

# **GLOBAL GRINNELL TASK FORCE REPORT**

**Phase I: 2014-2015**

**July 1, 2015**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Global Grinnell Task Force was commissioned by President Kington to conduct an assessment of international engagement at the College, lead a discussion of student learning goals, and make recommendations for an internationalization plan. The Task Force is conducting its work in two phases. During the first phase (2014-15) it produced a conceptual framework, options, and recommendations for strategic decisions. In the second (2015-2016), it will focus on implementation, including cost-benefit analysis, planning, and budgeting.

The Phase I report makes three overarching recommendations:

1. It argues for the incorporation of international learning goals and priorities in the College's statements of mission and identity and communications for external audiences.
2. It recommends a stronger, integrative role for the Center for International Studies.
3. It recommends the definition of strategic nodes and partnerships for sustained investment where the College's multiple international priorities converge.

### Specific Areas of Assessment

The report focuses on five major areas and makes recommendations pertaining to the following:

#### International Students

- Enrollment Targets and Revenue Implications
- Curricular and Cultural Impact
- Student-Centered Challenges
- Faculty and Staff Training

#### Off-Campus Study

- Financial Aid Portability and Sustainability
- Integration to the Curriculum
- Quality of Advising
- Enabling Students to Capitalize on their Experience

#### Global Learning and the Curriculum

- Internationally-Centered Major
- Assessment of Global Content
- Language Resource Center
- Faculty and Student Research and Resources

#### Co-Curricular Engagement

- Careers, Life, and Service
- Community and Regional Organizations
- Faculty and Staff Development
- International Alumni

#### External Partnerships

- Guiding Principles and Priorities
- Communication Across Campus
- Local and Regional Partnerships

## **TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. INTERNATIONAL PRIORITIES, MISSION, AND IDENTITY**

- 1.1: Revise core documents for mission and identity to incorporate international education.
- 1.2: Draw on market research to define the way that international education contributes to a distinctive identity for Grinnell.
- 1.3: Emphasize international dimensions in capital campaign priorities and case statement.
- 1.4: Build a vibrant, highly visible space for international programming in new facility.
- 1.5: Incorporate global learning goals into student advising framework and consider the adoption of a “Grinnell Passport” program to document student accomplishment.
- 1.6: Enhance resources of CLS to enable students to prepare for global vocations and careers.
- 1.7: Incorporate global learning goals into overall HLC assessment and accreditation.

### **2. THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CIS)**

- 2.1: Strengthen CIS as a point of collaboration among academic departments, centers, and programs.
- 2.2: Engage CIS in plans to connect the study of foreign languages, cultures, and histories to offerings across the curriculum.
- 2.3: Empower the CIS to administer the new Global Learning Program.
- 2.4: Assess staffing and administrative structure of the Center.
- 2.5: Involve CIS in continued fundraising and development initiatives.
- 2.6: Charge CIS with longer-term evaluation of institutional progress toward global objectives.

### **3. STRATEGIC NODES AND INTERNATIONAL PLANNING**

- 3.1: Conduct research to determine potential strategic nodes for international planning.
- 3.2: Identify two or three strategic points in diverse regions and assess options for sustainable programs.
- 3.3: Pursue collaborations with a network of outstanding liberal arts colleges abroad.

### **4. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

- 4.1: Determine targets for sustained international student enrollment.
- 4.2: Analyze strategies to achieve revenue targets while limiting the percentage of international students from a single country.
- 4.3: Assess the impact of the international student body on the curriculum and academic resources.
- 4.4: Conduct additional research on the experience of international students from different countries, regions, and socioeconomic classes.
- 4.5: Increase training opportunities for faculty, staff, and community members to support international student success.

### **5. OFF-CAMPUS STUDY (OCS) PROGRAMS**

- 5.1: Conduct a full review of the financial structure of OCS to preserve full portability of aid, control costs, and sustain high academic quality.
- 5.2: Clarify goals for OCS and promote hybrid or immersion programs over island ones.

- 5.3: Assess and enhance opportunities for students pursuing a broad range of majors, including the science fields.
- 5.4: Improve faculty and staff advising for OCS.
- 5.5: Empower students to articulate and capitalize on the value of OCS experiences.

## **6. GLOBAL LEARNING AND THE CURRICULUM**

- 6.1: Explore the creation of an internationally-centered major with distinctive focus and rigor.
- 6.2: Design improved tools to identify the international content of courses.
- 6.3: Charge departments and programs to analyze the international content of their programs.
- 6.4: Create and staff a Language Resource Center.
- 6.5: Assess resource needs for internationally focused faculty and student research.

## **7. CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

- 7.1: Analyze the impact of co-curricular components as part of the assessment of global learning goals. Establish benchmark data and monitor over time.
- 7.2: Pursue local and regional collaborations to provide international opportunities for students.
- 7.3: Review staff development programs to deepen global knowledge.
- 7.4: Conduct research regarding alumni living outside the U.S. to increase their engagement.

## **8. EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS**

- 8.1: Define and maintain a few highly visible “signature” partnerships to create distinctive opportunities for students and faculty.
- 8.2: Establish guiding principles for the creation and continuation of external partnerships.
- 8.3: Develop a comprehensive roster of external partnerships, establish memoranda of agreement where appropriate, and revise or discontinue those that no longer add value.
- 8.4: Communicate opportunities related to external partnerships more effectively.
- 8.5: Explore potential partnerships with local or regional entities in external collaborations.

