office (OBJECTIVE)

--provide high quality service to faculty program directors through the SAO so that 75% of all faculty responding to the satisfaction survey cite "good" or "excellent" overall service (Phase I TARGET)

B. International Student and Faculty Office

- a. Increase the number of new incoming undergraduate nonimmigrant students by 4% per year. (OBJECTIVE)
 - raise the number of new incoming undergraduate nonimmigrant students enrolling each year by 4% (Phase I TARGET)
- b. Increase the number of promotional efforts intended to raise the number of new undergraduate nonimmigrant students enrolling at NIU. (OBJECTIVE)
 - raise the number of promotional efforts done each year (Phase II TARGET)
- c. Provide essential information to nonimmigrant students. (Issues related to immigration regulations, culture, student expectations, campus expectations, and where to find additional information.) (OBJECTIVE)
 - provide excellent customer service to nonimmigrant students in ISFO so that 75% of all students responding to the student satisfaction survey cite "good" or "excellent" overall service (Phase I TARGET)
 - improve level of students' intercultural learning after one year of study at NIU (Phase I TARGET)
 - improve students' learning in orientation (create post-test of questions about each different section and require that is turned in before leaving the session). (Phase II TARGET)
 - improve students' learning in other sessions that ISFO conducts. (create post-test of questions about what should have been learned) (Phase II TARGET)

C. International Training Office

- a. Increase the number of opportunities for interaction between the participants on training programs and students on the NIU campus. (OBJECTIVE)
 - count total number of things that are done through interaction with NIU students each academic year. (Phase II TARGET)
 - count how many NIU students were involved in each different interaction each academic year. (Phase II TARGET)

2. Maximize international and intercultural exposure for faculty and staff. (GOAL)

- A. Increase promotional activities targeted toward faculty who may then lead a study abroad program. (OBJECTIVE)
 - count total promotional activities done for faculty involvement each academic year. (Phase II TARGET)
 - B. Increase activities designed to raise awareness of the exchange visitor program. (OBJECTIVE)
 - count total activities done to promote the program each academic year. (Phase II TARGET)
 - C. Increase the number of faculty and staff members involved in International Training Office programs. (OBJECTIVE)
 - count total number of faculty and staff who were involved in each ITO program over the academic year. (Phase I TARGET)
 - D. Increase faculty and staff exposure to international activities and opportunities. (OBJECTIVE)
 - increase total number of international activities done on campus for faculty and staff (International Education Week, Phi Beta Delta, Fulbright, etc.) (Phase II TARGET)
 - increase overall satisfaction rate for each event so that 75% of participants completing the evaluation for each event rate their overall experience as "good" or "excellent". Summarize those rates over the academic year (low, high, mean, median). Use ranks of "poor, fair, good, excellent" for all items in all International Programs satisfaction surveys. (Phase I TARGET)
3. Infuse the campus culture with international and intercultural perspectives and ideas. (GOAL)
 - A. Increase activities and opportunities related to international and intercultural awareness on the NIU campus. (OBJECTIVE)
 - increase total number of international activities on campus that are for the entire campus (International Education Week, speakers, etc.) (Phase I TARGET)
 - raise overall satisfaction rate for each event so that 75% of participants completing the evaluation for each event rate their overall experience as "good" or "excellent". Summarize those rates over the academic year (low, high, mean, median). Use ranks of "poor, fair, good, excellent" for all items in all International Programs satisfaction surveys. (Phase I TARGET)

- B. Increase the use of International Training Office programs to maximize the international exposure of the campus community. (OBJECTIVE)
 - improve student learning outcomes in ITO programs as evidenced in pre- and post-tests. (Phase II TARGET)
 - _Improve student learning outcomes as evidenced through reflective essays, measured against intercultural learning rubric. (Phase I TARGET)
 - increase total number of host families and community interaction (Phase I TARGET)

- C. Establish and maintain International Operations Network. (OBJECTIVE)
 - Network will meet three times per fiscal year. (Phase I TARGET)

