



International Student Recruitment and Study Abroad

Task Force Report
Five-Year Strategic Plan

I. General Overview

a) Task Force Charge

The committee will recommend a five year plan for international partnerships created to encourage:

- a. Enrollment of international students at USC Aiken
- b. Intellectual exchange and Faculty Research Collaboration
- c. Student Exchange (short term or longer)
- d. Class to Class collaboration (using video conferencing and other technologies).

This task force will make recommendations to the Chancellor concerning goals for international enrollment, identification of countries of focus, international marketing, and identify issues/opportunities to support international students who come to our campus. Additionally, the task force will make recommendations concerning inviting Fulbright scholars, building interest in class to class collaboration, and faculty research collaboration. Finally, the task force will recommend ways to enhance and expand the internationalization of the USC A curriculum.

b) Membership of the Task Force (alphabetic order by group)

Staff:

Maria Anastasiou (Chair),
International Programs

Roberto Aragon,
Registrar's Office

Gwen Ashley,
Business Services

Randy Duckett,
Enrollment Services

Nicolas Pattillo,
Enrollment Services

Jeff Priest,
EVCAA

Aja Vaughn,
Diversity Initiatives

Faculty:

Timothy Ashton,
Languages, Literatures and Cultures

Bing Han,
Communications Department

David Harrison,
School Of Business

Linda Heraldo-Gacad,
School of Nursing

Niren Vyas,
Distinguished Professor and Dean Emeritus

Linda Wang,
Sociology Department

Student:

Simon Houdus,
France, IESEG Exchange Program

c) Meeting Schedule and Time Line

The committee met on the following dates and discussed the following issues:

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| 2/4 | General discussion of the charge |
| 2/12 | Observations on sample strategic plan provided to committee members, Observations on 2012 Open Doors data, establishing a time line for report |
| 2/ 19 | Discussion on regions and countries to target for international student recruitment |
| 2/27 | Continued discussion on overall goals and strategies for internationalization of the campus, including improving and expanding study abroad opportunities |
| 3/ 5 | Committee invited Dr. Jordan to the meeting for a discussion |
| 3/19 | Discussion on goals for internationalizing the USCA curriculum |
| 4/1 | Review and discussion on overall goals and strategies agreed |
| 4/9 | Review and discussion on overall goals and strategies agreed continued |

II. Overview of Best Practices and Data examined

There are a number of overall general observations that the committee felt that it needed to provide as important information for understanding the proposed goals and strategies presented in this report.

The first observation the committee made was that the title of this task force did not accurately reflect its charge (refer above). A more accurate name for the task force would have been "Internationalizing the USCA Campus." Although a motion was not made to change the name, the committee proceeded with the agreement and understanding that it would discuss and consider goals and strategies that dealt with all aspects of improving global perspectives on the USCA campus and not only on international student recruitment and study abroad.

Second, the committee also proceeded with the understanding that the task force was charged to make recommendations for a strategic internationalization plan for the next five years. After examining the Internationalization Strategic Plans of a couple of peer institutions, the committee was in agreement that USCA greatly needs to be improved in all respects of international activity, from the number of international students to the degree of international comparative perspectives in USCA courses. Once again, this necessitates a broader and overarching view of where international efforts should be directed.

Third, the committee made the observation that when we talk about “international student recruitment” we should make the distinction that there are two kinds of international students: degree-seeking and exchange students. Each group requires different recruitment strategy, approach and support services. Each group also brings different financial sources and costs and we need to keep this distinction in mind as we move forward with more specific plans for international student recruitment.

The University of South Carolina Aiken and the Aiken community are perfect places for international students to succeed and thrive, the committee agreed. The small size of the University provides international students with personal attention from faculty and staff to succeed and thrive as students and individuals. It also increases their opportunities for leadership positions, service and student life involvement. The small size of the campus and the Aiken community also provides a safe place for them to complete their studies, an issue that is most important to international students’ families. As home to many diverse international groups, Aiken is a perfect small, safe, Southern city that can extend its hospitality to new international students. What USCA needs to do is to better communicate these values and advantages of the campus to prospective international students and their families and be more intentional in engaging the Aiken communities (international and local) in the International Programs Office efforts to support international students.