## **I. INTRODUCTION AND CHARGE**

The global flow of people, knowledge, goods, finance, and services has increased dramatically in the last two decades. As one prominent study illustrated, from 2001 through 2011 the volume of services crossing international borders tripled, while the flow of international data and communications increased by a factor of seven between 2008 and 2013.<sup>i</sup> Education has been integral to this latest round of globalization, a long-term, historical process of worldwide integration. The number of American students studying abroad, for instance, more than tripled between 1989-90 and 2011-12, while the number of students from other countries studying in the U.S. colleges and universities doubled in the last two decades.<sup>ii</sup>

Globalization poses curricular, strategic, financial, and ethical challenges for educational institutions like Grinnell College. Our students will graduate into a world that is more globally interconnected than ever before. In much greater numbers than at any point in history they will live outside the United States, work with and for foreign companies, and collaborate with foreign governments, multinational enterprises, and globally oriented non-governmental organizations and foundations. Their lives will be profoundly impacted by global concerns ranging from renewable energy to climate change, food security, human migration, public health, economic development, ethnic and religious conflict, and warfare. Pedagogically, small liberal arts colleges face the challenge of instilling the habits of mind that help students think across cultural boundaries, understand complex historical forces, interpret a massive, global stream of texts, images, and data, and make sense of both the enormous wealth generated through global economic processes and of its strikingly unequal distribution. Moreover, Grinnell's commitment to social responsibility calls for a consideration of what liberally educated people should do in view of these sweeping transformations. Strategically, Grinnell competes with peers and larger educational institutions for the privilege of training the next generation of international leaders, professionals, scientists, artists, and scholars.

Many of these institutions have clearly articulated plans for a curricular, personnel, and organizational structure that reflect and are affected by the benefits and downsides of globalization. Grinnell has a long tradition of thinking globally and linking the campus to institutions in other parts of the world. Our Center for International Studies, areas studies and Global Development Studies concentrations, rigorous language programs, off-campus study programs, and array of internationally focused courses reflect that commitment, as do our international internships and dynamic co-curricular programming. Yet the college lacks an explicit articulation of what our students should learn about the world and a forward-looking plan that will enable Grinnell to align its resources with a focused international strategy. Grinnell's many discrete initiatives to promote faculty research and teaching, attract international students, send students abroad, and foster intentional connections between the experience of our students and world developments would strongly benefit from a more deliberate, integrated approach.

To address this need for a strategy for internationalization, President Kington commissioned the Global Grinnell Task Force in the summer of 2014. The task force is co-chaired by Todd Armstrong (Professor of Russian) and Michael Latham (VP for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College). It includes the following members:

- Joe Bagnoli (VP for Admissions)
- Jayn Chaney (Director of Alumni Relations)
- Andrea Conner (Associate VP for Student Affairs)
- Jonathan Edwards (Associate Director of Admission)

- Karen Edwards (Associate Dean and Director of International Student Affairs)
- Caleb Elfenbein (Assistant Professor of History and Religious Studies)
- David Harrison (Professor of French, Director of the Center for International Studies)
- Gwenna Ihrie (SGA VP for Academic Affairs, 2014-15)
- Iulia Iordache (SGA VP for Student Affairs, 2014-15)
- Brad Lindberg (Director, Office of Student Financial Aid)
- Elaine Marzluff (Professor of Chemistry and Chair of the Faculty)
- Mark Peltz (Daniel and Patricia Jipp Finkelman Dean for Careers, Life, and Service)
- Maria Tapias (Associate Professor of Anthropology and Associate Dean of the College)

In addition, the task force consulted closely with David Cook-Martín, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for International Studies during 2013-14 and 2014-15. The task force also sought input from across the College as it has worked to develop this report.

President Kington charged the task force with several responsibilities, including the following:

- To conduct an assessment of global engagement and connections throughout all major functions of the College. This will include collecting information, reviewing existing program evaluations and surveys, assessing the 2008 presidential task force on internationalization planning, conducting additional surveys or focus groups if necessary, reviewing policies and procedures, and communicating effectively with campus constituencies about internationalization initiatives.
- To lead a campus-wide discussion about student global learning goals and assessment, as well as how different programs contribute to them.
- To participate in activities facilitated by the American Council on Education's Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE) as a means to receive expert advice and define strategies for international planning.
- To make recommendations to the President concerning an internationalization plan, including additional periodic reports and presentations to the President and the campus community.

Following its nomination in July of 2014, the task force organized its work into two phases. The first phase, running from the summer of 2014 through the spring of 2015, was dedicated to information gathering, consultation, and strategic thinking. During that period the task force organized itself into five subcommittees focusing on international students, the international dimensions of the curriculum, off-campus study, co-curricular activities, and external partnerships. Each subcommittee met separately and with the full task force to review current strengths, weaknesses, and strategic goals for its area of focus. The task force as a whole also met several times, including a day-long retreat in January of 2015, to define the scope of its work and frame overall learning goals in international education for the College and its students. Members of the task force attended CIGE events in Washington, D.C. as part of a cohort of higher education institutions engaged in an international planning process and the task force hosted a site visit by Dr. Barbara Hill, the CIGE Senior Associate for Internationalization. The task force reviewed plans drafted by other institutions, identified areas for further investigation, and collaborated with the Office of Institutional and Analytic Research to obtain necessary data for analysis.

