West Chester University (WCU) has seen notable growth in our study abroad programs, an increased interest by faculty and staff in international research and teaching opportunities, and a steady number of international students enrolling at the University.

As we develop an institutional strategic plan that continues to move us forward by staying true to our mission, one of providing an educational experience to our students leading to truly globally competent citizens, it was considered prudent by President Christopher Fiorentino and the members of the President’s Cabinet to conduct a self-study on internationalization activities at WCU and to develop a strategic and intentional strategy moving forward. The self-study was guided through the framework of the Internationalization Laboratory of the American Council on Education (ACE), an invitational learning community that assists participating institutions in developing goals and strategies for comprehensive internationalization. WCU applied for membership for the 2017-19 cohort and was selected by ACE to participate. The Global Leadership Team (GLT), comprised of members from various units across the campus, have been working on the self-study for two years. Our intent was not just to suggest an optimal structure, foundation and roadmap for the future, but also to create a baseline of important data points for future comparative analysis and assessment of programming.

Our self-study report is based on evaluating the internationalization structure, achievements, and opportunities at WCU along these four goals. As we analyzed the campus feedback and also the responses to our self-study questions from twenty-one units across campus, a clear consensus emerged. The WCU community is truly committed to prepare our students to be citizens of a multicultural community, both at home and in a globalized world. The GLT believes the proposed outcomes to be realistic and achievable within the 2019-2022 three-year timeframe.

As part of the self-study, the GLT proposes that internationalization efforts at WCU be considered comprehensively through the four overlapping strategic goals described below. The GLT also recommends that the various task forces proposed below be assigned both implementation and assessment responsibilities. Moreover, as the ACE Peer Review Team emphasizes in its full report, WCU is at a critical moment in terms of internationalization, with some sense of urgency in retaining the momentum developed over the past few years.

“Preparing our students to be global citizens is a key component of our mission and goals.”
—West Chester University President Christopher Fiorentino
Goal 1: Increase the number of international students enrolled in our academic offerings onsite and through distance education.

Under the leadership of the Vice Provost for Strategic Enrollment, the University should develop and implement a plan to achieve the international student enrollment targets set by the GLT and consider the recommendations in the report.

Goal 1 Targets/Outcomes:
- Increase the international F-1 student population to 3% of the University student population by 2022.
- Increase the student participation in international student programs and services by 25% by 2021.

The University should also set up a task force, co-led by a representative from the Center for International Programs (CIP) and the Division of Student Affairs, to improve the programs and services available for international students on campus.

Goal 2: Through improved access, diversify and strengthen international educational experiences for the WCU community.

The University should set up a task force co-led by a representative from the CIP and a Faculty Representative to achieve the education abroad targets set by the GLT and consider the recommendations in the report.

Goal 2 Targets/Outcomes:
- Increase participation in and access to education abroad programming by 50% by 2021.
- Create a permanent funding model to cover the costs of faculty/staff leading study abroad programs by 2021.

Goal 3: Integrate global learning outcomes into our curriculum, co-curriculum, and academic programs.

The University should develop a task force with the responsibility to achieve the joint targets and outcomes of Goal 3 and 4. The action task force would be led by representatives from the Division of Student Affairs and from Academic Affairs.

Goal 3 Targets/Outcomes:
- By the end of Spring 2020, the WCU Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC) will approve the definition of “Global Learning” and the objectives and outcomes that are required for the designation.
- By the end of Spring 2021, WCU’s CAPC will designate curricular and academic programs or courses as “Global Learning” and the Division of Student Affairs will approve a Global Learning Initiative as part of its sustainable leadership programming.

Goal 4: Promote global awareness and engagement in research, scholarship, teaching and service.

Goal 4 Targets/Outcomes:
- By Fall 2021, academic units will update the departmental teacher-scholar models to include the consideration of globally-focused criteria/standards for faculty promotion and tenure.
- All WCU divisions and units will embrace and incorporate an internationalization value statement and commitment to global engagement in their mission or program statements by Spring 2021.

PHOTO: Danielle Sinn, Political Science - International Relations Major with Minors in Arabic and French, during her five week Arabic language and culture immersion program in Jordan, Summer 2018
“Several of my professors have moved to the U.S. as adults and not only does this give them a very different and illuminating perspective on teaching and the content of their classes, but they also have very well-developed networks of contacts in the academic world internationally. Many of my international experiences have been facilitated through these networks of contacts, started either by email introduction or through guest lectures or seminars regarding topics of shared research interest.”

— Ms. Lydia Pehlert
  Graduate Assistant, Data Monitoring and Analysis, Office of Sustainability at WCU
  Graduate Assistant, Department of Geography and Planning at WCU

Overall, the GLT considered various parameters including resources, collaboration and partnerships, administrative structure and leadership, and articulated institutional commitment to propose the most effective pathway to achieve the proposed outcomes. Strategies to achieve the goals and outcomes include the recommendations based on building sustainable and scalable internationalization efforts across the University. The GLT acknowledges that while certain recommendations will allow us to achieve one or two proposed outcomes, some recommendations will have a wider impact beyond the goals of the self-study.

While much work remains in terms of the recommendations and outcomes noted throughout the report, the GLT is pleased to report a number of internationalization highlights and success stories that illustrate the level and degree of comprehensive internationalization across the four major goal areas.

With regards,

Peter Loedel
  Director, Center for International Programs and Department of Political Science

Vishal Shah
  Associate Dean, College of the Sciences and Mathematics

Christian Awuyah
  Department of English

Mahrukh Azam
  Department of Chemistry

Christin Bobbert
  Office of Finance and Business Services (2018-19)

Richard Chan
  Information Technology

Diane R. D’Arcangelo
  Division of Student Affairs

Nancy Gainer
  Office of Communication

Angela Howard
  Center for International Programs

Rachel Komlos
  Office of the Registrar

InYoung Lee
  Department of Applied Music

Rui Li
  Distance Education Division of Information Services and Technology

Hiram G. Martinez
  Office for Diversity Equity, and Inclusion

Margo M. McDonough
  Office of the President

Todd Murphy
  Division of Finance and Administration (2017-18)

Leah C. Paulson
  Office of Residence Life & Housing Services

Gopal Sankaran
  Department of Health

Claire E. Verden
  Department of Special Education

Xiaowei Zhu
  Department of Management (2017-2018)