The committee examined data provided by USCA Business Services showing international student enrollment at USCA in the last 5 years and other relevant data. It also examined the most recent Open Doors data that is provided yearly by the Institute of International Education (IIE) on international student enrollment in the US by country and region. Other important data examined came from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), NAFSA (Association of International Educators), American Council on Education (ACE) and their Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE), the Fulbright Commission, EducationUSA (US Department of State), and the China Center for International Educational Exchange (CCIEE). The committee also referred to Best Practices in the field of international education from the NAFSA website data and publications and by looking at peer and aspirant institutions and their internationalization efforts.

References on data and websites examined can be provided upon request.

III. Proposed Goals and Strategies

Necessary Human and Capital Resources

The following resource issues need to be quickly addressed for proposed internationalization goals to be successful:

1. Support of the International Programs Office (IPO) preferably before, but definitely at the same time that strategies are implemented. Specifically, a position for a full time professional needs to be opened and filled by the end of the 2013 calendar year. This is the most important financial cost that USCA will have to invest in regarding the goals presented in this report. However, the overall effect will be a positive one at the end of the five years because with more professional support, more of these goals can be implemented successfully and more revenue will be generated.
2. The International Programs website needs to be improved and expanded to include all international activities and initiatives on campus. The website of the IPO and the USCA website in general is our picture to the entire world and in most cases, the only way international students and partner universities can find out about USCA.
3. Work with the Development Office to establish an endowment for internationalization efforts.
4. Create a committee of faculty and staff to oversee and direct the internationalization process and evaluate the results periodically and at the end of the 5 years. Members will serve for a maximum of 5 years.

Five-year Plan Goals

The committee identified 4 major goals to be pursuit for the next 5 years. Each goal addresses at least one of the following Forward Together Themes: Grow the University, Improve the Current Budget/Funding Situation, Increase Program Degree Offerings, Expand Reputation and Awareness of USCA, Expand and Enhance Community Relationships.

- 1) Increase enrollment of degree-seeking international students**
- 2) Improve and diversify study abroad programs (exchanges, 2+2 programs, international internships, discovery programs, and international community service projects)**
- 3) Encourage and support faculty international research, collaborations and exchanges**
- 4) Internationalize USCA curricula**

Each goal and strategy is presented in terms of a short-term and long-term time frame. Short-term goals and strategies are to be implemented and evaluated within 1 academic year and long-term goals and strategies are to be implemented in the next 5 years and assessed at the end of that period.

Goal 1: Increase enrollment of degree-seeking international students to 3% of USCA student body, from currently at 1.6%

- Active recruitment from countries:
 - For which connections and networks already exist with USCA faculty and staff
 - For which there is a South Carolina sister-city relation, namely Germany, Australia, and Taiwan
 - That exhibit increasing middle classes and a large movement of students to the US to seek undergraduate degrees
 - That offer scholarships to their students to pursue studies in the US

Strategies:

Short term (within 1 year) with minimal cost:

- Prepare specific marketing material for international students: hard copies and virtual
- Create a strong support system for current and future international students that also involves the Aiken community (structured host family program)
- Develop a professional IPO website
- Develop an International Enrolment Management plan for the next year
- Partner with EducationUSA: Consult and provide information to Education USA recruiters, employ on-line (website) methods that work for international student recruitment, and attend the annual EducationUSA Forum, held in Washington D.C. every summer
- Advertise in Institute of International Education's (IIE) publications at no cost
- Involve Alumni
- Involve faculty and staff who have networks and contacts abroad
- Take advantage of Fulbright Occasional Lecturer Fund (minimal cost)
- Partner with Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program (FLTA) (minimal cost-sharing)
- Become Host for Fulbright Professors (minimal cost-sharing). This strategy would help increase international degree-seeking and exchange students in the long run.

