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## IV. VITAL AND OVERLOOKED: THE ROLE OF FACULTY IN INTERNATIONALIZING U.S. CAMPUSES<sup>1</sup>

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One of the key objectives of U.S. colleges and universities is to prepare students for an increasingly global world and job market. Scholars have proven to be tremendously effective in advancing this important goal. They serve as models of international collaboration to students, colleagues, and professional organizations as they bring their international experience to bear in their teaching and research, as well as in the advising roles they play on and off campus.

There are at least three broad areas where scholars are particularly effective in advancing the international awareness and multicultural literacy of U.S. students, campuses and communities:

- Faculty influence students and shape future generations of leaders through teaching and mentoring;
- Faculty bring international perspectives into their research and often establish long-lasting connections between their U.S. home institution and their partners abroad; and
- Faculty share their knowledge and experience with the wider campus community and the community at large.

Data from the Fulbright Scholar Program, the flagship international exchange effort of the U.S. government<sup>2</sup>, illustrates the significant impact faculty have on U.S. colleges and universities. Returned Fulbright Scholars report that they incorporate the international perspective they gained during their Fulbright experience in their teaching; they develop new internationally focused courses and programs; they continue to collaborate with their colleagues abroad after they return to the U.S.; they encourage colleagues and students to become involved in international experiences; and they share their experience with the community at large. The commitment of returned Fulbright scholars is remarkable. Over 70 percent, and in some areas up to 99 percent, reported substantial ongoing contributions to campus internationalization activities. The table below summarizes the critically important ways in which returned Fulbright scholars contribute to the internationalization of their U.S. home campuses and actively advance awareness of the benefits of experiencing another culture first-hand.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some of the research summarized here can also be found in O'Hara, Sabine (2009), *Internationalizing the Academy: The Impact of Scholar Mobility*, in *Higher Education on the Move: New Developments in Global Mobility*. Global Education Research Reports No. 2. New York: IIE; and in "Building International Connections for U.S. Universities: The Fulbright Scholar Program" compiled by Anne Clift Boris and published by CIES, a division of IIE. For these and other reports, visit [www.cies.org](http://www.cies.org).

<sup>2</sup> The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and is supported by the people of the United States and partner countries around the world. For more information, visit [Fulbright.state.gov](http://Fulbright.state.gov).

<sup>3</sup> Stanford Research Institute. (2002). *International outcome assessment of the Fulbright Scholar Program*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Research Institute; and *Report on U.S. Fulbright Scholar Follow-Up Study*, submitted to the Council for International Exchange of Scholars by ORC MACRO, August 2005.

<b>Research shows that Fulbright Scholars return to the U.S. and ...</b>	
Share information about the host country with colleagues	99%
Recommend that faculty colleagues apply for Fulbright	91%
Recommend other faculty international experiences	85%
Become more aware of cultural diversity	85%
Encourage students to study abroad	80%
Incorporate their Fulbright experience into curricula or teaching methods	73%
Share information about the host country with community groups	72%

What follows is a summary of research conducted on the vital role faculty in general, and returned Fulbright scholars in particular, play in the three key areas of internationalization: influencing students; advancing international connections and research; and influencing the campus community and the community at large.

## Influencing Future Generations

College and university students comprise the future economic, civic, cultural and political leadership of their countries. Given the increasingly global world and marketplace we live in, these future leaders must do more than acquire knowledge in their chosen academic or professional field. They must also be globally aware, culturally literate and able to collaborate effectively across cultural, national and linguistic boundaries. Yet data from the IIE *Open Doors 2008: Report on International Educational Exchange*, shows a less than encouraging picture—less than ten percent of U.S. undergraduates engage in study abroad.<sup>4</sup>

The influence and multiplier effect of faculty in shaping student interest is significant. Surveys of alumni typically mention faculty members as major influences. Enrollment figures in tertiary education institutions illustrate the point. During the 2005 academic year, 17.5 million students were enrolled at degree-granting institutions in the U.S. Of these, 85 percent were undergraduates, 12 percent were graduate students and three percent were enrolled in other professional programs. Every one of these students has contact with and is actively engaged with faculty in coursework and research assignments.

