

# **INTERNATIONALIZING ACADEMIC STUDIES AT PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE: SURVEY RESULTS**

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“Internationalizing” is a term that can represent a broad sweep of academic endeavors. At a college as diverse in its student body as Prince George’s Community College, located in one of the fast-growing immigrant growth areas of the United States, the dynamism of internationalizing our environment and our education has us rushing to keep pace. Additionally, area employers need a workforce educated with global competencies.

“Internationalizing” is used here to indicate curriculum reform that multicultural education expert Christine Bennett describes as that which “strives to expand traditional course contents that are primarily monocentric and (in the United States) Anglo-European through inclusion of multiethnic and global perspectives. . . . This aspect of multicultural education focuses on both minority and non-minority students” (p. 15). Typically in higher education, internationalizing the curriculum involves providing support for individual faculty members to reassess their courses and their content, providing alternatives to Anglo-European perspectives and information.

Internationalizing the curriculum is a subset of internationalizing an institution. Laura Siaya’s and Fred M. Hayward’s 2003 American Council on Education (ACE) study found internationalization strongly supported by students, faculty, and the public at the 752 colleges and universities who responded to their survey. Of all higher education institutions, community colleges were “the least likely . . . to include internationalization in their mission statement, list it as a priority in their strategic plan, or have assessed their efforts in the last five years.”

Prince George’s Community College does have international and intercultural perspectives reflected in its mission statement and its strategic plan. However, before this survey, the college had never assessed levels of faculty commitment to internationalizing the curriculum or researched what approaches were being used in the classroom.

In fall 2002 and spring 2003, I conducted the Faculty Survey on Multiculturalizing the Classroom, which, parenthetically, was the first online survey at PGCC. One hundred thirty-three full-time and adjunct faculty responded to the survey, representing more than 20 percent of the 639 faculty employed in FY03. The faculty respondents represent all academic divisions of the college; the response level was fairly high.

Respondents provided feedback in four categories: 1) faculty attitudes toward incorporating international perspectives into curriculum; 2) what instructors currently provide in their classrooms to offers international perspectives; 3) their interest in opening their classrooms to international student speakers on relevant curriculum topics; and 4) their level of interest in the upcoming International Center – Academic Support.

Survey responses described 104 faculty members from all divisions of the college using course readings with global perspectives and drawing students' diverse cultural backgrounds into the classroom education. Sixty-four indicated that they did so frequently. For example, a ceramics instructor teaches Asian and western approaches to the medium over the centuries, incorporating traditions, religions, and technological advances. When criminal justice students research criminal cases, they are encouraged by one instructor to find ways the same crime is handled in other countries. Some complete courses are framed in global perspectives.

Yet, some faculty acknowledged that they avoided discussion of students' backgrounds, fearful of making students uncomfortable. They seek assistance with strategies for incorporating intercultural perspectives. The International Center – Academic Support, described elsewhere in this issue, will be available to assist with such issues.

The complete Faculty Survey on Multiculturalizing the Classroom report can be obtained from Marlene Cohen, [mcohen@pgcc.edu](mailto:mcohen@pgcc.edu).

### **Works Cited**

Bennett, C. I., *Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and practice, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.*, 2003.  
Siaya, L. & Hayward, F. M., *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses: Final report Executive Summary*, 2003.

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## **INTERNATIONAL CENTER – ACADEMIC SUPPORT AT PGCC**

### **The Physical Location of the International Center – Academic Support**

Lanham 117 will begin to serve in November 2004 as a part-time IC-AS center, welcoming all students, faculty, and staff to share cultural perspectives and get involved in the college's internationalization efforts. It will also support the unique challenges of international students. This part-time office will be staffed largely by faculty members offering one hour each week of their office hour time.

It will address academic needs that occur **AFTER** students enroll, and will work with the offices of Admissions, Testing, and Advising. IC-AS will work in cooperation with, but be separate from, those Student Services offices. If you would like to be part of this effort, please contact Coordinator Marlene Cohen at [mcohen@pgcc.edu](mailto:mcohen@pgcc.edu).

### **International Student Speakers Bureau**

IC-AS can arrange for an international student speaker to come to class to speak on a relevant global topic of your choice. Guest speakers' unique experiences can expand the global understanding of your students and add a personal perspective to your studies. If you have a request, contact Marlene Cohen at [mcohen@pgcc.edu](mailto:mcohen@pgcc.edu)