

THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

INTERNATIONAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY PLANNING CLUSTER

Report to the Provost

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The International and Cultural Diversity Planning Cluster was composed of faculty members representative of the diversity on our campus. Included were natives of six of the world culture realms, a somewhat more limited cross-section of domestic diversity, and several individuals with extensive international experience.¹ The International Planning Committee (IPC) Final Report (July 12, 2001); the subsequent Status Report for the Office of International Programs based upon the IPC report; the 2001-2002 University of Montana Catalog; the Mission Statement of The University of Montana-Missoula; the Board of Regents and Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education's action plan regarding American Indian Studies; and Article X of the Constitution of Montana were among the background documents that informed the cluster's discussions. It is clear that The University of Montana has been successful in promoting international initiatives and programs. It is similarly evident that the university has been sensitive to issues of domestic diversity. Hence, it is important that the university learn from its experience and build upon its successes.

The cluster participants were aware of the limited financial resources available to support international and cultural diversity efforts, and the effects of financial constraints upon program emphases and directions. At the same time, it was felt that academic, rather than financial, considerations should drive the university's international and diversity efforts. It should go without saying that a university, by definition "an educational institution of advanced learning and research,,,"² should focus upon the academic merit of its activities. A strong academic program with an active research component would both strengthen instruction and facilitate increased levels of external financial support for the university.

¹The International and Cultural Diversity Planning Cluster was composed of Tunde Adeleke, Rhea Ashmore, Maria Bustos-Fernandez, Jillian Campana, Debra Earling, Gerald Fetz, Jeffrey Gritzner, Nabil Haddad, Robert Hausmann, Marina Kanevskaya, Kathryn Shanley, Stephen Siebert, Conrad (Wes) Snyder, Lisa Swallow, Gyda Swaney, and Yuka Tachibana.

²The Oxford Modern English Dictionary, 2d ed, s.v. university.

Among the cluster participants' observations regarding international programs were the following:

There should be greater awareness of the complexity of the world, and the desirability of adapting activities to that complexity. Many of the university's international courses and activities are based in some variant of modernization theory. Modernization, Westernization, globalization, and similar processes are often viewed as inevitable-if occasionally hindered in the non-industrialized world by environmental or cultural constraints. Since the Industrial Revolution, the West has variously addressed these constraints through disorienting missionary activity, colonization, international development, or military force. This pattern persists.

Rather than viewing a modern "First World" dominated by the United States and Western Europe, a "Second World" dominated by the former Soviet Union and China, and a "Third World" composed of the rest; or a world divided by the Brandt Line separating a wealthy "North" from an impoverished "South;" more attention might be directed to cultural relativism and the inherent, adaptive diversity of the world's culture realms (Appendix 1). It is apparent that Westernization is often a principal cause of "underdevelopment" and poverty;³ not a solution.⁴ One might suppose that many of the remarkable civilizations that yielded to European arms, such as that of the Inca, would have continued to reside as complex, powerful states had they not been fragmented and disoriented.⁵ Likewise, modern science is increasingly validating the sophistication of the adaptations of "primitive" societies.

³The total wealth of the world's three wealthiest individuals is greater than the combined gross domestic product of the forty-eight poorest countries-a quarter of all the world's states. *Le Monde Diplomatique* (November 1998).

⁴See, for example, John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, 3d ed. (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1990).

⁵These themes are developed further in Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999).

In some academic traditions, the world is divided broadly into regions of cultural continuity and those in which cultural continuity was truncated by colonization. Particularly since the 1960s, many of the latter regions have experienced gradual "decolonization" -including the recovery of more traditional cultural values and adaptive livelihood strategies. This process is variously reflected in "authenticity" movements, such as the rise of Negritude in Africa, or the return to more adaptive agro-sylvo-pastoral systems in rural areas of the non-industrialized world.⁶ In many regions of Asia and Africa, Islam provides an alternative framework for the integration of social, economic, and political activity.⁷ In non-Western regions beyond the Islamic world, the process is complicated by the absence of relevant alternative frameworks for social re-integration on national or regional scales or, as in Latin America, by entrenched patterns of Westernization reflecting lengthy periods of colonization.