Given the range of full- and part-time, residential and non-residential students, a student can conceivably graduate without having had any interaction with residence life staff, counseling staff, or even IT staff serving the ubiquitous network systems supporting academic and administrative activities. Yet it is inconceivable that a student would graduate without having engaged with faculty. Approximately 1.25 million full- and part-time faculty were employed at U.S. colleges and universities during the 2005 academic year. Faculty work is very diverse, and not all faculty carry significant teaching responsibilities. Yet the student-to-faculty ratio evident in this data suggests a significant degree of interaction between faculty and students whether in the classroom, the laboratory, the studio, or in community engagements like service learning and applied research.

The influence faculty wield as teachers and mentors can both support and hinder the increasingly important advancement of international awareness and multicultural literacy among U.S. students.

<sup>4</sup>Bhandari, R. & Chow, P. (2008). *Open Doors 2008: Report on International Educational Exchange*. New York: Institute of International Education.

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Faculty who have experienced first-hand the enriching and enlightening impact of a teaching or research experience abroad can be far more effective in communicating to their students the importance of studying abroad and being exposed to international perspectives. In bringing their own experience, as well as broader international perspectives to the classroom, faculty who themselves have international experience can best mitigate students' lack of international exposure. Fulbright Scholar Dr. Donald Hall, clearly articulates the powerful role experience plays. He writes:

My teaching and the experiences of my students here in the United States have been substantially enhanced because of my work abroad. Not only has my knowledge base in my subject areas ... been diversified and deepened, but my ability to broaden the narrow American perspective on the topics covered in my classes has expanded significantly. ... Students will not learn the cultural limitations of their knowledge, which they must if they are to develop effective global communication skills, if faculty members themselves are parochial in their vision and awareness.<sup>5</sup>

An analysis of a Carnegie Foundation survey on the international engagement of faculty undertaken by Martin Finkelstein and colleagues at Seton Hall University confirms the critical importance of faculty members' personal experience abroad. The researchers found that the key characteristic of U.S. faculty who are internationally engaged is that they themselves have had international experiences during their adult years (defined as post-graduation). Time spent abroad proved more influential than being foreign-born, or experiencing institutional pressures to advance internationalization. Faculty who spent one to two years abroad are almost twice as likely to incorporate international themes in their courses than those who spent no time abroad; and faculty who spent time abroad were also three to five times more likely to have a research agenda that is international in scope.<sup>6</sup>

The international engagement of faculty is all the more important since faculty encouragement is critical to student participation in study abroad. This is confirmed both by the *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)* and by application surveys from the Fulbright student program. NSSE data suggest that when faculty are surveyed on the importance of international exposure, a one-point increase in a Likert scale rating of importance (for example, from important to very important) translates into a 20 percent increase in student participation in study abroad. And although just 43 percent of U.S. faculty in general believe that study abroad is important for students, more than 80 percent of returned Fulbright scholars say they have recommended that students or colleagues participate in an international exchange program.<sup>7</sup> Since approximately 90 percent of American students still graduate from college without having studied abroad, developing a faculty that will support and encourage participation in study abroad programs is critical to producing globally prepared graduates.

Unfortunately, funding to support teaching experiences of U.S. faculty abroad is very limited. A Fulbright grant is often the only funding source available for faculty interested in a teaching experience abroad. According to the American Council on Education, just 26 percent of U.S. campuses provide funding such as sabbatical pay for faculty members who lecture overseas.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Hall, D. (2008). Why Professors Should Teach Abroad. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 24.

<sup>6</sup> Finkelstein, M., Walker, E. & Rong Chen (2009). The internationalization of the American faculty: Where are we? What drives or deters us? [Research Paper]. South Orange, NJ: Seton Hall University.

