

**Infusing the World into TSU**  
**Internationalizing the Curriculum, the Student Body, and the Faculty**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International/global engagement and cross cultural competence are increasingly recognized as integral components of a complete and contemporary liberal arts education. The global economy and telecommunication advances that continue to blur national boundaries and internationalize work teams have prompted universities to address the urgent need to equip students to fully participate and succeed in a global marketplace. Too many students at Texas Southern University, as well as other HBCU's and minority-serving institutions (MSIs) are being left behind in the area of global engagement. While there are a several ways a university may demonstrate its commitment to international education, one widely recognized marker is the number of undergraduate students who study abroad for academic credit each year. According to a 1997 report in *Black Issues in Higher Education*, only 2,348 (2.8%) of the 85,000 undergraduates who studied abroad during the 1995-96 academic year were African American. As of August, 2009 an estimate of 115 Texas Southern University students have studied abroad since 1997. In light of Texas Southern University's special mission, it can be argued that the need to value and equip students in the area of global engagement is particularly urgent.

The changing economic and political landscape demands that Texas Southern University reconceptualize internationalization of its campus and curriculum from something that is "extra" to something that is an integral component of the TSU educational experience. The "Infusing the World into TSU" Quality Enhancement Plan will focus on a three-pronged approach to globally engaging and internationalizing TSU students by: 1) Internationalizing the campus, 2) internationalizing the classroom, and 3) by internationalizing Third Ward, Houston, and the World.

## **Introduction**

It is our contention that implementation of this proposal will strengthen the global literacy and marketability of TSU students. TSU has an opportunity to be on the forefront of creating successful models of internationalizing a campus that serves low-income, minority, and nontraditional students who deserve to compete at all levels within a global economy.

The Pulitzer Prize winning author Thomas Friedman has famously declared that the "world is flat" in an age of globalization. Academic institutions that equip multi-cultural student bodies with cross-cultural skills and delineate three competencies needed to succeed in this new era will be among the most competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the last 5 years alone some U.S. schools have increased enrollments in record numbers by enhancing the curriculum in one area: that of global engagement. Indeed, not only do goods and services crisscross the planet through international trade, but capital and labor are increasing mobile and fungible. With the rapid expansion of instant communication in the age of the internet and the rise of a global mass media, culture itself—the way people live and make sense of their lives—has become global. Just as everyday life increasingly involves interaction with things, people, and ideas from

half a world away, so to do the crises and problems span the globe. Climate change effects every human being, albeit not equally, and the current global financial crisis has led to hardship and suffering from Detroit to Shanghai to Lagos. Every university owes it to its students to prepare them to live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and thrive in this “hot, flat, and crowded” (to use another of Friedman’s titles) home.

Texas Southern University (TSU) was founded in the dying days of legal segregation in the United States during an era when the white majority of the state of Texas put forth systematic efforts to isolate citizens of African descent from the give and take and overall profitability of global interaction. Fortunately, TSU has always pursued a path of global acceptance and served as a welcoming home for people and ideas from around the globe. This current, “Infusing the World,” initiative will serve to help transform the institution from a passive recipient of global influence to a more active and engaged participant in global interaction. The strategic goals and actions of the Internationalization Initiative are described in the remainder of this document. Each strategic goal and action encapsulates the QEP core which consists of Critical Thinking, Engagement, and Communication (CEC) competencies:

### **Strategic Goals**

1. establish internationalization as a top priority in the institution’s strategic planning and
2. strengthen the use of explicit international learning goals
3. demonstrate the value of internationalization (and an increased international education fee) to external stakeholders
4. increase the ability of domestic students to engage in study abroad activities
5. integrate international students and student organizations into the international program
6. encourage and reward faculty to leverage their international engagement activities into internationally oriented research

### **Antecedents**

Texas Southern has a history of international initiatives to build upon. As a historically black university, it has always been open to people and ideas from across the globe. It has focused especially on fostering links between Africans in the Diaspora and Africa. However, too many of its students are not able to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the university. Many come from financially deprived backgrounds and cannot afford that increasingly vital aspect of contemporary college life, the study abroad experience. Many at TSU focus on the immediate imperative of getting a job after their education and consciously avoid engagement with what they see as extraneous distractions. While it is true that the basic educational needs of students must be met, it is equally true that students can become stagnant if they are not exposed and equipped to reach beyond what they know and see regularly. Furthermore, international skills have been largely associated with “privileged” members of U.S. society in the past. However, U.S. President Barack Obama epitomizes an increasing awareness and need to equip all segments of U.S. society with skills valued in the global market. In order for students to advance beyond the levels of previous generations, students need to be equipped with skills that are valued in the global marketplace.