The task force also consulted with multiple Grinnell College constituencies from January through May of 2015. Members met with faculty regarding proposed learning goals at division, department, and interdisciplinary chairs' meetings. The Dean met with the Student Government

Association cabinet to discuss the work of the task force. Grinnell College staff were invited to a meeting devoted to the task force's work and faculty, staff, and students were invited to comment on the task force's proposed learning goals through a survey. Dean Latham also discussed the task force's proposed learning goals with the Board of Trustees at their February, 2015 meeting. Through April and May the task force discussed the draft report with the Grinnell College faculty, the Board of Trustees, and the campus community before delivering the report to the President and the Senior Staff for consideration.

Following consultation with the President and the Senior Staff, the second phase of the task force's work will commence in the fall and winter of 2015 and 2016. During this period the task force will focus on questions of implementation, defining the specific steps and institutional resources that will be required for the achievement of recommendations. This work will involve the definition of a timeframe for the achievement of major goals as well as planning for operational budget, strategic fund proposals, external grant and foundation initiatives, and proposals for institutional development and fundraising. It will also involve provisions for continued evaluation and assessment of the college's progress in relation to its recommendations.

## **II. GLOBAL EDUCATION LEARNING GOALS**

As the committee began its work, it determined that its review should grow out of a clear statement of the abilities that a Grinnell College education should provide students as they engage with the curriculum, pursue international experiences, and prepare to define future careers and vocations. Through multiple discussions the task force members framed four global learning goals for all students. These include the abilities to:

1. **Understand a place** outside of their home country, using a complex set of skills and knowledge that represents the diversity of disciplines and learning experiences at Grinnell College. "Place" can be defined broadly as a city, region, ecosystem, or other geographic entity, and it includes the people who reside in that location.
2. **Understand a global process or system** (e.g. climate change and sustainability, migration, development, international trade, linguistic patterns, religious practices, literary or artistic traditions, colonialism) that connects different places in the world.
3. **Identify a topic, issue, practice, custom, idea and/or historical debate** on which people in different parts of the world have **different opinions or attitudes, and different ways of expressing them**, and then be able to **explain the reasons behind these differences**.
4. **Understand their home or home country in global terms**. That is, students should understand the relationships between the home country and other places in the world, and students should recognize how particular characteristics of the home country are practiced differently in other places.

Such an education will enable Grinnell College students **to think ethically about global forces and social concerns** in ways that inform their prospective commitments and professional choices. They will be prepared to **express a global perspective** to diverse audiences and to **continue to learn** about the complexity of the world after leaving Grinnell.

These goals are intended to provide the task force and the college as a whole with an aspirational objective as well as a point of reference for ongoing assessment of our international programming and planning. During the coming year, the task force will develop a rubric in consultation with faculty and staff to define the experiences through which students achieve these abilities and measure their attainment. The goals also shape the first of our overall recommendations.

### **III. OVERALL, CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS**

Through its investigation and discussions, the task force decided to foreground three overall, cross-cutting recommendations. These objectives are considered central to an effective international strategy for the college in the years ahead.

#### **International Priorities, Mission, and Identity**

Grinnell College is already a remarkably international liberal arts college. As of 2014, thirteen percent of our total enrollment was made up of international students, and a full eighteen percent of the class entering in the fall of 2014 was international, ranking Grinnell first among our comparison group of sixteen top-tier liberal arts colleges in the United States. By 2014, an impressive fifty-two percent of our students spent a semester or more studying abroad during their careers at Grinnell, a figure that ranks among the highest in the United States. The College's challenging language programs, area studies and global development concentrations, and course-embedded travel opportunities distinguish the curriculum. In any given week, our vibrant and generously funded co-curricular program provides opportunities for Grinnell students to engage with the world through a wide variety of symposia, lectures, exhibits, concerts, and performances. Our external partnerships allow for visits by prominent scholars from around the world, enable the college to host foreign instructors, and send our faculty to compelling teaching opportunities abroad. Our many internationally based alumni, moreover, offer a resource that the college might pursue to promote international internships and career opportunities in addition to student recruitment.

Most strikingly, however, the college's international accomplishments and priorities remain largely absent in the documents through which we define our mission, identity, and values and the forums through which we represent our distinctive character to external audiences. Neither the Grinnell College Mission Statement, the college's statement of three overarching Core Values, nor the college's definition of six fundamental Elements of a Liberal Education make explicit reference to international or global education. While the consulting materials produced by the CRANE group and the Arts and Sciences group do note the international dimensions of the college, the distinctive attributes and international offerings and characteristics of a Grinnell education remain largely absent from the college's website and promotional materials.

This void has damaging impacts. Prospective students and their parents, comparing Grinnell to institutions that have done a much more effective job of defining, branding, and highlighting their international profile and commitments, may ultimately conclude that Grinnell is an inferior choice

to our competitors. Prospective faculty or administrators may not realize the depth of offerings and resources in these areas as well. More broadly, the absence of an identified, highlighted, and continuing commitment to international education leaves the College without a framework through which it can pursue institutional development and assess progress toward defined goals.

