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EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR
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Going Global Without Going Abroad

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This essay is rooted in the belief that thinking “globally” does not always mean “internationally” and that global awareness begins with self-awareness. Often the idea of “global citizenship” remains abstract to students, and previous efforts to create global curricula suggest that students need more than theoretical knowledge to “develop their own agency as responsible actors in the world” (Sperandio, Grudzinski-Hall, & Stewart-Gambino 2010). Our National Endowment for the Humanities funded project, “Building Global Perspectives in the Humanities” (2018-2020), intentionally brought these ideas together to expand the quantity and quality of our institution’s global learning opportunities.

Our model demonstrates the benefits of training faculty in experiential learning focused on developing global citizenship through local engagement. The research-based methods we suggest can make global experiences more inclusive by making them more accessible, especially for economically disadvantaged students. Such an approach—what we call “going global without going abroad”—can provide the transformative experiences students need in order to see themselves as global actors with the potential to effect change in the world. In designing similar programs, we encourage institutions to reflect on their students’ unique needs within the context of their geographical locations and limitations.

The Building Global Perspectives program came about in part because of the unique situation of our university, from demographics to curriculum to geographic placement. Texas Woman’s University (TWU) is the largest public institution primarily for women in the US and a minority-majority, Hispanic-Serving Institution. Most of our students are first generation; many

are considered non-traditional: they have full-time jobs, are returning to school at a later age, and/or are parents or caregivers. Such student populations face unique challenges in their quest for academic success (Blankenship, 2010; Dolan, 2008; Kirby, White, & Aruguete, 2007). The factors behind these challenges also affect our students’ willingness to consider study abroad opportunities. Lack of awareness about opportunities and benefits of study abroad, familial responsibilities, and (perhaps most important of all) financial implications are clear barriers to minority and first-generation student participation in education abroad (Brux & Fry, 2010; Kasravi, 2009; Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009).

While our short-term, faculty-led study abroad programs are one successful approach to helping students make space for global learning, we also wanted to provide another accessible curriculum-based option. As our mission at TWU is to cultivate engaged leaders and global citizens, all students must complete one Global Perspectives (GP) course in order to graduate. Global Perspectives

refers to “skills, knowledge, and attitudes in areas such as global dynamics, non-western worldviews, international systems and events, and global cultures.” We chose to enhance our university’s global education by providing GP-designated courses that emphasize the idea that global learning begins at home and cultivate students’ awareness of their own place in overlapping global networks. As a result, we developed a “going global without going abroad” model that promotes learning in the same dimensions emphasized by many study abroad programs.

In designing our program, we drew from the American Association of Colleges and Universities’ Global Learning Rubric, which defines such learning as “a critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people’s lives and the earth’s sustainability.” Local experiential learning with a global focus has enormous potential to help students meet the goals of “1) becom[ing] informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences, 2) seek[ing] to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities, and 3) address[ing] the world’s most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably” (AAC&U). The key to such experiences is engaging students directly in communities and fostering their ability to reflect on their own actions and those of others in ways that inform their future decision-making.

Our program built on TWU’s Quality Enhancement Plan, which centered on experiential learning because it can create a positive impact on minority student persistence and graduation rates, workforce readiness, and pursuit of advanced degrees (Dolan, 2008; Espinosa, 2011; Eyler, 2009; Kelly, 2011; Lee, 2007; Stocks, 2011). To ensure the highest standards in creating learning experiences, we based our faculty training on the National Society for Experiential

Education’s “[8 Principles of Good Practice](#).”

Perhaps the most important of these practices for global learning are authenticity—the need for real-world outcomes—and reflection. Not only did we encourage faculty reflection in the process of creating course outcomes and designing assignments, but we also emphasized the critical role that reflection plays for students in transformational learning.

The core of our program was an interdisciplinary group of faculty fellows that created or revised GP courses with a GP designation to include at least one significant experiential learning assignment. We held five workshops for each of our cohorts in both 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. In our three fall workshops, we explored theoretical topics related to global learning, global citizenship, and applied humanities, providing the foundation for our faculty to meaningfully apply these ideas to new or revised student learning outcomes for their courses. During two spring workshops, we shifted to the theory and practice of experiential education and developing experiential opportunities for their curricula. Central to our success was ensuring that the faculty in our workshops (and, eventually, the institution) had a network of potential partners. To do this, we created a list of some 300+ organizations and cultural events that faculty can use to research potential partners for their experiential learning opportunities.

Our own program takes advantage of our position near a major metropolitan area. TWU is less than an hour from the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, which allows us to capitalize on the presence of international corporations and organizations and the diverse international population in North Texas. Of course, one need not be situated closely to a metroplex in order to take advantage of a “going global without going abroad” model. We encourage other institutions to look first among their staff and students to find organizations and affinity groups that represent diverse perspectives and faculty with

research and teaching experiences in topics that address global systems. We also encourage a broad understanding of diversity in seeking local organizations and businesses to collaborate with. Finally, we encourage colleagues to consider broadening their radius for potential experiential learning opportunities to include faculty-led travel within the broader United States.

