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## Action Project

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**Institution:** Wayne State College  
**Submitted:** 2006-09-14                      **Contact:** Dr. Robert O. McCue  
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### Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: 05-01-2006

Target completion date: 05-01-2011

Actual completion date: --

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Enhance International Learning Experiences

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

This Action Project is designed to increase diverse, international cultural learning interactions for our students and faculty. This will be accomplished by increasing educational experiences in foreign countries and through interaction via technology and other means with students in and from foreign countries. The institution has listed International Education as a Wayne State College priority on the Nebraska School College System (NSCS) Biennium Budget with NSCS emphasis, seeking additional funding for waivers and staffing to coordinate efforts in the last two biennium budgets, (2009-2011 and 2007-2009). The Alumni Foundation will be asked to establish and support a plan to fund international learning experiences for Wayne State College students, faculty and alumni. The institution plans to increase publicity and promotion of international learning experiences in news releases through various media resources. The goal is to provide an international experience for at least 200 students per year within a 3 to 5 year time frame.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities: \_

The Nebraska State College System and our institutional strategic plan indicate a need for increased emphasis and growth in international education in the areas of globalization, institutionalization, and international students. A large population, approximately 93 percent, of our students come from the local geographical region. This region is populated with people from predominately, white, middle-class European ethnicity. Approximately 94 percent of our student population are white. The majority of students that attend WSC come from modest incomes with little additional discretionary money and find it difficult to fund international travel. For this reason, we are trying to secure alumni foundation contributions/scholarships to support student international travel. Our institution feels it is extremely important to provide students and faculty with as many diverse learning experiences as possible, to fulfill the mission of the college to prepare our students for success upon graduation in a competitive, global society. As our country

is more and more involved in globalization activities; the need to further international education and learning is vital.

E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

Student learning and enhancement of international education is the responsibility of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the four School Deans, the fourteen Department Chairs, all faculty, staff; which includes the Registrar, Counseling, Admissions, and the Multicultural Center, and students.

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs with leadership from the Deans of the four schools and faculty are implementing strategies to increase international learning through continued coordination with current international connections in Greece, China, Australia, Taiwan, France, Nepal, and Costa Rica. A semester abroad opportunity will continue to be offered through the Nebraska Semester Abroad Program to the Czech Republic and Greece. These processes will be enhanced through increased funding, contact, visits, and diplomacy. In addition, faculty and students will be encouraged to increase engagement and the number of countries and courses involved in the interactive video conferencing distance learning experiences offered. Currently, the Inter-Cultural Communication's classes provide on-campus learning through WebCT mail and discussion groups, along with interactive live video conferences with students from other countries. This course also offers the opportunity for actual international study and travel abroad with connections to Costa Rica and Taiwan. Additional on-campus courses offer cultural learning; such as, International Business, International Discussion, Diversity in the Workplace; and International Economics. The campus Multicultural Center is increasing its activities and educational functions which are open to all faculty, staff, and students. An annual budget of \$15,000 was authorized in 2005/06 and continues to the present to maintain and increase international experiences. The Office of Continuing Education will work to develop and offer additional travel and learning experiences. The Office of Institutional Research has updated tracking criteria and the student enrollment counts of students with an international country of origin are as follows: Canada 3; Columbia 2; Costa Rica 1; Denmark 1; Ecuador 1; Guyana 1; Kenya 3; Morocco 1; Mexico 7; Nigeria 2; Nepal 5; Peru 1; Palau 3; South Africa 1; Sri Lanka 3; Sudan 5; Switzerland 1; Tanzania 1; Venezuela 1; for a total foreign student enrollment of 43.

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):

The Vice President for Academic Affairs provided \$15,000 for international travel for faculty to provide support for this action project during the 2006-2007 academic year. During 2007-2008 a faculty team visited China to determine the feasibility of cultural exchanges between a college in China and our institution. The institution is studying the feasibility for our faculty teaching English classes in China and providing an opportunity for our students to study in China and provide an opportunity for Chinese students come to our institution in America for study. Several groups of students and faculty have visited and studied in several countries. During the 2006-2007, our institution had students and faculty who studied and traveled to: Costa Rica, 23 students and 2 faculty; Czech Republic, 3 students; Greece, 25 students and 16 faculty and others; for a total of 69 students and faculty involved in international travel. During the 2007-2008 academic year our institution had students and faculty who studied and traveled to:

Australia, 2 students; Austria and Italy, 30 students and 3 faculty; Costa Rica 20 students and 2 faculty; Czech Republic, 9 students and 1 faculty; France 15 students and 1 faculty; Greece 10 students and 16 faculty and others; Jordan, 1 student and 1 faculty; Taiwan 2 students and 2 faculty; for a total of 105 students and faculty involved in international travel. So, an increase in foreign travel has already been documented. Additional travel to expand cultural experiences and exchange visitations between our institution and foreign countries are planned for the 2008-2009 academic year and beyond. Exchanges have been completed between Greece, China, Australia, Taiwan, France, Turkey, Austria, Czech Republic, and Costa Rica. Additional international learning strategies and countries to visit will be determined by the academic areas and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Statistics and the numbers of students involved in these international learning experiences will be tracked through the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Continuing Education for each year the action project is implemented from 2006 through 2011. These results will be compared with initial data from the 2006-2007 academic year to show growth in each year following: 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011. Additional data will be obtained from the Office of Continuing Education, the Multi-Cultural Center, and the institution's student information system to track the successful completion of the goal of providing an international experience for at least 200 students per year by May 1, 2011.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

Successful efforts will be monitored through the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, through faculty and student documentation. The Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Continuing Education will compile the data.