<sup>7</sup> National Survey of Student Engagement – NSSE (2008). A. McCormik, Director. Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.

<sup>8</sup> Green, M., Dao L. & Burris, B. (2009). *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses: 2008 edition*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

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## Establishing International Connections for U.S. Colleges and Universities

Almost all Fulbright Scholars report that they continue to maintain their connections to their colleagues and host institutions abroad after they return to their U.S. campuses. In addition, three-quarters of returned Fulbright Scholars continue to collaborate on specific projects with colleagues from their host institution or country, and returned Fulbright scholars often invite faculty or other professionals from their host country to the United States. Approximately one-quarter of returned Fulbright scholars initiated at least one institution-to-institution exchange program between their home and host institutions. These exchanges typically include student and faculty, professional training, or even joint degree programs.

The ongoing international collaboration between U.S. institutions and universities abroad also has implications beyond the immediate institutional connections it creates. International connections help U.S. campuses attract scholars and students from overseas. The presence of returned Fulbright Scholars on U.S. campuses is an important factor in creating a welcoming atmosphere for foreign students. More than a quarter of Fulbright Scholars (27 percent) bring students from their host country to the United States, and nearly half report becoming more involved with foreign students after their return to their home institution in the United States.

In addition, the international engagement of scholars has long been a key factor in advancing knowledge and innovation. Universities have historically been global institutions and Latin was the lingua franca of professors and students from many different countries and cultures. The knowledge shared and taught at these universities thus was reflective of the broader knowledge of the Western world and exceeded the perspective of any one country. Non-Western traditions too were shaped by international contacts and scholarly exchange, although colonization ultimately spread the Western university model around the globe.<sup>9</sup>

The impact of faculty mobility on the advancement of knowledge is evident even today. According to IIE's *Open Doors 2008 Report*, over 106,000 scholars from overseas taught and conducted research at over 400 universities in the U.S. during the 2007-08 academic year.<sup>10</sup> This strong representation of visiting scholars at U.S. universities has increased steadily over the past twenty years. The top sending countries are China (22 percent of all visiting scholars), India, South Korea, Japan and Germany. Together these five countries comprise more than 50 percent of all visiting scholars to the U.S. while only six percent come from Latin America, and less than two percent from Sub-Saharan Africa. U.S. institutions, research programs, scholars and students benefit significantly from the perspectives, research methods and skills these visiting scholars bring. This is particularly true in the STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), which constitute almost 75 percent of the academic disciplines of visiting scholars to the U.S. A recent Universities UK report summarizes the positive impact of diverse knowledge systems and perspective as follows:

Enhanced researcher mobility allows for new ways of thinking to develop, and supports the academy in its pursuit of greater knowledge and new discoveries. Institutions benefit from students and staff who approach issues differently, and who are committed

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of globalization and the university, see, for example, Altbach, P. (2004). *Globalization and the University: Myths and realities in an unequal world. Tertiary Education and Management*, 10, pp. 3-25.

<sup>10</sup> Bhandari & Chow (2008). For the purposes of *Open Doors*, international scholars are defined as non-immigrant, non-student academics (i.e., teachers and/or researchers) at U.S. research institutions. The definition does not include, for example, scholars based at the national research labs.

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to greater collaboration with colleagues in other countries and thereby add value to research teams. Individuals benefit from new experiences, learning different ways of designing research projects, and gaining access to new kinds of research equipment and different opportunities. Networks created through researcher mobility can sustain the development of new disciplines and aid research and institutional links.<sup>11</sup>

Diverse perspectives, methodologies, and epistemologies are an essential prerequisite to sustaining creativity and innovation and to advancing knowledge. As knowledge systems become too homogenized and “inbred,” they lose the ability to advance and innovate. U.S. scholars report benefiting significantly from research and teaching experiences abroad that expand their world view, cause them to reframe research questions, and bring new information into their course content and teaching approaches. Access to information and observations in other cultural contexts and countries is an essential tool in this reframing process, and ultimately facilitates the creation of new knowledge that advances solutions to such large-scale problems as climate change, biodiversity loss, pandemics, and decision-making under uncertainty.