### **Recommendations 1.1 through 1.5: Institutional Identity and Practice**

- **1.1:** Revise Grinnell College’s signature statement of the “Elements of a Liberal Education” to incorporate international education. In future revisions of the College’s Core Values and Mission Statement, incorporate international education more explicitly
- **1.2:** Define and emphasize the ways in which international education contributes to a distinctive identity for Grinnell, particularly in relationship to our individually advised curriculum, student research pursuits, diversity, and social engagement. Identify and highlight the international commitments and offerings of a Grinnell education prominently in the materials through which the college presents itself externally. Draw on the CRANE and Arts and Sciences studies to identify compelling themes. Revise the College website to create a searchable and prominent gateway.
- **1.3:** Emphasize the College’s international dimensions and aspirations prominently in the academic priorities and overall case statement framing for our forthcoming capital campaign.
- **1.4:** Build a vibrant, highly visible physical presence for the College’s international programming and activities into the renovation and construction of new academic space.
- **1.5:** Incorporate the proposed global education learning goals into the advising framework used by faculty to guide students as they plan their paths through the college’s open curriculum. Just as faculty stress the need for courses that promote writing ability, skilled oral argument, and quantitative analysis, faculty should also encourage students to pursue experiences which will deepen their degree of global understanding and prepare them for post-graduate life. Consider the adoption of a “Grinnell Passport” program as an advising tool for the documentation of student accomplishments and a visible statement of value.
- **1.6:** Determine how best to enhance the resources and programming made available for students through the Center for Careers, Life, and Service to enable students to achieve the global learning abilities in preparation for future vocations and careers.
- **1.7:** Incorporate the proposed global education learning goals into the overall assessment process in advance of the accreditation review by the Higher Learning Commission in 2017-18. Assess curricular and co-curricular dimensions of the ways in which our students experience a global education at Grinnell.

### **The Center for International Studies (CIS)**

The administrative and organizational structure through which Grinnell carries out internationalization initiatives is highly decentralized. It comprises the Center for International Studies, the Off-Campus Study office (OCS), the Office for International Student Affairs (OISA), international admissions and recruitment, the Grinnell Prize, and elements of the work of the Center for Careers, Life, and Service (CLS) in addition to the courses and programs led by diverse academic departments and concentrations. The Humanities Center, Rosenfield Program, Wilson Program, Center for Prairie Studies, Development and Alumni Relations, and the Faulconer Gallery often pursue globally-oriented initiatives as well. Given the diverse functions of these

offices and the diverse constituencies they serve, some administrative separation is clearly necessary.

The task force believes, however, that particularly in the academic realm, an enhanced Center for International Studies can contribute to much more cohesive, coordinated planning in support of international initiatives at Grinnell. Despite its fourteen-year history, CIS has a thin policy structure. The Director and Program Associate offer administrative support, host visiting scholars, promote co-curricular projects, offer faculty development seminars, and administer course-embedded travel. But CIS can and should play a larger, more integrative role as well. As a locus for collaborative planning among academic centers, departments, and concentrations, CIS could promote annual themes on international topics, allowing for far more integrated events (including lectures, seminars, performances or exhibits) that would have appeal to faculty and students from across the academic disciplines. Amid an already very crowded calendar, this coordination could enable faculty to identify valuable points of curricular collaboration, allowing students to pursue common texts, problems, or research questions from diverse disciplinary perspectives. Such an approach need not reduce the ability of individual centers, programs, or departments to launch initiatives, but it can provide an essential, integrative platform to ensure that in the global arena the whole really is larger than the sum of its parts.

A stronger, more integrative role for the Center for International Studies could also enable the study of foreign languages at Grinnell to be promoted more effectively. As foreign language departments have continued to broaden their scope of inquiry from language and literature outward toward the histories, cultures, economies, and politics of diverse regions of the world, their course offerings can find new synergies across the curriculum as a whole. As a point of collaboration, the Center for International Studies can help to reinforce the continuing and essential value of liberal inquiry to an understanding of the fundamental forces shaping the twenty-first century world. It can also help ensure coordination of academic initiatives with the newly proposed Language Resource Center (as referenced in recommendation 6.4 below).

The Center for International Studies should play a more integrative role in promoting and assessing international initiatives of the college as a whole. A recent gift has provided the college with a wonderful opportunity to promote a Global Learning Program, featuring first-year courses exploring contemporary global problems in a comparative dimension, a series of internationally focused upper-division offerings, and a dedicated, post-graduate year for international exploration by outstanding students. An organizationally robust CIS, bolstered by a new staff member supported through the gift, will need to advance this distinctive program. The CIS will also need to play a more significant and integrative role in administering the policies and support for international visitors, course-embedded travel, and risk management associated with faculty-led trips for students and student research activity abroad.

Finally, and vitally, CIS should be directly engaged in the longer-term evaluation of progress toward the goals and objectives defined in this task force report. In collaboration with the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, it should be charged with the responsibility and support to provide periodic evaluations to the President, Dean, and Senior Staff of the extent to which the college has advanced toward these objectives.

In terms of administrative structure, several options are possible, ranging from better collaboration among currently autonomous units to a more fully integrated approach. In one variant, for example, CIS could be charged with convening regular meetings to coordinate programs and initiatives among the leadership of OCS, OISA, and a new Language Resource Center in addition to other co-curricular centers (Rosenfield, Humanities, Prairie Studies), and academic departments

and concentrations. In another, the CIS Director might be charged with supervisory authority over OCS and formal liaison relationships to a new Language Resource Center and OISA. To define that change, CIS could also be replaced by a new entity (perhaps a “Global Learning Center”) which would incorporate the current functions of CIS and OCS, collaborate with a new language resource center, OISA, and convene regular planning discussions across the College.

