

A Key to Further Internationalization at CU Boulder

Since 1965 there have been 11 committees that filed reports with campus administrations regarding the internationalization of the University of Colorado Boulder. All of the reports were slightly different, reflecting the different makeup of each committee; however, all of the reports reflected the views of both faculty and staff that were engaged in some part of internationalization. There has been one common theme in all of these reports: *better coordination of the various efforts is necessary for success.*

CU Boulder continues to enjoy a broad international reach; however, our international efforts are often fragmented, redundant, or underfunded. We are not effectively leveraging our opportunities on the world stage. Recently we've experienced a significant drop in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) (commonly called the "Shanghai ranking"). For the previous ten years we were either **33 or 34** in the world; in the last two years we have fallen dramatically to **43**. This white paper reiterates the 2008 ACE Task Force recommendation for a *Vice Chancellor for International Policy and Programs*, charged with articulating, achieving, and maintaining CU Boulder's international objectives, who would report directly to the Provost. I believe this is the change necessary to turn our ranking around and regain lost ground.

The most recent such report ([Internationalization Task Force - http://www.colorado.edu/oie/internationalization-cu/internationalization-task-force](http://www.colorado.edu/oie/internationalization-cu/internationalization-task-force)) was done by a largely faculty group charged by then-Provost Phil DiStefano with developing a strategic plan for internationalization at CU Boulder in collaboration with the American Council on Education (ACE) Internationalization Laboratory. That Task Force began to meet in fall 2008 to assess the level of international activity at CU Boulder. The findings indicated a remarkable amount of international activity, despite the absence of a concerted campus-wide effort for internationalization. This activity was credited to a number of individuals and departments who had taken it upon themselves to pursue the full range of international activities available in higher education.

The Task Force reported on research partnerships formed, exchanges developed, travels to foreign archives and other research storehouses, work presented at conferences held abroad, scholars invited from around

the world to speak or collaborate here, and so forth. Their report is a remarkable compilation of the campus' international activities!

As is so often the case at CU Boulder, the prevailing engine driving much of the international activity here has been the spirit of entrepreneurship; a spirit that has been a reality on a campus where resources are often limited. It is a tribute to the resourcefulness of the CU Boulder faculty and staff that such individual and largely independent efforts have succeeded so well, but it also raises the important question: how much better could we do if we actually pulled together, with an informed plan, adequate central support and guidance, and a fully transparent flow of information?

The work of that Task Force demonstrated two facts that are beyond dispute: one, that there is a great deal of international activity, and two, the actual extent of that activity is currently very difficult to measure accurately. An excellent foundation for future international work is in place. We have an active and internationally engaged faculty and had a well-functioning Office of International Education.

While a great deal of international activity can be found around the institution, it is very loosely connected and it is quite common for individuals and departments to be totally unaware of similar efforts taking place in other departments. These silos of international activity are problematic in that many remain disconnected from resources in other departments on campus. While the entrepreneurial spirit is advantageous for the campus in forging new opportunities, there is no central structure that ensures that such efforts follow university procedures or administration's desires. For example, new exchange agreements developed outside of the Office of International Education have occasionally led to problems for exchange students and the institution due to failures to arrange critical support structures.

The ACE Task Force called for a cabinet level position to oversee campus internationalization, an idea that is not new (called for in 7 of the 11 previous reports) ([Internationalization Task Force - https://www.colorado.edu/oie/internationalization-cu/internationalization-task-force/previous-cu-boulder-reports](https://www.colorado.edu/oie/internationalization-cu/internationalization-task-force/previous-cu-boulder-reports)). At a minimum, all of the reports cited the need for better coordination and some structural changes (such as a campus-wide coordinating committee) in order to improve efforts built across disciplinary lines as a means of expanding international activities

and opportunities. In addition, that Task Force recommendation was based on a survey of peer institutions that showed a majority of peer institutions have either a senior international officer or a campus-wide coordinating committee or both, in order to reduce duplication of effort and support for interdisciplinary international efforts.

The VC for International would work to accomplish the following goals that are necessary to make strides in internationalizing the campus:

1. Establish an international advisory committee comprised of faculty appointed by the deans, and staff from critical positions in international program offices across campus to facilitate communication among the schools and colleges and advocate for international initiatives.
2. The Task Force saw this as a crucial point: they recommended the creation of the VC position not to revamp or change the activities of the Office of International Education, but rather to supplement OIE's efforts and help to foster the realization of a campus strategic plan, which would greatly contribute to the internationalization of the campus.
3. Coordinate and encourage faculty and college efforts to pursue external grant opportunities such as federally funded Title VI Centers, support existing grants, and provide information about other grant opportunities for international programming and research.
4. Collaborate with the Graduate School, OIE, colleges, deans, and faculty to facilitate the growth of international partnerships such as joint degree programs, faculty exchanges, and joint faculty research opportunities.
5. Work with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement (ODECE) to bridge multicultural and international awareness.
6. Maintain a continually updated inventory of international activities and create an international network on campus to increase awareness of the international activities on campus and help connect individuals

who may benefit from collaboration. In part this can be done through improved use of the FRPA and a similar effort with staff that work in international areas of the campus.

7. Work to expand CU Boulder's access to digital technologies that may facilitate international collaboration for teaching and research.
8. Serve as a liaison to the Alumni Association and the CU Foundation, and in this capacity work to ensure that CU Boulder cultivates international donors and increases its recruitment of international students.
9. Work toward establishing dedicated faculty lines for visiting faculty, and work with the Vice Chancellor for Administration and others to ensure the availability of accommodations for short-term and long-term international visitors.

In order to accomplish goals such as these, the campus needs a Vice Chancellor directly responsible for proactive leadership in internationalization with a direct line to the Provost. Or alternatively, in the very least, the campus needs to establish an international coordinating committee appointed by the provost in order to tear down silos of international activities and prevent duplication of internationalization efforts.

Submitted by Lawrence H Bell, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Global Strategic Initiatives, October 18, 2017