- D. Increase activities related to the NIU international alumni network. (OBJECTIVE)
 - Create and maintain international alumni database (Phase II TARGET)
 - Create and maintain international alumni website (Phase II TARGET)
 - Communicate once a month with NIU international alumni through social media. (Phase II TARGET)

METHODS

In 2006 we in the Division of International Programs originally designed an assessment plan that was deemed overly complex and ambitious. In fact, in the initial review of our original plan, the University Assessment Panel recommended that we consider phasing in our assessment methods over time. Five years later, we have now identified two Phases for implementing the revised plan: Phase I will cover the five years from 2012 - 2017, and Phase II will be used for the five years following that period. However, we may wish to allow for the possibility that improved experience and understanding during Phase I may lead us to implement another revision for Phase II.

In this revised plan, therefore, we will refer only to those outcomes and methods identified above for use in Phase I, 2012 - 2017.

Methods Matrix

In this chart we note the objectives assessed, the methods to be used and descriptions thereof, a timeline for data collection, the positions responsible to gather the data, and a note regarding whether a method represents a direct or indirect measure.

OBJECTIVES	METHOD	DESCRIPTION	TIMELINE	POSITION RESPONSIBLE	DIRECT/INDIRECT
1Aa, 1Ba	Student headcount census for study abroad participants and new international students each semester.	Count and track the number of NIU students who study abroad each academic year; Count and track the number of new incoming nonimmigrant undergraduate students enrolling each year	Compiled throughout the year and reviewed each semester.	Study Abroad Director and Director of the International Student & Faculty Office	Direct
1Aa, 1Bc	Student satisfaction survey	Conduct online student satisfaction survey to have students evaluate the service they receive from the Study Abroad Office and from the International Student & Faculty Office	Surveys conducted after end of each study abroad program and once per semester for ISFO. Results compiled annually	Study Abroad Director and Director, International Student and Faculty Office	Indirect
1Aa, 1Bc	Cultural awareness instrument	Evaluate level of students' intercultural learning by creating or identifying appropriate instrument for assessing cultural learning	Instrument administered after each study abroad program and once each year to international students.	Study Abroad Director, International Student and Faculty Office Director	Direct

		achieved while abroad.			
1Ac	Survey of faculty directors	Conduct a survey of faculty directors for all study abroad programs to have them evaluate the service they received from SAO	Compiled annually	Study Abroad Director	Indirect
2c	Faculty staff census	Count the number of faculty and staff involved in ITO programs each year	Compiled annually	International Training Office Director	Direct
2d, 3a	Event evaluations ("Workshop / Seminar Evaluation")	Conduct evaluations at every IP event and summarize, in order to track overall satisfaction rate for events	Compiled annually	Administrative Assistant	Direct
3a, 3c	Event census	Count and track total number of international activities on campus that are for the entire campus; count and track number of meetings of the International	Compiled annually	Administrative Assistant	Direct

		Operations Network.			
3b	Reflective essays with rubric	Use AAC&U Intercultural learning rubric to evaluate reflective essays; record and track results.	Compiled annually	International Training Office Director	Direct
3b	Host family census	Count and track total number of host families involved in ITO projects	Compiled annually	International Training Office Director	Direct
1Aa, 1Ac, 1Ba, 1Bc, 2C, 2D, 3A, 3B, 3C	Focus group of NIU faculty who aren't significantly involved in Global NIU	Ask about their level of awareness of international operations and programming; ask about ways to improve offerings.	Held biennially	Associate Provost	Direct

Outcomes by Methods Matrix

This is added as an attachment rather than being incorporated into the body of the document, because only landscape orientation would work for this table.

ATTACHMENTS

Outcomes by Methods Matrix

Current enrollment records for new undergraduate international students and for study abroad programs.

ISFO student satisfaction survey form, from SurveyMonkey

Summary of results from the last administration of this survey, spring 2011.

MyCAP: a sample assessment instrument for evaluating cultural learning.