### **Recommendations 2.1 through 2.6: Center for International Studies**

- **2.1:** Determine the best administrative means through which to create a strong point for collaboration among academic centers, departments, and programs for more integrated programming in terms of international events, visitors, curricular, and co-curricular initiatives.
- **2.2:** Engage CIS in plans to connect the study of foreign languages, cultures, and histories to offerings across the curriculum.
- **2.3:** Empower CIS to administer the new Global Learning Program as it expands and develops. This should also include a greater role in administering policies for international visitors, course-embedded travel, and risk management practices.
- **2.4:** To achieve these expanded objectives, assess the staffing and administrative structure of the Center, including the roles of the Faculty Director, Program Associate, and necessary professional staff.
- **2.5:** Engage the CIS in continued fundraising and development initiatives. To expand its institutional reach, consider adding a trustee and an alumni representative to its advisory board.
- **2.6:** Charge CIS with the longer-term evaluation of institutional progress toward the objectives defined in this task force report. In collaboration with the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, create a process for periodic reporting and evaluation to the President, Dean, Faculty, and Senior Staff of the college.

### **Strategic Nodes and International Planning**

Grinnell College has pursued international partnerships and initiatives around the world. Our faculty, for example, teach short courses to students at Nanjing University and Jawaharlal Nehru University and participate in ACM programs in Tanzania and Costa Rica. Our students conduct biological field research in Namibia, spend semesters with faculty at our program in London, and pursue post-graduate service and teaching opportunities in Thailand in addition to taking advantage of many off-campus semester study programs through other institutions and providers. Such engagement has enriched opportunities for teaching and learning in profound ways.

To this point, however, Grinnell has not considered the possibility of identifying vital, strategic nodes where its essential objectives converge on a specific regional or national setting. Other institutions have pursued such strategies, choosing to promote initiatives in locations where their institutional interests come together in a reinforcing way. Designating a few such strategic nodes would help the college determine where it might benefit most strongly from an expanded commitment and presence. Such an approach need not prevent the potential creation of partnerships outside such centers, but it could help to define areas for more sustained institutional engagement.

### **Recommendations 3.1 and 3.2: Strategic Points of Interest**

- **3.1:** Conduct institutional research to determine where the college’s international priorities intersect in geographic terms. Determine locations where multiple factors converge, including a strong relationship to the curriculum, faculty research interests, significant off-campus study interest by students, the ability to recruit international students, a significant alumni presence, the potential to create international internships, and/or grant and fundraising opportunities. Explore, for example, the extent to which our large number of international students from China, the presence of alumni in the region, faculty and student interest, and opportunities to pursue internships and fundraising would make a strategic investment in projects in Nanjing and Shanghai a logical step. Consider the extent to which Grinnell’s program in London could be transformed into a more fully multi-modal asset, building on off-campus study to expand international internships and incorporate faculty research, alumni engagement, and fundraising. Such nodes would explicitly promote the College’s learning goals but, unlike “island programs,” they would increase immersion in and exposure to foreign societies, languages, and cultures to the benefit of students, faculty, and alumni.
- **3.2:** Identify two or three such strategic points in diverse regions and assess how the college might create a sustainable series of programs or external partnerships related to them. Recognizing that a school of Grinnell’s size faces limits in terms of what it can or should attempt to pursue abroad, determine ways in which mutually reinforcing efforts across the divisions of the college might generate networks that can benefit international planning in the future.
- **3.2:** Consider potential collaborations and partnerships with a small cohort or network of outstanding liberal arts colleges abroad, including institutions such as Leiden University College at the Hague, the Underwood International College at Yonsei University, South Korea, and the Bard-Smolny College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Saint Petersburg University, Russia.

#### **IV. SPECIFIC AREAS OF ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

During the course of its review, the task force organized subcommittees to focus on the following specific issues:

- International Students
- Study Abroad
- Curriculum
- Co-curricular activities (including CLS and DAR)
- External Partnerships

The following provides an assessment of Grinnell’s strengths and weaknesses in each area, with specific recommendations.

##### **International Students**

###### **Strengths:**

Grinnell is a leader in the field of international student recruitment, enrollment, and retention. As an elite destination for international undergraduates, we rank first among our Peer 16 group of top-tier liberal arts colleges in the percentage of international student enrollment (13% in 2014 and rising.) Our large application pool allows us to maintain very high academic standards for international students and a very competitive acceptance rate of eight to nine percent. Our yield of

international students, bolstered by high-touch admissions efforts and attractive financial aid policies, stands at thirty percent, more than double that for the overall applicant pool. Additionally, we offer exceptional support for our enrolled students from abroad, including student loans (an unusual practice among our peers), regulatory compliance and advising, a high quality pre-orientation program, and an active Community Host Program. In addition to the work of the Office for International Student Affairs, a host of other offices across the campus, including the Center for Careers, Life and Service (CLS) and the Center for Religion, Spirituality, and Social Justice (CRSSJ) all consider international student clients in their training, work flow, and departmental objectives. International Students also have excellent access to co-curricular opportunities, including Off-Campus Study, grant funding for internships, support for student organizations, and free housing during breaks. (For data regarding international student experiences, see Appendix 1).

