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“Global Learning for Global Citizenship” at Florida International University

Florida International University (FIU), as its name suggests, was founded with a distinctly global outlook. The Miami-based university is known for its extensive area studies and diverse faculty and student population—FIU’s student body is composed of 81 percent ethnic and racial minority students, and the university confers more bachelor’s and master’s degrees to Hispanic students than any other institution in the United States. But until recently, “that diverse, global aspect wasn’t actually being put to use for student learning,” says Hilary Landorf, director of the FIU Office of Global Learning Initiatives. “We had all the components [of global learning] and yet there was this gap in terms of putting them to use to prepare our students for global citizenship in an interconnected world. We call this our internationalization gap.”

When FIU began its reaccreditation process in 2007, the university community decided to make closing the gap a priority. FIU hosted a series of conversations with stakeholders to choose a theme for advancing student achievement that would impact all students, says Stephanie Doscher, associate director of the Office of Global Learning Initiatives. “Over and over, our stakeholders—from community members to alumni to faculty, students, and staff—said, ‘it’s time to reinvigorate the I in FIU.’”

Global Learning in the Classroom

The result of those conversations was the Global Learning for Global Citizenship initiative, a multi-year quality enhancement plan (QEP) that aims to “enabl[e] every undergraduate to develop global awareness, a global perspective, and an attitude of global engagement,” as President Mark Rosenberg writes in a letter introducing the initiative. The bedrock of the initiative is a two-tiered global learning requirement for all undergraduate students: a global learning foundations course from the university’s core curriculum, and a discipline-specific course from the student’s major. As of fall 2011, all new first-year students and transfer students must complete these requirements to graduate.

In order to fulfill the global learning requirement, courses must address the three learning outcomes designated in the QEP: global awareness, global perspective, and global engagement. In addition to addressing these outcomes, a global learning course must include appropriate content with multiple perspectives on the theme or topic of the course, a syllabus that incorporates active learning strategies, and an assessment plan to ensure students are meeting the global learning outcomes, Doscher says.

There are now global learning courses in each of FIU’s eleven colleges and schools and almost every department—sixty-five discipline-specific courses and twenty-five foundations courses. Courses range from the writing-intensive “How We Know What We Know,” which concerns information literacy and the contemporary media landscape, to “Global Supply Chains and Logistics,” a team-taught course developed by engineering, business, and geography faculty that examines the interrelationship between society and business practices around the world. Many of the courses take on interdisciplinary subject matter, and some are taught by teams of two or even three professors, says Fred Blevens, a professor of journalism who designed and team-teaches “How We Know What We Know”

These courses represent a mix of new courses designed specifically for the Global Learning initiative and older courses that have been adapted and revised. Global learning instructors are offered faculty and staff development workshops, where they receive extensive support while developing their syllabi and training for teaching with active learning strategies.



The Global Learning for Global Citizenship was initiative developed as part of FIU’s reaccreditation process. The initiative includes a two-tier global learning course requirement and numerous co- and extracurricular opportunities centered on global learning. (Photo courtesy of Florida International University)

While the workshops are not required, almost every faculty member who has designed or revised a global learning course has attended one—about 250 of FIU's 800 full-time faculty members. The basic format for this training, says Doscher, are two half-day interdepartmental workshops in which faculty and staff engage in a discussion of what global citizenship means and how to approach this concept in the classroom and in cocurricular activities. "What we do throughout is model the same kind of active teaching strategies that faculty and Student Affairs professionals can use in their work.... We go through different strategies for assessment, and the last part of the session is a writing workshop where participants bring in draft learning outcomes and colleagues help each other revise them to make sure those outcomes align with our [institution-wide] learning outcomes and articulate something meaningful and useful for students."

However, every workshop is not the same, Landorf notes. "There are different models for faculty creating new courses, or revising a course, or if they're coming because they have a set syllabus but that faculty member is new to teaching that particular course ... we tweak the workshop." Faculty stipends for designing or revising global learning courses are also adjusted accordingly. The Office of Global Learning Initiatives also continues to provide support even after the workshops have ended, helping faculty revise syllabi and submit new courses to the faculty senate. The Office also hosts meetings at the beginning and end of each semester for faculty teaching global learning courses to meet and discuss pedagogical strategies.

Global Learning in the Co-Curriculum



To fulfill the global learning for global citizenship requirement, a course must incorporate active learning strategies, include appropriate content with multiple perspectives, and address three learning outcomes: global awareness, global perspective, and global engagement. (Photo courtesy of Florida International University)

Service, says Beverly Dalrymple, the center's director.