Another important dichotomy of which we should be aware is that between folk (or traditional) and popular culture.⁸ The former exhibits major variations from place to place, but only minor variations over time. The latter displays less difference from region to region and changes rapidly over time. Most of the world's people, particularly those residing in rural areas, are guided by traditional values-and, with decolonization, increasing poverty, and marginalization, the percentage of traditionalists in many areas is actually growing. Individuals in urban centers are more influenced by popular culture. This dichotomy is expressed in tension between rural and urban areas and, more generally, conflict between those who resist change and those who attach importance to the idea of progress. In Afghanistan, for example, roughly eighty per cent of the population is rural. Every effort to modernize the country, since that of King Amanullah in 1926, has been met with overwhelming opposition-and in recent years that opposition has grown.

Academic implications:

⁶The movement toward more adaptive intercropped systems is increasingly supported by multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies. The reestablishment of such systems is supported by agencies as diverse as FAO, ICRAF, the Mennonite Central Committee, the American Peace Corps, Swiss DDA, USAID, and The World Bank.

⁷ Since the colonial period, encounters with the Muslim world have helped Americans define a national identity and purpose. The tendency to demonize figures such as Iran's Khomeini or Libya's Qaddafi, or to associate Muslim opposition to American dominance in the Middle East with "terrorism," is consistent with this historical trend. See, for example, Robert I. Allison, *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776-1815* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).

⁸ Folk culture is defined as "a small, cohesive, stable, isolated, nearly self-sufficient group that is homogeneous in custom and race; characterized by a strong family or clan structure, order maintained through sanctions based in the religion or family, little division of labor other than between the sexes, frequent and strong interpersonal relationships, and a material culture consisting mainly of handmade goods." Popular culture is defined as "a dynamic culture based in large, heterogeneous societies permitting considerable individualism, innovation, and changes; having a money-based economy, division of labor into professions, secular institutions of control, and weak interpersonal ties; producing and consuming machine-made goods." Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov and Mona Domosh, *The Human Mosaic* (New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 2003), 444-445, 449.

A rough inventory of international courses⁹ on campus yielded the following distribution by culture realms (other than the North America Realm): Europe (73); East Asia (28); Russia and the Newly Independent States (13); Middle and South America (12); North Africa and Southwest Asia (10); Sub-Saharan African (6); Southeast Asian (5); South Asia (1); Oceania: Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific (none). A greater number of international courses should be offered, and attention should be given to realms, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, that are of interest to our students, but find little support in the curriculum.

The need for greater curricular balance should be taken into consideration when new faculty members are being hired. Several cluster participants also noted that the overall responsibilities of some retiring professors included one or more international courses that were of peripheral importance to the department, but that were of considerable importance to specific international programs. When these individuals are replaced, the departments understandably focus upon their immediate needs rather than upon those of the international programs. It is recommended that the needs of our international programs be taken into consideration in the process of faculty replacement.

⁹The many European- and East Asian-language courses skew the numbers somewhat, and undoubtedly there are a number of courses that have been added or omitted since the 2001-2002 university catalogue was printed.

Despite a university commitment to internationalism and a curriculum designed to encourage international awareness, a University of Montana student can graduate with only a limited understanding of the world's culture realms. There is no comprehensive, required gateway course, such as English 101, that introduces students to the fascinating complexity of the world and that provides a basis for informed, responsible citizenship. It is strongly recommended that World Regional Geography (GEOG 1038) be required of all students. It is the only course on campus that comprehensively and systematically explores the physical and cultural aspects of all culture realms. A copy of the table of contents of a typical world regional geography textbook and a course syllabus are attached as Appendix 2.