The international student presence enriches the global learning experience of the campus as a whole. Our international students are fully integrated into the community, represented in every first-year tutorial, in every residence hall, and in varsity and intramural athletics. They organize a wide range of events that celebrate and share their distinctive cultures and perspectives in addition to developing lasting relationships with faculty, staff, peers, and host families.

### **Weaknesses:**

While their aggregate numbers are very high, Grinnell's dependency on the financial contributions of international students directly impacts the geographic and socio-economic diversity of the international cohort. Admissions decisions in a need-aware process for international students include a target discount rate that is lower than that of domestic students admitted through a need-blind process. As a result, revenue priorities have led the college to recruit and enroll a much larger share of students from Asia (61% of Grinnell international student enrollment is from Asia, with 31% from China specifically) than from other areas of the world. This presents challenges for social integration on campus and our large reliance on enrollment from a single country presents a risk to the college in the event of a potential political or financial crisis. Higher need international students also face financial challenges that extend beyond the comprehensive fee, at times struggling to purchase books, pay for uninsured medical needs, secure campus jobs over breaks, or find affordable summer housing.

At the institutional level, Grinnell has moved slowly to analyze and respond to the needs of its growing international cohort. Our metrics focus primarily on the cohort as a whole, and we have less data that drills into differences in experience in terms of nationality, region, or socioeconomic status. Post-graduate employment opportunities are also limited for students holding an F-1 visa. We offer only limited training for faculty and staff as they teach and respond to the needs of international students who arrive at the college with profoundly varied learning modes and cultural practices.

### **Recommendations 4.1 through 4.5: International Students**

- **4.1:** Initiate a process through which the college determines a stated goal for international student enrollment. A target of 18-20% international student enrollment, for example, would reflect admission practices for the past two years, allow for approximately 3-4 international students per Tutorial, and allow the college to preserve a leadership position within our Peer 16.

- **4.2:** Analyze strategies through which Grinnell might balance its revenue targets with a reduction in the percentage of students enrolled from a single country. Determine which approaches could facilitate that, including dedicated recruiting from other countries or fundraising for international student aid.
- **4.3:** Assess the impact of the international student body on the curriculum, noting patterns of enrollment and demand for particular courses of study, especially in the sciences and economics. Analyze the extent to which international students pursue a balanced course selection across the liberal arts. Assess the impact of the international student body on academic support centers (the Writing Center, the Science Learning Center, and others), and non-academic resources (Student Health and Counseling Services, Residential Life).
- **4.4:** Pursue additional research into the diverse experiences of international students from different countries, regions, and socioeconomic classes. Review financial challenges faced by highest need international students to determine how best to support the full costs of attendance.
- **4.5:** Increase training opportunities for faculty, staff, and community members seeking to promote the teaching, learning, and overall success of international students.

### **Off-Campus Study (OCS) Programs**

#### **Strengths:**

Grinnell offers an extensive array of off-campus study opportunities, extending to over eighty programs on every continent except Antarctica. Our student participation rates are among the highest nationally, and full portability of financial aid has consistently enabled more than fifty percent of our students to spend at least one semester studying abroad during their college careers. Given the transformative impact that study abroad can have on a student's liberal arts education, these figures are both impressive and encouraging. Our approach has also removed many barriers to study abroad typically faced by students from less affluent backgrounds. The College's own Grinnell in London program has recently added optional enrollment in Queen Mary-University of London, allowing our students to have a more immersive experience. In addition to our own programs, consortium programs (ACM, IES) have provided excellent opportunities for faculty development. Most recently, course embedded travel opportunities have sharply expanded and the Global Learning Program has enabled Grinnell to embed travel into dynamic, interdisciplinary first-year offerings. International opportunities for student research and internships have deepened as well. (For off-campus study data, see Appendix 2.)

#### **Weaknesses:**

Although off-campus study opportunities are extensive and student participation is excellent, work remains to be done to ensure the highest possible quality of advising and experience. At the present, the College lacks a formal program to prepare faculty to advise students regarding off-campus study. Experienced faculty provide advising for some programs, but often OCS staff serve as the sole advisers. In the absence of a training program, staff and faculty sometimes lack concise, updated information about program offerings and application procedures. The link between the curriculum and off-campus study needs to be strengthened as well, and the College lacks explicit coursework that prepares students for study abroad or programs that enable them to reflect on and apply their experiences to courses and research as well as their personal and professional goals when they return. Departments and majors don't always specify how OCS relates to their

programs, and students need additional guidance in learning how to articulate the meaning of their experiences as they consider application to graduate schools and enter the job market. Improved assessment practices are needed to determine how to address potential imbalances in OCS participation across the student population. Finally, full portability of financial aid is a very expensive practice, and in recent years Grinnell has expended upwards of three million dollars annually to maintain it.