Dalrymple says her office has always focused on using service to develop globally engaged leaders, but what Global Learning "gave us was the intentionality to make it an obvious part of what we do. We help instructors set up service learning in their classes, work with our community partners, and provide guidance for students through the process, including reflection techniques through the course, and training for faculty."

But for global learning to become a central part of every student's experience at FIU, "it has to be more than a two-course experience," Doscher says, and Dalrymple agrees. "We look at student learning outcomes and translate those into our day-to-day interactions with students. ... The Division of Student Affairs has workshops for staff to learn how to apply the student learning outcomes the same way faculty would in building a course."

The Division of Student Affairs is also working with Landorf and Doscher to advance global learning outcomes beyond individual classes and a new calendar of student activities will highlight those that feature global learning and engagement opportunities. Eric Feldman, a graduate student in education and assistant to Landorf, coordinates one such activity—the Tuesday Times Roundtable, a weekly series of discussions between students, faculty, and staff prompted by *New York Times* articles on global current events. Feldman manages a schedule of moderators—open to any faculty member, staff member, and graduate student—who choose an article and lead the discussion.

Feldman notifies faculty who teach in fields related to each week's topic, and while attendance tends to be around forty students, some weeks it may be over one hundred when instructors encourage their students to attend. Lunch is provided courtesy of the *Times*, and some students who first show up for a free meal end up coming back every week, Feldman says. The discussions are recorded and posted as [YouTube videos](#)

First-time college freshmen and transfer students who have not completed core curriculum requirements must complete a foundations course as one of their two global learning classes. Foundations courses must include two more requirements in addition to those for all global learning courses. First, the course must use a common reading that explores global concepts in some way—one recent reading is Kwame Anthony Appiah's "[The Case for Contamination](#)," a *New York Times* article which "explores concepts of globalization and the cosmopolitan movement of ideas," Doscher says.

Second, she says, "there must be an integrated cocurricular activity—student affairs is an equal partner in the initiative." Cocurricular activities can take a number of forms. Many faculty are turning to partners in the community, as in a course on labor that has students work with a local farm union. More professors are now also taking advantage of the service-learning support offered by the Center for Leadership and

and as [podcasts on iTunes](#).

In addition to his work on the Roundtables, Feldman speaks to new students about global learning during orientation. While he speaks about graduation requirements and cocurricular opportunities during a designated orientation session, Feldman also goes out of his way to talk with individual students about why global learning is an important part of their education. “I want to tell them what this means, why it’s going to help them get jobs, and how they can use it. I tell them, if you’re working in business, at some point in your career you’ll be on a conference call with someone from another culture, or on a trip in a foreign country. If they’re into art, I tell them that we have a course about how different cultures express themselves through art... Even if you’re in a major that is not obviously global, there are global aspects to it and you’ll be a more well-rounded person for knowing them.”

A Learning Orientation

Rigorous institution-wide assessment of the Global Learning for Global Citizenship initiative was built into the QEP from the start. FIU uses both the [Global Perspectives Inventory](#), which assesses global awareness, perspective, and engagement in cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions, and an FIU-developed case study assessment tool that requires students to apply their skills to specific problems.

“On a program level we won’t be able to tell [that students are meeting learning outcomes] until, realistically, the end of next year when transfer students from this year graduate,” Landorf says. Anecdotally, though, Blevens says he and other faculty are seeing strong performance from students, and Doscher notes that assessment summaries from individual courses are overwhelmingly positive. “I’d say on a course-to-course basis, from the assessment summaries we’ve looked at, the students are meeting the three global learning outcomes.”

Because Global Learning for Global Citizenship is part of the university’s reaccreditation process, the initiative has been blessed with relatively stable funding and strong institutional support, Landorf and Doscher say, and although some courses that were once team-taught are now taught by a single instructor, they’re confident about continued support. But more than funding, it was the way that the university embraced the concept of global learning that has made the initiative so transformational.

“The university itself has taken on a learning orientation,” Landorf says. “We enable faculty to enable the students, and in doing so the university itself is enabled in these capacities of global citizenship... the university had to internalize global learning and engagement in order for the change to happen on the level of the students.

“We very much have taken on the two missions of serving our local community, and knowing that our community is global.”

For more information about the Global Learning for Global Citizenship initiative, including the QEP, visit [FIU’s Global Learning Initiatives web page](#). For more resources on global learning resources, including assessment tools and examples from other campuses, see [AAC&U’s Shared Futures tools for educators](#).