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Rubric
Record sheets for results from the AAC&U Rubric
Workshop/Seminar Evaluation form for events in International Programs

INTENDED OR PROSPECTIVE USE OF RESULTS

Student Headcount Census: if we do not increase the numbers of students participating in study abroad or the number of new undergraduate nonimmigrant students enrolling for the first time, we will make appropriate adjustments in our promotion of both opportunities. We may need to advocate for additional funds for more staff members and for promotional activities such as recruiting.

Student Satisfaction Survey: results from this survey will let us know if we need to work more on customer service skills for staff in ISFO and SAO. Such efforts might include additional external training, or perhaps more frequent open discussions on how to serve our students more effectively. Running an ineffective program of student support needs to be corrected as soon as it's perceived.

Cultural Awareness Instrument: results from this method of measurement will let us know if we need to work more explicitly with the faculty program directors to help them address the question of cultural awareness during the courses abroad. It will be most interesting to see if incoming international students increase their cultural awareness while following their degree programs at NIU; as we understand, this population typically is not assessed on this dimension. We will learn if more cultural/educational programs are needed for this population.

Please note that we have not specified numeric targets for our students regarding this instrument. We have never used such instruments and do not know what results we can expect. Additionally, we have not yet agreed upon an appropriate instrument to use to measure cultural awareness.

Survey of Faculty Directors: results of this survey will inform our continuing efforts to provide strong support to those faculty who wish to lead programs abroad. Because faculty-led programs are our most user-friendly study abroad programs, we need to help our faculty as much as possible in this process, or we will not have enough programs to serve our students and thereby to increase our study abroad participation.

Faculty Staff Census: these results will let us know whether ITO programs are involving enough NIU faculty and staff in their activities. If the numbers appear to decline, the ITO staff will work to increase opportunities for NIU faculty and staff to serve in these programs.

Event Evaluation: Because we conduct so many events each academic year, this measure will help us understand whether, on a consistent basis, we are meeting the needs of our colleagues and students for excellent programs of a global nature. If we are not, we will need to reach out more eagerly to colleagues around campus for help in creating outstanding events. Poor evaluations of specific, repeated events, such as “Life After Graduation”, offered every semester by an immigration attorney, will mean we need to rethink our approach and presentation format to meet more effectively the needs of the participants.

Event Census: these results will not tell us as much as the event evaluations, above. It will simply reflect volume rather than quality.

Reflective Essays: results from measuring these essays against the AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Rubric will help us understand if we are meeting the goals of increasing intercultural communication and understanding in ITO programs. This will also be a useful test, on a small scale, of the process of assessing student learning outcomes using essays which are then evaluated against a rubric. Please note that again we have not specified numeric targets here, because we have never used an instrument like this and do not yet know what we can expect from such a measurement.

Host Family Census: results from tracking these numbers will help us understand if we are reaching greater numbers of local families with our special programs for the State Department and other organizations. If we are not, we will need to institute new promotional methods.

Faculty Focus Group: results from these encounters will likely give us a very open-ended picture of our operations as seen by faculty who are interacting with us perhaps for the first time, from something of a distance. We will be able to incorporate their insights into not only our Phase II assessment plan but also into our strategic planning in a wide variety of areas and our operations as well.

FURTHER INFORMATION NEEDED AND TIMELINE

Where we need additional information most especially is in the instruments we will be using. For example, while ISFO has created a short online survey on customer service, Study Abroad may need to extract certain items from their existing very useful (and very long) post-program online evaluation. The survey of faculty program directors also needs to be designed.

Additionally, we need to decide on an instrument to use in measuring cultural learning. We have attached an edited version of MyCAP, an instrument owned and copyrighted by NAFSA: Association of International Educators, and designed originally for use only

in teacher education programs. While we understand we will likely be able to obtain permission to use a version of this instrument, it is not normed or validated, and the Subcommittee on Assessment of the International Programs Advisory Council (IPAC) did not approve this instrument. Other similar instruments are commercially available, such as the Global Perspectives Inventory, and they are all quite expensive to administer.

The reflective essays, to be used in evaluating student learning during ITO special programs, still require some work: we need to create questions or prompts for the essays that will elicit the appropriate kind of introspection that would reveal levels of cultural learning. In addition, we need to identify persons to evaluate the essays using the AAC&U rubric on intercultural knowledge; I believe this may require paying someone or asking a current staff member to take on significant additional work.