### **Actions**

To counter these trends on our campus, this initiative proposes the following actions:

1. Create a Global Engagement Office that coordinates Study Abroad, International Majors and Minors, and Global Collaboration efforts

2. Infusing international themes across the curriculum
3. Infusing international course content into courses beyond the first-year experience, especially in the upper division of the curriculum
4. Creating an a flexible program of international minors and monitoring enrollment in minors with international content
5. Broadening the incentives, rewards and recognition for faculty and student engagement in global learning with support from private gifts as well as institutional funds
6. Expanding faculty development for internationalizing the curriculum that include participation by the part-time faculty
7. establishing a reward system for domestic students to use their study abroad experiences for outreach into the student body and local community
8. Promoting international engagement through study abroad
9. Improve cultural literacy through increased and expanded language study
10. Increasing the opportunity for international study through the development of internationally focused minors
11. Promoting engaged intellectual discourse on our society and the world through a high-profile speakers' series
12. Enhancing alumni and community relationships.
13. Integrating international students and student organizations into the international studies effort
14. Collaborating with internationally-focused organizations in the Houston area (e.g., IIE, WAC)
15. Hosting a cadre of instructors from other societies through external support and faculty exchange
16. Strengthen and grow global partnerships and grant opportunities as well as governmental and NGO collaboration at local, state, and federal levels.

### **Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will demonstrate more awareness of global issues, concerns, and cultural literacy.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to successfully operate in diverse international contexts.
3. Students will demonstrate awareness of their own culture and society in comparison to those of others.
4. Students will demonstrate greater understanding of international infrastructures within contemporary cross national contexts.
5. More students will acquire cross cultural competency skills.

6. More students will benefit from engagement with international education through studying abroad.
7. More students will participate in international service, internships, and exchange programs.
8. A greater number of TSU students will take course with significant international content
9. A greater number of TSU students and faculty will engage in international research
10. A greater number of TSU students will take foreign language courses
11. A greater number of TSU students will achieve internationally themed minors
12. TSU students will demonstrate a greater knowledge and engagement in the world around them

### **Assessment**

1. Measurement of achievement of numeric goals
2. Surveys
3. Achievement on in-class assessments

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**Table 1**  
**Comprehensive Evaluation Plan**

	Course Pass Rates	Course-Level Assessment	Student Evaluations	Program Level Assessment	1 Year Retention Rates	Graduation Rates
<b>I Internationalizing the Campus</b> Create a Global Engagement Office that coordinates Study Abroad, International Majors and Minors, and Global Collaboration efforts  Creating an a flexible program of international minors and monitoring enrollment in minors with international content Increasing the opportunity for international study through the development of internationally focused minors  Integrating international students and student organizations into the international studies effort						
The Orientation Experience				X	X	X
Integrated Student Academic Advising and Support Center				X	X	X
<b>II Global Engagement in the Classroom</b> Infusing international themes across the curriculum.  Infusing international course content into courses beyond the first-year experience, especially in the upper division of the curriculum.  Improve cultural literacy through increased and expanded language study.						
The Faculty Development Initiative	X	X				X
Supplemental Instruction in Freshman Courses	X	X				

**III Global Engagement in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward, Houston, and World Communities**

Establishing a reward system for domestic students to use their study abroad experiences for outreach into the student body and local community.

Promoting international engagement through study abroad.

Promoting engaged intellectual discourse on our society and the world through a high-profile speakers' series.

Enhancing alumni and community relationships.

Collaborating with internationally-focused organizations in the Houston area (e.g., IIE, WAC).

Hosting a cadre of instructors from other societies through external support and faculty exchange.

Strengthen and grow global partnerships and grant opportunities as well as governmental and NGO collaboration at local, state, and federal levels.

Service Learning				X	X	
Travel and Study Abroad				X		