### **Recommendations 5.1 through 5.4: Off-Campus Study**

- **5.1:** Strive to make full portability of financial aid sustainable for all students by offering a balanced portfolio of opportunities through a home tuition model. Analyze student participation by race, gender, and socioeconomic status and conduct a full review of the financial structure of off-campus study. Examine the cost to Grinnell and to students of different program opportunities in different regions and balance them against the imperatives of academic quality. In some cases (e.g. high cost programs in Western Europe or Japan) the college may indeed lose money. In others, however, (including many programs in Latin America, Africa, or parts of China) lower program costs may allow for savings. Devise a strategy to move toward a net balance, potentially offering a smaller number of outstanding programs, negotiating volume discounts with providers, and/or establishing cost ceilings where appropriate.
- **5.2:** Work with academic programs to clarify desired outcomes of OCS, identify specific programs that best serve these outcomes, and create routine practices for visiting these programs and debriefing students. Continue to emphasize the value of hybrid or immersion programs over “island” ones that limit educational experiences to narrower student cohorts.
- **5.3:** Assess and enhance the opportunities for students pursuing a diverse range of majors, including the science fields, to study abroad
- **5.4:** Build on the ongoing efforts of the OCS office to improve faculty and staff advising through workshops and training. Distribute materials that include information regarding enrollment and financial policies. Promote courses, like the new offering by OCS, to offer preparatory experiences for those planning to study abroad.
- **5.5:** Promote means through which students can capitalize on the significance of their study abroad experience. Encourage departments and concentrations to identify the relevance of off-campus study to their curriculum. Through CLS, teach students to articulate the value of this experience for post-graduate endeavors.

### **Global Learning and the Curriculum**

#### **Strengths:**

Grinnell’s curriculum is delivered by faculty with active research agendas and expertise across the globe. In addition to many departments that feature international content and perspectives, the college offers a rigorous curriculum in language, literature, and culture. Several concentrations, most notably Global Development Studies, European Studies, Russian, Central, and Eastern European Studies, East Asian Studies, and Latin American Studies, provide students with excellent opportunities to pursue interdisciplinary knowledge. Grinnell’s academic centers and programs, including the Center for the Humanities, the Rosenfield Program in Public Affairs, International Relations, and Human Rights, and the Peace and Conflict Studies Program offer an outstanding array of lectures, workshops, and symposia related to international themes. Our International

Visiting Scholar program allows writers, scientists, and artists to contribute courses to the curriculum as well. Grinnell's Library and Faulconer Gallery provide outstanding resources for students seeking to deepen their international understanding.

Grinnell's Office of Corporate, Government, and Foundation Relations has enjoyed significant success in securing support for international initiatives. The Henry Luce Foundation endowed a Professorship in Nations and the Global Environment and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation funded a Program for Overseas Community Involvement, including internships and an interdisciplinary seminar. Grinnell's program in East Asian Studies has been supported through grants by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Japan Foundation, the Gardner and Florence Call Cowles Foundation, and the Freeman Foundation. Recently, a grant from the Mellon Foundation established a tenure-track line in Arabic and funded additional visiting instructors from the American University in Cairo. Individual faculty also continue to pursue grants that enhance their research and teaching. Several of the college's pending grants involve international components, and two of them, under review at the National Science Foundation, involve opportunities for students to travel abroad to work on international research teams.

### **Weaknesses:**

As strong as the curriculum is, faculty often lack sufficient information about courses and internationally-oriented learning opportunities to advise students effectively toward a global education. Neither our electronic advising tools nor the college catalog permit searches based on simple terms (like "Africa," for example) to determine which courses have specific content. Beyond course titles, build on the precedent of the new Global Learning Program to design constituent "tags" that can be used to identify offerings in particular geographic areas or international themes.

There are imbalances in the curriculum itself. In some fields, majors focus more heavily on Western traditions and lack significant coverage of non-Western content. More broadly, while students design and create more independent majors related to international studies than in any other field, aside from Global Development Studies the college lacks a major or concentration that is explicitly global in design and structure. While area studies concentrations provide options for some students, such an absence may put the college at a disadvantage to peer institutions that do present such major offerings.

We also confront imbalances in terms of research support. As we seek to promote student scholarship, resources for international research by students remain low and difficult to identify and use. Finally, faculty conducting internationally focused research frequently exhaust the resources available to them.

### **Recommendations 6.1 through 6.5: Global Learning and the Curriculum**

- **6.1:** Convene a faculty body to explore the creation of an internationally centered major with a distinctive area of focus and rigor. Explore the potential relevance of both policy centered programs, such as "International Relations" or "International Political Economy," as well as humanistic and culturally-centered ones, like "Postcolonial Studies." Determine how such a program might draw on offerings from across the divisions of the college.
- **6.2:** Design better tools (both electronic and print) that allow faculty, staff, and students to identify the international content of courses in our curriculum, especially at the time of preregistration. Such tools might include: a) making course descriptions searchable; b)

creating simple geographic or thematic tags for courses; c) creating systems that allow faculty to cluster courses across divisional or departmental lines, in order to feature a specific theme, issue, or geography.

- **6.3:** Ask departments and concentrations to analyze the international component of their programs as part of the college's standard review process. In cases of imbalance or insufficient coverage, explore means through which resources may be reallocated or expanded.
- **6.4:** Create and staff a Language Resource Center that has a wide programmatic reach, in affiliation with the Center for International Studies, to coordinate language-across-the-curriculum (including "Plus Two" Foreign Language Options for specific courses), MAP research with non-English sources, native-speaking language assistants and student tutors, translation studies, distance-learning involving foreign students and institutions, and other initiatives to embed languages within the international work done by students and faculty.
- **6.5:** Assess resource needs for internationally focused faculty and student research, clarify procedures, and consider potential development initiatives in this area.