The cluster participants feel that there is often a "disconnection" between academic instruction and international initiatives; relatively little comprehensive planning; and often a lack of genuine commitment to those initiatives undertaken. They also felt that a greater number of international courses should be required.

The allocation of available funds; the reconciliation of available resources and program objectives; the costs and benefits of travel for program development; and other issues relating to finance were of concern to the cluster participants. Without recourse to specific numbers, there was a sense that the costs associated with international programs exceeded the benefits, and that there should be greater investment in the strengthening of the university's international curriculum.

There is no academically valid reason for altering the nature of university programs in regions of cultural continuity, such as Europe or East Asia, or in other regions in which the

Lydia Mihelic Pulsipher and Alex A. Pulsipher, *World Regional Geography: Global Patterns, Local Lives*, 2d ed. (New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 2002).

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charter group I I is European-for example, Australia. However, it was felt that greater emphasis should be placed upon relationships that are both mutually beneficial and sustainable. We should concentrate upon achievable objectives and what we, as a university, do well.

II Charter group: "In plural societies, the early arriving ethnic group that created the first effective settlement and established the recognized cultural norms to which other, later groups are expected to conform." Jerome D. Fellmann, Arthur Getis, and Judith Getis, *Human Geography*, 7th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 548. Resident indigenous societies are likewise expected to conform to the norms of the charter group.

The university should evaluate the success or failure of university programs conducted in the non- Western world, and focus upon areas in which the university possesses strength and relevance. It was suggested that a diagnostic approach be developed to identify appropriate program activities, and that our planning be projected ten years into the future.¹²

Owing to geographical similarities, Central Asia would seem to relate well to The University of Montana's strengths and interests. For example, research at the Flathead Lake Biological Station is relevant to a variety of problems encountered in the Caspian Sea and other Central Asian lakes; environmental issues related to mining are similar; forestry and wildlife issues are similar; and the greater western Montana community is connected with the region through the Montana-Kazakhstan Exchange and other programs.

In developing international programs, the university should give thought to the potential benefits of specific programs to the State of Montana. It should also continue to showcase successful accomplishments in order to increase public awareness.

In the non-Western world, the university should consider focussing upon a more limited number of regions and institutions, and establishing more long-term relationships. This was successful, for example, with regard to the University of Nebraska's relationship with Colombia and Utah State University's relationship with Iran prior to the 1979 revolution. It permitted the universities to accrue important experience, to involve a broad spectrum of academic units in the program, and to benefit culturally and financially from the exchange relationship. The university should evaluate its own experience with regard to programs in the non-Western world and identify and assess successful models on campuses elsewhere in order to inform future directions.

Regional programs on campus might better be organized around culture realms rather than around continents. Our Asian Studies Program, for example, incorporates five quite different realms: North Africa and Southwest Asia, Russia and the Newly Independent States, South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia.¹³ Organization around culture realms would permit greater focus and collegiality, as well as more satisfactory alignment with specialized professional associations.

Greater emphasis might be placed upon overseas activities that explore non-Western

¹²This emerged from concern that international commitments were often made opportunistically, with little concern for benefit, continuity, or cost.

¹³Culture realms are variously defined. For example, predominately Islamic regions of Central Asia are often included in the North Africa and Southwest Asia realm.

culture, or practical activities that contribute to the integrity of societies or the restoration of environmental systems-not upon activities that reinforce the imposed structures and assumptions of the colonial period. Overseas courses that provide students with "authentic" foreign experience, such as The Arts and Culture of Bali (ASIDAN 435L), should be encouraged.

The university has made a concerted effort to sensitize the campus community to cultural diversity. Nevertheless, non-Western dance troupes and similar visitors to the campus are often viewed as curiosities or artifacts of the past. More attention might be directed toward the efforts of non-Western societies to maintain their identity, such as the Department of Geography's project to develop a "red book" for threatened and endangered cultures on behalf of the World Conservation Union (IUCN).¹⁴

The academic and experiential credentials of the administrators, faculty members, and staff members engaged in international activities should be rigorously evaluated in relation to the specific activity undertaken. "Development" activities should be discouraged unless the social and/or environmental costs and consequences are carefully evaluated.