The most significant outcomes of our program were an increased awareness of the benefit of interdisciplinary collaboration in defining global citizenship and increased opportunities for students to have global experiences on a local scale. Not only do these curricular interventions make global learning more accessible and more inclusive, they also help students see beyond the purely theoretical to the ethical and pragmatic values of a global outlook. Just as global learning begins at home with each student's own awareness of their place in the world, each institution must begin by looking within (see Table 1 for a recommended institutional self-assessment). Based on our experience, we believe that similar projects could be highly successful at a broad variety of institutions, as long as they include explicit training in experiential learning best practices, especially critical reflection; open, interdisciplinary dialogue about the values and characteristics of global citizenship; and a willingness to promote internal and external partnerships.

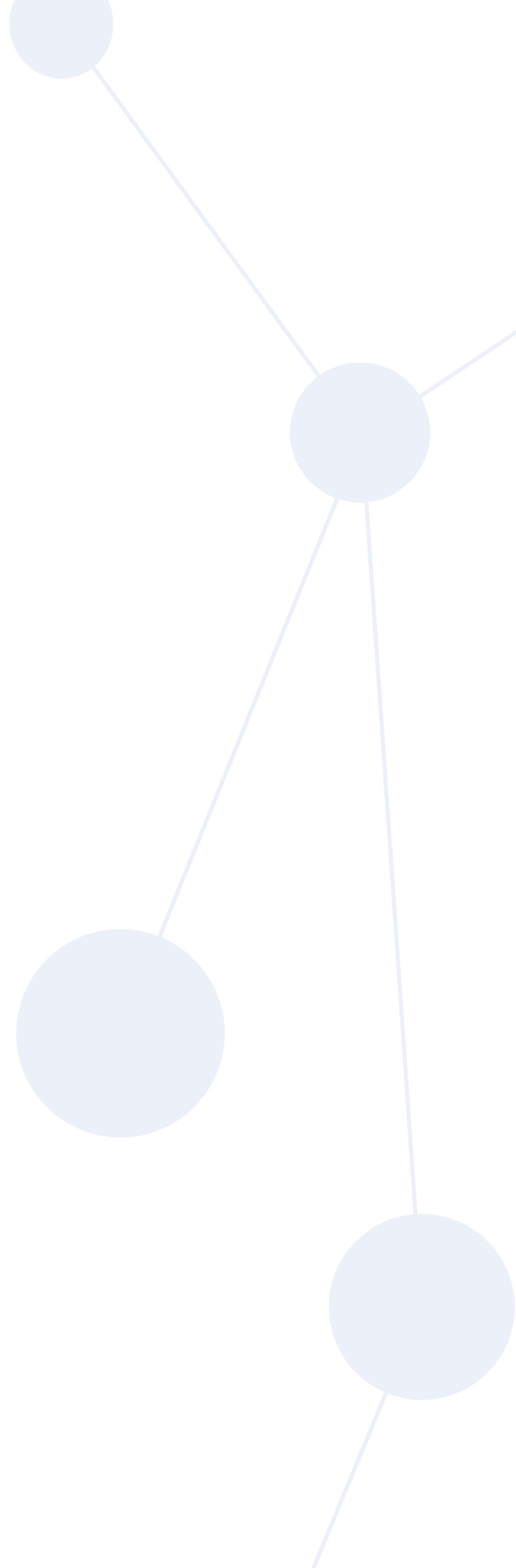


Table 1: Institution Self-Assessment

Foundational questions:

- ◇ How does your institution define global learning?
- ◇ What does global learning mean to you?
- ◇ How might you reconcile these definitions?
- ◇ What are 2-3 student learning outcomes that can be drawn from these definitions?

Contextual inclusivity questions:

- ◇ Who are your students? What are their unique needs?
- ◇ What are your barriers to inclusivity?
- ◇ What activities can help your students work towards learning objectives connected to inclusivity?

On-campus global connections questions:

- ◇ Which faculty are already teaching globally focused courses?
- ◇ How might you add experiential learning to those courses?
- ◇ What departments are already engaging in experiential learning?
- ◇ How might you add a global component to those experiences?
- ◇ What resources already exist on campus to connect students to different cultures?

External global connections questions:

- ◇ What international groups or organizations have a local presence in your area?
- ◇ What local organizations represent or connect diverse cultures?
- ◇ Who do you already know that may be connected with these organizations?
- ◇ What connections may faculty or staff have to other similar groups or organizations outside your immediate area?

Partner collaboration questions:

- ◇ What are your goals for this partnership?
- ◇ What does your partner stand to gain?
- ◇ Who will manage the relationship?
- ◇ How will expectations be communicated and evaluated?
- ◇ What risks are involved?
- ◇ What part will the organization play in the assessment of the program?

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