### **Co-Curricular Activities**

#### **Strengths:**

The college offers a multiplicity of co-curricular opportunities and resources for students to engage in global learning, including dining services offerings, foreign language houses, symposia, film series, guest lecturers, performances, arts shows, student-led events, cultural celebrations, and funding for job shadowing, externships, and internships. Central Iowa, including the community of Grinnell and the urban centers of Iowa City and Des Moines, has become increasingly global in orientation, offering opportunities for potential collaborations with other educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and private sector firms. Recent investments in CLS have resulted in greater support and better coordination of post-college international opportunities, particularly in the areas of post-graduate service, social innovation, graduate study, and international fellowships.

#### **Weaknesses:**

To date, while there have been periodic efforts to develop an integrated approach to co-curricular activities, a concerted, ongoing, and integrated approach has been elusive. Our many programmatic offerings across campus fill the calendar, but they are not well-coordinated and, as an institution, we lack an understanding of the extent to which co-curricular offerings have advanced the global knowledge of our students. We have yet to pursue a systematic engagement with the many Grinnell College alumni who live and work outside the United States to explore not only their fundraising capacity but also their ability to promote goals related to student internships, research opportunities, and recruitment. College staff, including those working in CLS, still face limited means to deepen their experience and understanding of international opportunities.

#### **Recommendations 7.1 through 7.5: Co-Curricular Activities**

- **7.1:** As part of an assessment plan of global learning goals, analyze the impact of co-curricular components. Establish benchmark data and monitor over time.

- **7.2:** Pursue collaborations within the local and regional community to promote international opportunities for our students, including guest speakers, site visits, service engagements, and potential internship sites.
- **7.3:** Review staff development programs to help deepen knowledge of global issues, practices, perspectives, and experiences to design programs to serve students.
- **7.4:** Conduct research regarding the alumni community living outside the United States and increase their engagement in the work of the college through collaborative fundraising, internships, student research opportunities, and assistance with international student recruitment.

## **External Partnerships**

### **Strengths:**

Grinnell College has a rich history of establishing external partnerships with colleges, universities, non-profit organizations, and service partners around the world. CIS has served as the administrative home for many of these partnerships, and many faculty have developed strong ties with foreign institutions, providing the college with a great depth of experience. The benefits of partnerships have also had a very positive impact, allowing faculty to teach and conduct research abroad, enabling the college to host international scholars and teachers, and enhancing the depth and quality of our curriculum. The senior leadership of the college has historically supported these partnerships as well, traveling to meet with foreign counterparts and seeking ways to further advance collaborations.

### **Weaknesses:**

Grinnell lacks both a complete inventory of external partnerships as well as a systematic basis on which to evaluate them. In the absence of a comprehensive roster of current partnerships, an uneven use of memoranda of agreement, and the absence of clear metrics and criteria for evaluation, our approach has been highly contingent and opportunistic. Many of our external partnerships are also founded by and maintained by specific individuals and groups, which makes transitions potentially difficult in the absence of a stronger administrative structure. Most of our partnerships, with the exception of our longstanding collaboration with Nanjing University, are also quite limited in terms of their specific forms of engagement. Few of them reflect multivalent forms of cooperation across more than one or two points of contact.

### **Recommendations 8.1 through 8.4: External Partnerships**

- **8.1:** In tandem with the development of institutional nodes abroad, define and maintain a few highly visible “signature” partnerships that convey a distinctive opportunity for the College and its students.
- **8.2:** Establish guiding principles and priorities for the creation and continuation of external partnerships. Frame a checklist of desired attributes and determine the extent to which a proposed collaboration provides sufficient value. Points of evaluation should include the relationship to the curriculum, appeal as a potential off-campus study and faculty/student research site, possible engagement with the Center for Careers, Life and Service, expectations for sustainability, relationship to international student recruiting, emerging

significance of a location or region, and risk assessment. Evaluate cost over time in relation to goals.

- **8.3:** Develop a comprehensive roster of current external partnerships and establish memoranda of agreement where appropriate. Revise or discontinue partnerships that no longer add significant value. Establish a protocol for the development of future partnerships.
- **8.4:** More effectively communicate to faculty, staff, students, and alumni opportunities that current external partnerships may provide. Where advantageous, provide support for travel to sites.
- **8.5:** Explore ways that the college might partner with local or regional entities in external collaborations.

## **V. APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1: International Student Data**

[https://grinco.sharepoint.com/sites/dean/Global\\_Grinnell/Intl\\_Students\\_at\\_Grinnell.pdf](https://grinco.sharepoint.com/sites/dean/Global_Grinnell/Intl_Students_at_Grinnell.pdf)

### **Appendix 2: Off-Campus Study Data**

[https://grinco.sharepoint.com/sites/dean/\\_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B443A840D-8505-4AA5-9DDD-E82E8503B5CD%7D&file=Off-Campus\\_Study.xlsx&action=default](https://grinco.sharepoint.com/sites/dean/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B443A840D-8505-4AA5-9DDD-E82E8503B5CD%7D&file=Off-Campus_Study.xlsx&action=default)

---

<sup>i</sup> McKinsey and Company, "The Expanding Network of Global Flows," <http://www.mckinsey.com/tools/Wrappers/Wrapper.aspx?sid={7EFFEE03-A6D2-470D-AD7D-A7D861C4537F}&pid={76040855-7D4D-4933-A7AC-4069867D1D8D}>, accessed March 22, 2015.

<sup>ii</sup> Institute of International Education, Open Doors Report, 2014, <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/US-Study-Abroad/Infographic>, accessed March 22, 2015.