

EDITORS' NOTES

In the last quarter century, the international revolution has significantly transformed the sociopolitical, technological, and economic variables that define how countries interact. The effects of globalization are even more acute in the post–September 11 era. Today, globalization has opened borders to the flow of goods, services, information, and people, and in the process it has changed the academic and employment fields by requiring students to know about other cultures as part of their academic, vocational, and occupational education. There is undisputed recognition that the role of education is, in part, to produce internationally literate graduates who can effectively understand the complexities of our modern world.

Community colleges remain on the postsecondary frontlines as they prepare more than half of the nation's college students. Thus it is essential for community colleges to expose their students, faculty, and staff to an international education, which we define as “any form of education that emphasizes the need to understand a variety of perspectives (geographic, ethnic, cultural, class, and gender) by acknowledging similarities, encouraging cross-cultural communication, and respecting and protecting differences among diverse communities” (Raby, 1999, p. 7). This book argues that community colleges must make international education the routine, rather than the exception.

Since the 1960s, community colleges have responded to the need for international educational reform by creating and implementing a variety of programs and practices. Among them are developing faculty and staff exchanges, enrolling international students, offering education abroad programs, and participating in cooperative agreements that provide technical, vocational, and occupational education, workforce improvement, and international trade and development to institutions in other countries. Community colleges have also made significant attempts to internationalize their curricula by incorporating international themes into existing course sequences.

Although efforts to internationalize the community college are growing, many colleges continue to find it difficult to implement international education throughout their entire campus (Green and Siaya, 2005; Romano, 2002). Although there are pockets of excellence, 61 percent of community colleges have a low measure of their overall level of internationalization (Green and Siaya, 2005). Despite the existence of consortia models that offer advocacy and support, many educators still believe that international education is not a key component of the community college's mission. This lack

of support is problematic considering that community colleges are the only avenue for some students to acquire the skills necessary to participate in a global knowledge economy. Hence, international education remains for the vast majority of community colleges as marginalized today as it was forty years ago.

Since September 11, 2001, there has been abundant literature on four-year university efforts to initiate international educational reform (U.S. Department of State, 2006; Committee for Economic Development, 2006). However, very few of these publications discuss the community college. Literature on community college internationalization efforts can be found, but it is not as prolific and reflects a pre-September 11 world. It is apparent that a current and comprehensive examination of international education reform in the community college is sorely needed.

This volume seeks to fill this void. The various chapters discuss the peripheral nature of international education and delineate variables that account for college success. Each chapter also lays out unique applications of community college international education and discusses the steps needed to institutionalize international education.

Three common threads are found throughout the various chapters. The first thread examines the role of the new generation of leaders who will be a catalyst for developing, sustaining, and implementing international education. Raby and Valeau suggest general paradigms for historical and philosophical analysis, and in so doing they set the tone for the future of international education. Green defines those elements that are essential for success and identifies some of the barriers to institutionalization. Boggs and Irwin use informal interviews with community college presidents to propose that presidential leadership is the glue for any reform. Hence, international education must be on the agenda for the development of leadership skills for the next generation of community college leaders. Finally, Korbel illustrates how college leaders can use regional and state international education consortia to expand successful institutionalization efforts.

The second thread examines how international education has permeated various components of the college and has made a significant impact over time. Dellow describes how globalization has changed the economy and job market for community college students and how community colleges must now change their technical and occupational programs to remain relevant. Milliron examines this interrelationship further, illuminating what he refers to as the gorilla in our midst and how workforce development programs can respond. Raby defines on- and off-campus forms of internationalizing the curriculum. Emert and Pearson give us a case study in which an assessment of intercultural competencies and international literacy is viewed as an outcome of study abroad participation. Finally, Wells compares a cohort of international faculty with noninternational faculty and calls for greater emphasis on this often-overlooked group in future policies and research.

The final thread explores how international education becomes a catalyst for educational revitalization. Two case studies are presented showing both the success and the problems that can emerge in the constant struggle for institutionalization of international education. Ng's case study of the Peralta Community College District documents the challenges that resulted from internal campus politics and how leadership of one district overcame these problems. Richards and Franco's case study of Kapi'olani Community College illustrates how a single international program was strengthened and transformed into an integrated program that serves as a model for the entire country.

This book suggests a vision for those working to internationalize their community college. A current and comprehensive examination of concepts and methodologies involved in institutionalizing international education reform in the community college is sorely needed. It is our hope the information presented in this *New Directions for Community Colleges* volume fills this void.

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