YEARLY CALENDAR OF METHODS

July

Survey of faculty directors of study abroad programs
Student satisfaction survey, SAO (summer programs)
Event evaluations
Event census

August

Student headcount census for SAO

September

Event evaluations
Student headcount census for ISFO

October

Faculty Focus Group (even-numbered years)
Event evaluations

November

Event evaluations

December

Student satisfaction survey (ISFO)

January

Event evaluation
Student headcount census for ISFO
Student satisfaction survey, SAO (fall semester programs)

February

Event evaluations

March

Event evaluations

Cultural awareness instrument (ISFO)

April

Event evaluations

Student satisfaction survey (ISFO)

May

Event evaluations

June

Event evaluations

Reflective essays evaluated using AAC&U rubric

Host family census

Cultural awareness instrument (SAO)

Student satisfaction survey, SAO (spring semester programs)

Event census

CONTEXT

While assessment is certainly a prominent current topic in international education circles, and forms a significant focus for the Teaching, Learning and Scholarship Knowledge Community of NAFSA: Association of International Educators, typically these assessment efforts and projects focus only on study abroad rather than on the full scope of initiatives within centralized international offices like the Division of International Programs. By attempting to assess our progress on student cultural learning outcomes for incoming international students, we are pushing the envelope of assessment as currently practiced in international education around the US.

We recognize that our professional association NAFSA may be in a position to assist institutions such as NIU in moving assessment in international education beyond study abroad; in a 2010 e-publication *Assessment and Evaluation for International Educators*, Braskamp et al. cite as a future possibility "an assessment that integrates elements of international education extending beyond one area (e.g., education abroad). To measure institutional change, such an assessment may involve the evaluation of faculty, curricular, research, and administrative areas" (p. 6). Providing assistance to colleagues across the nation who are facing assessment requirements similar to those posed here at

NIU for student learning outcomes in areas beyond study abroad will be one of the goals of NIU's Associate Provost during her current service as Vice President for Education and Professional Development of NAFSA.

One more bit of context may be useful: typically when international educators engage in assessment of study abroad or other facets of comprehensive internationalization, they do so at the institutional level rather than the divisional or programmatic. Because success in study abroad or international education generally relies on multiple efforts across an institution, typically assessment of student learning outcomes in study abroad is intended to provide information on accountability for the institution as a whole, rather than to be used in holding the international office responsible for outcomes they do not control and may influence only marginally.

CONCLUSION

Over the five years of our original assessment plan we made very limited progress. After devoting an entire leadership retreat to the question of assessment planning and working extensively with the full IPAC and its new Subcommittee on Assessment, as well as receiving extensive consultation from the Associate Vice Provost for Assessment, we now believe we are closer to the right track. Starting with Phase I for 2012 - 2017, we will begin to understand more about program effectiveness and about student learning outcomes within the areas of effort of the Division of International Programs. We look forward to having appropriate data to assist us in our management decisions in the future, and to developing Phase II for the five years following the conclusion of this assessment plan in 2017.

Reference

Braskamp, L.A., D.K. Deardorff, M, Paige, P. Briggs, S. Gladding, and R. Sutton. 2010. *Assessment and Evaluation for International Educators*. NAFSA: Association of International Educators. E-publication available at <http://www.nafsa.org/assessmentbasics> .

Outcomes by Methods Matrix

	Student Head-count Census	Student Satisfaction Survey	Cultural Awareness Instrument	Survey of faculty directors	Faculty staff census	Event Evaluation	Event Census	Reflective Essays	Host Family Census	Faculty Focus Group
Increase study abroad participation	X	X	X							X
Provide excellent service to faculty directors				X						X
Increase number of international students	X									X
Provide essential information		X	X							X
Increase faculty staff participation in ITO programs					X					X
Increase faculty staff global exposure						X				X

Increase intercultural events						X	X			X
Increase intercultural exposure in campus community								X	X	X
International Operations Network							X			X