Despite the tremendous benefits of international exposure, U.S. scholars are among the least mobile. A 1992 Carnegie Foundation survey of faculty in fourteen countries showed that U.S. faculty are considerably more insular than their colleagues abroad. Only one-third of U.S. faculty had studied or conducted research abroad, and U.S. faculty were less likely than their counterparts overseas to view connections with scholars in other countries as very important to their professional work. The recent study conducted by Finkelstein and colleagues at Seton Hall University concludes that little progress has been made between the initial 1992 Carnegie Foundation survey and a follow-up survey of scholar mobility conducted in 2007.<sup>12</sup> In 2007, still only 33 percent of U.S. faculty reported collaborating with international colleagues in research, and U.S. faculty still ranked last among the fourteen countries in the percentage of articles published in a foreign country (7 percent). U.S. faculty also ranked among the bottom four countries in the percentage of courses taught abroad (17 percent) and the percent of publications co-authored with foreign colleagues (5 percent). Faculty in the STEM fields are even less likely than their colleagues in other fields to incorporate international perspectives into their courses.

These results are regrettable, especially in light of the significant benefits resulting from the international engagement of U.S. faculty. Data from the Fulbright Scholar program indicates that returned U.S. Fulbrighters regularly engage in ongoing research activities that produce books, articles, conference presentations and electronic publications. Even Fulbright Scholars who received teaching grants (as opposed to research grants) typically publish as a result of their experience abroad. Not surprisingly, Fulbright Scholars also report being successful in obtaining follow-up funding for their research activities from both public and private funding sources. These examples illustrate that the tremendously positive impact of faculty engagement in international collaborations extends far beyond the more immediate benefits of internationalizing U.S. campuses. It extends to a wide range of indirect benefits from more innovative teaching, to increased research productivity, to the financial benefits resulting from increased external funding.

<sup>11</sup> Universities UK. (2009). *Researcher Mobility in the European Research Area: Barriers and Incentives*. London: Universities UK.

<sup>12</sup> Finkelstein, Walker & Rong Chen (2009); see also Fisher, K. (2009). U.S. academics lag in internationalization, new paper says. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 2.

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## Influencing the Campus Community and Beyond

As the above mentioned examples of faculty influence on student participation in study abroad indicate, faculty are effective influencers and opinion makers. And their influence is not limited to student engagement. Nine out of ten returned Fulbright Scholars recommended that colleagues apply for a Fulbright. Their encouragement appears to be effective: in the 2008 competition for Fulbright Scholar grants, nearly half of all applicants identified the recommendation of a former Fulbright grantee as a major motivating factor in their application. Fulbright Scholars also become a resource for their colleagues and the wider community. Almost all returned scholars report that they share information about their host country with their colleagues (99 percent), and more than half make presentations about their host country to schools, the media, and community and civic organizations. Many returned Fulbright scholars also become proponents of international education in the wider academic community.

The vital, positive impact faculty have on internationalizing U.S. colleges and universities, and on advancing the future success potential of students, may well have been underestimated. Internationalization efforts have typically focused far more on increasing the presence of international students on U.S. campuses and on creating administrative offices focused on international education. These efforts are most certainly laudable and a step in the right direction. Yet advancing the international engagement of faculty may well prove to accelerate and amplify the impact of student-focused internationalization efforts. Regrettably, the critical role faculty play in increasing the international engagement of the entire academic community has at times been overlooked, and support for initiatives that increase the international engagement of faculty have not always kept pace.