It is recommended that the university form advisory panels composed of administrators, faculty, staff, and students with practical familiarity with each culture realm. The panels would evaluate initiatives and programs related to each realm. Its approval would be required for an activity to be undertaken. The formation of such panels is of particular importance in connection with activities in non-Western realms. In evaluating activities, panels might wish to adopt an approach similar to that of Canada's International Development Research Centre-in which proposed activities are factored into their academic components, and qualified experts are then called upon to evaluate specific components of the proposed activity as collaborating members of a team. The university possesses an enormous reservoir of international talent that could contribute to the proposed advisory panels-much of which goes unrecognized.

It is proposed that an electronic university message board be established that would facilitate connections and interactions vis-a-vis international activities. For example, one panel participant was interested in spending a sabbatical in a relatively remote region, knew little about the region, and through considerable effort discovered a wealth of expertise present in the university community. A message board would have greatly facilitated her efforts.

In regions dominated by traditional or non-Western cultures, care should be taken to establish linkages with respected traditionalist leaders and institutions. This is particularly true in countries in which there is widespread popular opposition to an American presence-particularly a military presence. The United States maintains roughly sixty-five military complexes in some twenty-five countries and Joint Combined Exchange Training missions (special operations) in

¹⁴particular attention is given to marginalized indigenous peoples. They number 350 million worldwide; constitute five per cent of the world's population; reside in more than seventy countries; and occupy roughly twenty per cent of the earth's landmass. Cultural Survival Voices 1, no. 3 (summer 2002): 2.

more than 130 countries. The total number of military installations overseas exceeds 800, and is rapidly increasing as the United States pursues a policy of broad-spectrum dominance. Recent years have witnessed greater organized opposition and increased violence directed toward Americans in countries in which the United States maintains military installations.¹⁵ It is obviously important that University of Montana students and researchers are exposed to as little risk as possible.

In areas of significant risk, greater emphasis should be placed upon research, rather than upon academic exchange involving large numbers of students and faculty members. Collaborative research with nationals of the country in question is recommended. Such an emphasis would also benefit the university financially, particularly if the research were supported by external grants, rather than by scarce university resources.

Rather than focussing upon partnerships with Westernized institutions in non-Western regions, the university might explore possible relationships with selected, indigenous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or programs sponsored by organizations such as Cultural Survival. Because decolonization is often accompanied by increased religiosity, relationships with foreign clergy are easily arranged and should be encouraged. During the course of a Department of Geography institute in Iran, for example, the participants were welcomed by Armenian, Islamic, and Jewish clerics—all of whom provided important insights.

Although other units of the university do not enjoy the School of Forestry's formal relationship with the Peace Corps, it is suggested that academic programs such as Anthropology, Geography, and International Business make it possible for students to incorporate Peace Corps experience into their graduate programs. It was generally agreed that international experience should have a greater role in graduate training.

It is felt that course work could be better coordinated among departments. For example, in the past, Geography's Africa (GEOG 277S) essentially served as a framework course for Anthropology's Peoples and Cultures of the World: Africa (ANTH 330H). It is also suggested that academic departments require more international course work, and that increased crosslisting would be helpful to students in their efforts to enroll in international courses while

¹⁵The problem and its implications for our students are discussed in Chalmers Johnson's *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000). Dr. Johnson is president of the Japan Policy Research Institute and professor emeritus at the University of California, San Diego.

satisfying their departmental requirements.

There was exploratory discussion regarding the possibility of focussing upon specific subject areas in which the university possesses recognized strength. Similarly, some cluster participants felt that the university might benefit by focussing upon a specific geographical area, rather than casting its net more broadly at the risk of fragmentation.