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals:

Success will be determined by several measures. Educational experiences in foreign countries and student experiences through interaction via technology and other means of collaborating, studying, and learning with students in and from foreign countries will be increased. A budget has been established using funding from the Nebraska State College System and Wayne State College along with plans to establish Wayne State College Alumni Foundation endowment funding. The Biennium NSCS Budget will provide funding for faculty and staff travel, marketing and publicity. The Alumni Foundation will be asked to establish a plan for funding international learning experiences for Wayne State College students. Publicity to enhance marketing and admissions growth will promote the international learning experiences in news releases through various media resources. Data compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Continuing Education will show that an international experience for at least 200 students per year has been accomplished.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

Information and publicity on the international learning programs will be showcased on the institution's Web site, in the Wayne Stater (the campus student newspaper), the Wayne State College Alumni Magazine, and reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Wayne State College President.

K. Project Leader and contact person:

Contact Name: Suzanne R. Sydow, Director of Assessment

Email: susydow1@wsc.edu

### **Annual Update: 2008-08-14**

#### **A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.**

This Action Project was originally started in May of 2006, but was posted in draft mode. The project was updated to reflect the past two year's accomplishments and posted as a current Action Project in June 2008. Therefore, the institution is seeking review on this Action Project for the first time. A major accomplishment has been securing funding for faculty for international learning experiences. The institution has listed International Education as a Wayne State College priority on the Nebraska School College System (NSCS) Biennium Budget with NSCS emphasis. The institution has been seeking additional funding for waivers and staffing to coordinate efforts in the last two biennium budgets, (2009-2011 and 2007-2009).

#### ***Review (08-28-08):***

The rationale for the time planned for the Action Project indicates a well established set of benchmarking data for 2006-2007 against which the next years of the Active Project can be compared. Wayne State College has progressed remarkably on a Project posted only as a draft in May 2006. This evidences commitment to increasing emphasis upon international education in the areas of globalization, institutionalization, and international students. It will be interesting to compare data in the next Annual Update as evidence that activating a Project provides even more stimulus for growth and commitment.

#### **B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.**

Faculty and students have been encouraged to increase engagement with the number of countries and courses involved in international learning experiences. This has been implemented through funding from the Vice President for Academic Affairs and from the leadership and promotion from the Deans of the four schools and faculty. The institution is committed to continue to expand coordination with current international connections, while seeking new opportunities. Faculty are encouraged to endorse new international learning experiences.

#### ***Review (08-28-08):***

Funding for faculty and students will continue to be a challenge as this Project grows and evolves. The institution is seeking additional funding for waivers and staffing to coordinate efforts in the last two biennium budgets, (2009-2011 and 2007-2009). The annual budget of \$15,000 authorized in 2005/06 and continuing to the present would seem to be insufficient for the desired goal of showing an international experience of 200 students per year by 2011.

#### **C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.**

Plans are to continue to increase and encourage international learning experiences. A proposal is being studied to initiate our own institution study abroad program. The Alumni Foundation will be asked to establish a plan for funding international learning experiences for Wayne State College students through their endowment fund. The Biennium NSCS Budget funding will be granted providing funding for faculty and staff travel, marketing and publicity. Publicity used to promote the international learning experiences in news releases through various media resources will be used to enhance marketing and admissions growth. Data will be compiled by the Office

of Institutional Research and the Office of Continuing Education to show that an international experience for at least 200 students per year has been accomplished.

**Review (08-28-08):**

Although it is indicated that the Alumni Foundation will be asked to establish a plan for funding international learning experiences for Wayne State College students through their endowment fund and that funding will be available through the Biennium NSCS Budget to support faculty and staff travel, marketing and publicity, what is not provided is a clear sense of how much funding is involved or whether it will prove sufficient.