A study of factors that impact the international engagement of faculty indicates that the locus of international initiatives within the university is an important factor to be considered. Faculty who are employed at higher education institutions where the primary leadership in establishing international linkages resides with the faculty appear to be more likely to be engaged in international initiatives than those faculty who are employed at institutions where internationalization initiatives are administratively driven. The presence of international students on campus, on the other hand, did not prove to be a significant predictor of the international engagement of U.S. faculty. The authors of the study conclude: “The emergence of the ‘faculty leadership’ factor is a key distinguishing factor in international activities.”<sup>13</sup>

This significance of the ‘faculty leadership’ factor in international engagement may require some rethinking of the role of administrative efforts. Administrative efforts may be more effective if they focus attention on and provide support for internationalization efforts of faculty. Some steps administrators can take to support the international engagement of faculty are:

- to allow sabbaticals and paid leave for both teaching and research assignments abroad;
- to provide salary supplements to achieve salary equivalency while faculty are on grants abroad;
- to continue to provide health insurance and other benefits to faculty who teach or conduct research abroad;
- to make faculty engagement overseas a part of promotion and tenure decisions;
- to provide recognition for faculty engagement abroad and most especially for establishing institutional linkages with universities abroad;

<sup>13</sup> Finkelstein et al. (2009).

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- to encourage returning faculty to develop teaching materials and new courses or revise courses based on their international experiences; and
  - to support further faculty collaboration between host institutions abroad and their U.S. home institution.

These examples may point the way to more effective efforts to internationalize U.S. higher education. In addition, efforts to increase the international engagement of faculty may be increasingly urgent for the U.S. to maintain its leading role in research and innovation and thus in the global economy. A recent article on scholar mobility reveals a change in scholar mobility patterns, as a growing number of foreign-born scholars now return to their home countries.<sup>14</sup> As a result, U.S. faculty will have to become increasingly involved in collaborations abroad in order to keep pace with scientific discovery and progress.

## Conclusions

The growing need for increased global awareness and multicultural competency of U.S. students requires that faculty members who teach their countries' future leaders are themselves actively engaged in international collaboration. Faculty are in regular contact with millions of students, advance knowledge in their field, incorporate new perspectives into their teaching and research, and drive innovation. They are also critically important opinion makers on their campuses and beyond. In its 2008 report, *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses*, the American Council on Education states:

Both ACE's experience working directly with institutions and the literature on internationalization show that faculty play the leading role in driving campus internationalization. It follows, therefore, that institutional investments in faculty travel to teach, conduct research, and lead students on education abroad programs, as well as workshops to help faculty internationalize their courses, can have a significant impact on internationalizing the curriculum.<sup>15</sup>

Data from the Fulbright scholar program confirms the vital role faculty play. Returned Fulbrighters are engaged in numerous activities that are essential to the successful advancement of internationalization efforts of U.S. colleges and universities. They:

- create new courses and certificate and degree programs;
- incorporate new international material into existing courses;
- develop sustainable study abroad programs, some of which include community development or service learning components;
- develop programs that involve multiple institutions, distance learning components and online learning communities;
- attract foreign students, scholars, artists and writers to their home campuses in the U.S.; and
- involve their colleagues, their students, and their institutions in partnerships with NGOs, the United Nations, and universities abroad.

Yet increasing the international engagement of faculty will require deliberate efforts. These efforts include changes in university policies that make it easier for U.S. faculty to assume teaching and

<sup>14</sup> O'Hara (2009).

<sup>15</sup> Green, Dao & Burris (2008: 17). See also Hill & Green. (2008: 30-31).

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research assignments abroad. Especially important are sabbatical leave policies and promotion and tenure policies that favor international engagement of faculty.

Yet beyond these on-campus efforts, national efforts are needed as well to effectively support opportunities for U.S. faculty to teach and conduct research abroad. Building on the exceptionally successful history of the Fulbright scholar program is an important starting point for such larger policy initiatives. The sustained political and financial commitment to significantly increase the international engagement of U.S. faculty is critical not only to the future success of U.S. students, but to the future success of the U.S. economy. The increased international engagement of U.S. scholars is needed across all academic fields, but it is especially urgent in those fields that drive innovation, economic development and social progress.