It is suggested that the university encourage foreign students to better acquaint the university community with their cultures. A stipend should be made available to in-coming students to purchase books, videos, compact discs, and other materials in their home country, and share that material while enrolled at the university. A greater number of public presentations by students in classrooms and other venues would also be welcome.

It is proposed that symposium, lecture, and/or film series be established for each culture realm capable of supporting such a series.

The cluster participants feel that proposed target numbers for foreign-student enrollment are distractions from the university's efforts to develop substantive international programs; that they reflect an entrepreneurial instinct inappropriate to our circumstances.

It is generally felt that International Programs should be separated from Research and Development-although some cluster participants questioned the strength of the university's commitment to International Programs should it be removed from Research and Development. The relationship has tended to link international programs with more entrepreneurial concerns, often resulting in university involvement in overseas activities with little academic merit, redeeming social value, or that relate poorly to the strengths of the university. At the same time, it is felt that Research and Development offers opportunities for international involvement that are often neglected by potentially interested faculty members.

Effort should be made to better coordinate the activities of International Programs, the International Committee, and other units of the university involved in international activities. It was felt that such coordination could contribute to greater effectiveness and cost reduction.

It is felt that funding (\$10,000) should be made available for the development and presentation of multi-cultural courses; that attendance should be required; and that extra credit should be given to encourage students to attend cultural events on campus and elsewhere.

It is felt that the university web page requires revision in order to better inform and attract foreign students. It is also felt that the international directory could be made more accessible through greater attention to cross-listing.

Many issues relevant to domestic diversity relate well to the international issues described above. Nevertheless, there are significant differences:

Although there is considerable rhetoric on campus regarding diversity,¹⁶ the panel participants feel that there is relatively little diversity on campus-particularly domestic diversity.

They also feel that the diversity that the campus and greater community does possess is often neglected.

In considering issues of international and domestic diversity, it is felt that American Indians constitute an important, underutilized "asset." Indian cultures tend to be little understood, regarded as artefacts of the past, and little valued-perhaps owing to the assimilationist assumptions that have conditioned attitudes in the United States over the years. ¹⁷ Far more could be done to inform the campus community regarding Indian history, culture, political status, economic circumstances, &c.

It is also felt that a more genuinely respectful relationship should be forged with our Indian citizens. This would include a much broader range of course offerings related to Indian issues; an increased effort to recruit Indian faculty members in all academic disciplines; and an increased presence of Indians in the university administration. It is important that more Indians be placed in positions of authority beyond the academic niches assigned to them-such as Native American Studies.

¹⁶Recognizing the importance of ideological, religious, and other forms of diversity, the planning cluster

focussed upon "visible minorities."

¹⁷This lack of understanding has resulted in widespread prejudice. See, for example, Drumming Up

Resentment: The Anti-Indian Movement in Montana (Helena: The Montana Human Rights Network, 2000).

With regard to course offerings, it is recommended that each department give serious thought to the inclusion of course work in some way related to Montana's Indian population. For example, a study of the tribal geography of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille people has been prepared by the Salish Culture Committee of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. It would be a welcome addition to the curriculum of the Department of Geography-particularly for its historical geographical content and for its contributions to environmental perception.

It is suggested that appropriate university courses, such as ethnobotany, be taught by tribal elders on the reservations. This could be done through a series of weekend sessions on the Flathead Indian Reservation, or as blocks during the spring break or early in the summer session on more distant reservations.

It is proposed that a greater number of campus events be held that are related to Indian history and culture. Similar to the above recommendation for culture realms, it is suggested that symposium, lecture, and/or film series be established that address Indian issues.

With regard to local "assets," it is also felt that much more could be done to link the history and culture of the Belarusian, Hmong, and Tibetan communities of the Missoula area to university courses or other campus activities.

IS A copy of the title page of the grant application for the project is included as Appendix 3.