Long term (5 years):

- Work with the Development Office to create a scholarship fund for prospective international students
- Develop specific Enrollment Management strategies for each county identified
- Hire professional recruitment companies (higher cost)
- Identify and strategically attend international recruitment fairs
- Become Host for Fulbright Students (minimal cost-sharing)
- Partner with SC (or other state) Institutions to create Study Abroad Consortia (moderate cost)
- Collaborate with SC institutions to create a "Study SC" website (moderate cost)

Goal 2: Improve, expand, and diversify study abroad programs

Strategies:

Short term (1 year):

- Create programming to increase our students' curiosity on exploring the world
 - Through new IPO experiential activities
 - Through incorporating other existing programs and working with other groups on campus for increasing incentives. For example, the ICE program can be better utilized and incorporated to better motivate students.
- Identify roadblocks that prevent our students from studying abroad
- Develop a marketing strategy for study abroad opportunities including internships and service
- Evaluate existing study abroad policies and procedures for efficiency and transparency to faculty, staff and students
- Involve faculty and staff with existing networks and contacts abroad to increase direct exchanges
- Create and implement discovery programs to increase curiosity among students and provide opportunities for faculty to create contacts with potential partners
- Create meaningful avenues for study abroad students to showcase their experiences
- Create an award system for students who engage in meaningful international initiatives on and off campus

Long term (5 years):

- Create direct exchange study abroad opportunities with partner institutions
- Create 2+2 and similar programs with partner institutions
- Create international internship opportunities for students
- Create opportunities for international community service for students
- Find creative ways to help students finance study abroad experiences

Goal 3: Encourage and support faculty international research, collaborations and exchanges

Strategies:

Short term (1 year):

- Gather information on current international connections among faculty
- Financial support for faculty to attend international professional development workshops and international conferences to make connections with international colleagues and peers
- Encourage faculty to write proposals for grants to host faculty from other universities whenever grant money is available from IIE, Fulbright, Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs, Department of Education and Private Foundations

- Encourage faculty to write proposals for grants to host international students and other international opportunities from Fulbright, Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs, Department of Education and Private Foundations

Long term (5 years):

- Create incentive systems for faculty to participate in international collaborations and research through:
 - The tenure promotion process
 - A reward system for creating pilot programs and collaborations

Goal 4: Internationalize the USCA curriculum

Strategies:

Short term (1 year):

- Appoint a group of faculty to examine the current status of the curriculum, establish goals and strategies for internationalizing curricula. The decision on **how** global perspectives are to be included will remain with individual faculty and each department.
- Develop an International Studies BA degree using existing courses and expertise from various departments.

Long term (5 years):

- Integrate study abroad into the general education curriculum
- Solicit departments' help in identifying or creating room for a study abroad program, international internship, or community service experience in 1 or 2 semesters in the program
- Encourage departments to incorporate a global comparative perspective in as many courses as possible in all disciplines and programs
- Use technology to link classrooms and students across partner universities
- Provide structured opportunities and incentives for students to present their study abroad experiences and discoveries and help them connect those to their research interests
- Create recognition tools for faculty successfully incorporating global perspectives in courses
- Create faculty development workshops on incorporating global perspectives in the classroom and beyond in collaboration with the Center for Teaching Excellence

Final overarching goal:

Increase awareness and appreciation among faculty, staff and students of international and intercultural issues on our campus and around the globe.

Strategies:

- Create development workshop for all campus constituents to develop a sense of global understanding and appreciation with the help of the Human Resources office, Center for Teaching Excellence, International Programs Office, and Diversity Initiatives.
- Create opportunities for all campus constituents to participate in international community service and volunteerism.
- Create opportunities for students to explore international careers with the help of the International Programs and Careers Office.
- Create opportunities for students to better incorporate in meaningful and practical ways their improved knowledge and understanding of the international community and their intercultural skills