**D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.**

The stimulus to international learning experiences for our institution has been from increased funding initiatives provided by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Our students have also benefited by collaborating with other institutions to provide international learning opportunities through the Nebraska Semester Abroad Program. The Intercultural Communication's classes provide on-campus learning through WebCT mail and discussion groups along with interactive live video conferences with students from other countries. This course also offers the opportunity for actual international study and travel abroad with connections to Costa Rica and Taiwan. Students can interact through email, see and communicate through live video conferences and then have the opportunity to actually meet face-to-face through travel abroad. The following is quoted from the Summer 2007 WSC Arts & Humanities Newsletter, "Expanding International Connections." Beginning in the fall 2006 semester, Communication Arts Professor Deborah Whitt developed an innovative classroom experience for a communication studies course entitled Intercultural Communication. This "Global Classroom" experience utilized technology that allowed WSC students to interact in real time with students in classrooms at the University of Jammu (India), the University of Costa Rica, and Chienkuo Technology University (Taiwan). WSC is one of approximately twelve institutions nationwide that are collaborating with each other and with overseas institutions in order to create a Global Classroom experience for students. WSC students and their international partners began their interactions through discussion boards and chat rooms, utilizing WebCT internet software. After a series of assignments developed to facilitate the students getting to know and understand their partners, Dr. Whitt reports that "students began to develop friendships, trust, and close bonds with their international partners. When we followed with our video conferencing and actually saw one another smile and laugh together instantaneously in our classrooms, incredible learning experiences took place. The experience was rewarding and life changing." Also beginning in the fall 2006 semester, Michael Marek (Communication Arts) began an additional collaborative internet project with a colleague teaching at Chien-Kuo Technology University (Taiwan). Marek served as a guest speaker in his colleague's English as a Foreign Language class via internet video technology, discussing cultural topics as well as current events. The following is quoted from the Summer 2008 WSC Arts & Humanities Newsletter, "Wayne State Program Provides Cultural Exchange." In addition, the following story regarding the burgeoning exchange program between Communication Arts professors at Wayne State College and Chienkou Technology University in Taiwan is reprinted with permission of the Norfolk Daily News. Oyster omelets were on the menu and Buddhist and Taos temples were among the scenery when professors and students from Wayne State College took a recent visit to Taiwan. In a reciprocal program, Wayne State students spent two weeks learning first-hand about the Chinese and Taiwan culture and history, while Taiwan students brushed up on their English speaking skills. Two Wayne

State faculty members, Deborah Whitt and Mike Marek, participated in the program at the Chienkou Technology University at Changhua City, Taiwan, along with students Lucas Christensen and Tony Miller. Christensen and Miller gave presentations in 13 classrooms, increasing student exposure to global communication and technology. Whitt and Marek gave more formal presentations on campus. They also spent numerous hours talking informally with Taiwanese students in the campus coffee shop. Coffee was free if asked for in English to encourage use of the language. Both Whitt and Marek are part of the Wayne State Communication Arts Department. Whitt instructs in speech communication, and Marek in mass communication. Before the four made the trip to Taiwan, Wayne State students enrolled in Whitt's intercultural communications classes and Chienkou University students got to know one another through e-mail and conversed, utilizing videoconferencing technology. "In some ways it's been a bold undertaking," Marek said. The program serves student learning and encourages faculty to incorporate what Marek calls "cool stuff" into their classrooms. The program is a prime example of the type of networking in higher education that typically takes place at educational conferences. The cultural exchange program began in 2003 when Dr. Vivian Wu of Chienkou Technology University and Marek were earning their doctoral degrees at the University of South Dakota at Vermillion. When Wu returned to Taiwan in the fall of 2006, Marek and Wu began collaborating on classroom activities several times a semester. Because the style of Taiwan college instruction is a series of lecture and memorization, Marek's goal was to make classroom interaction interesting while integrating a different culture into the students' routine. Whitt's students became involved in the collaborative venture in the spring semester of 2007. Marek and Whitt said they feel the program has benefited participating Wayne State students, expanding their understanding of the world, and giving them the opportunity to communicate interculturally and internationally. Taiwan students involved with the program experienced a slice of an American classroom, filling their desire to speak with native English speakers and practice their English skills. Taiwan students are encouraged to reach a proficiency in English while in college to better help them engage in the world marketplace at a future date, regardless of their major. Whitt's students have also had the opportunity to interact - via video conferencing - with students in India and Costa Rica. The exchange program generates excitement on both sides of the ocean, according to Whitt. Ultimately, the two Wayne State instructors hope that more Wayne State and Chienkou University students become involved. As the program evolves, Wayne State and Taiwan students may spend a semester or two in each other's colleges. "I think the world is better off the more we know about other countries and cultures," Marek said. "When faculty from another country's college describe problems with their students, it's the same problems we see. People are people. The more we learn that people are the same, it serves all of us well."

**Review (08-28-08):**

Innovative practices in courses and the classrooms and collaborations all would seem to be candidates for "Best Practices" that could be submitted to the AQIP Innovation Exchange. <http://www.aqip.org/InnovationExchange/>

**E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?**

Faculty and students are challenged by time commitments away from family and friends, loss of working income, and travel expenses. Securing funding to assist students and faculty with travel expenses still remains the biggest challenge facing this Action Project.

**Review (08-28-08):**

The College has clearly identified the biggest challenge facing this Action Project. It may be that similar programs at other institutions could help provide ideas for funding as well as help with finding ways to deal with other challenges of exchange.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

***Review (08-28-08):***