A Model for International Collaboration Among Faculty to Enhance Understanding of Global Issues Through Course Development

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Summary and Report of the Project
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The Why – Collaboratively developed over the course of our meetings during this project

Cultures intertwine requiring deeper understanding of our world. We must educate and transform Leadership to create the synergy required for the many transitions occurring in our 21st century world.

To support our partnership agreement with Novgorod State University (NovSU) in Russia and to continue to build upon our relationship with COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) in Pakistan, we proposed the development of a sustainable model of online international collaboration to engage our graduate students and faculties at each university. By bringing together faculty members and graduate students representing our three universities and their respective cultures, we hope to enhance global education for our students and the organizations they lead. The intent of this project, while focused on the development of one course, is to inform the ultimate development of a Graduate Certificate in International Leadership. This course will be taught in the Fall 2016 as a Special Topics Course (LSA 6XXX, Perspectives of Culture in International Leadership) as a pilot. Students from each institution will enroll in the course in their respective universities with course credit being granted through existing institutional procedures and processes.

Vision

This project is to model, promote and support continued collaboration among our schools and universities so that true globalization is achieved at the classroom level.

Initial steps toward this end were taken previously with faculty exchange/visits between ASU and NovSU in 2014 - 2015. A second foundational layer was added with John Tashner's Fulbright Specialist award to CIIT in January 2015. Clearly, for a global 21st century vision to develop, faculty as well as students must understand the issues, challenges and successes experienced in each country, which requires both online and face-to-face work.

Rationale for the Course – Collaboratively developed over the course of our meetings
We plan to build a model for bringing together international faculties and students to gain an understanding and appreciation of cultures that intertwine to educate and transform leadership.

A core team of faculty members from each university (Drs. John Tashner and Barbara Howard from ASU; Dr. Natalia Ilyashenko from NovSU; and Dr. Arshad Bashir from CIIT) began collaboratively developing ideas for a course outline and syllabus online using Skype and Google Docs during Fall 2015 in preparation for the face-to-face meetings scheduled in February. We began our face-to-face work on February 7 with a planning session by Tashner, Howard, Ilyashenko, and Bashir to finalize the week's goals and agenda. We invited the following faculty to our meetings at various times throughout the week to provide input: Dr. Paul Wallace, LES; Dr. Herb Brown, C&I; Dr. William Gummerson, LES; Dr. Terry McClannon, LES; and Dr. Sara Zimmerman, C&I.

Outcomes

The Goal for the Course: Collaboratively developed over the course of this meeting.

Create a deep understanding of cultural awareness in order to develop international leaders able to work effectively within and across cultures

During the week of February 8 – 12, 2016, we accomplished the following:

1) Created a course topics outline and course module that included the following:

   a. Rationale for the course;
   b. Overarching goal for the course;
   c. Set of objectives linked directly to the goal;
   d. Series of strategies, activities and assessments directly linked to the objectives; and
   e. Suggested resources from each perspective to support student learning.

2) Presented our ideas in a session at the International Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. While this part of the project was not funded by QEP, we felt strongly enough in its inclusion as part of our work that we covered the costs of our travel and registration personally.

3) Met with Chancellor Everts and Provost Kruger to outline the project.

4) Presented at a meeting of the Boone Rotary Club to provide information on the Russian and Pakistani cultures. As a result of these presentations by Drs. Ilyashenko and Bashir, the Boone Rotary Club plans to investigate additional ways to support Appalachian's international students as well as to connect with the Rotary Clubs in Novgorod and Islamabad.
5) Met with Dr. Tashner’s evening class to discuss educational culture, goals and achievements in each country.

6) Met with Dr. Jesse Lutabingwa regarding continuing partnerships among our universities.

7) Developed plans for continued development of our project, including a schedule for future Skype calls, ideas for articles in academic journals, and continued refinement of the course module using Google docs.

**Future Extensions of this Project**

By developing this unique collaborative course, we can build a bridge between our universities, our graduate students, and the organizations they serve, which will expand into a greater partnership. This project provided an important step toward realizing our greater goal of expanding international experiences beyond isolated courses and study abroad programs thus developing a model for bringing international experiences to the classroom level. We also hope that through our students, we will have an impact on the organizations and schools they lead.

Immediate issues must be resolved for the course to be implemented in the Fall are as follows:

- Decide who to bring into the project as new courses must be developed to create the Graduate Certificate in International Leadership.
- Continue to refine our course module to include strategies designed to engage student participants in direct interactions that will enhance cultural understanding.
- Design Orientations for each participating university group and one for the whole group together.
- Create an e-portfolio on NovSU website.
- Develop assessments and formats aligned with the goal and course objectives.
- Complete identification of appropriate Content - Knowledge of cultures, skills in communication, and their relationships to leadership.

Future challenges to be addressed include the following:

- Structures and procedures within the respective universities to give course credit and Graduate Certification to students.
- Continued administrative support by each university.
- The role of each university in this developing partnership.
- Development of innovative and creative online multicultural pedagogy.
- The development or selection of technology platforms that will provide ongoing engagement and communication among international faculties and students – both synchronously and asynchronously.
- The development of at least three additional courses to be included in a Graduate Certificate of this nature.

We look forward to continuing these collaborations and to develop a successful model for online course design for internationalizing content at the classroom level.

**Perspectives from our International Colleagues (Received 2/23/2016)**

**Dr. Natalia Ilyashenko** reported about the intermediate results of the project to Prof. Mikhail Pevzner, the Vice Rector for International Affairs, Dr. Gergey Gudilov, the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Elena Zhukova, Dean of the Philology Faculty, and gained their support. At present, she negotiates with the Dean of the Philology Faculty, about her (the dean's) participation in the project as an expert in cross-cultural communications.

**Dr. Arshad Bashir** states: “At a personal level, the visit provided me a great learning experience of developing an academic course. The way we worked together with our American and Russian friends, itself, a learning for me. I have never been engaged in such a logical way to develop something that we can own. At an institutional level, I spoke to my Head of Department (Dr. Aliya Mueen Zafar) about the course development. She is very interested and supports this collaboration. I also talked to the Director of International programs at COMSATS, and he welcomed our initiative and promised me to support this project in all possible ways. I have some meetings scheduled for next week with the Rector and Pro Rector, and I hope to get them on board and secure full support on this project. I also suggest to work on other logistics such as medium of engagement and an online forum to make a speedy progress"