

**CONCEPT PAPER  
ON**

***THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW CENTER  
FOR GLOBAL STUDIES AT GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY***

**BY  
GEORGE KLAY KIEH, JR.  
PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE &  
AFRICAN STUDIES  
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface.....	2
Introduction.....	4
The Rationale for the Establishment of the Center for Global Studies.....	6
The Relationship Between the Proposed Center for Global Studies and the Padnos International Center.....	7
The Structure of the Proposed Center for Global Studies.....	7
The Activities of the Proposed Center for Global Studies.....	9
Related Issues.....	13
Conclusion.....	15

## PREFACE

When I returned to Grand Valley State University in the winter semester 2006, following my leave of absence, I was offered a joint appointment as Professor of Political Science and African Studies (Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies). My understanding is that the appointment was made against the background of my several years of experience in teaching, research and service in interdisciplinary studies, especially international studies or global studies. I was delighted to accept the appointment because it gives me an opportunity to undertake teaching, research and service activities in two areas of interests—Political Science (my home discipline) and Global Studies (African Studies). Additionally, the appointment affords me the opportunity to formally participate in the activities of the new and exciting College of Interdisciplinary Studies.

Moreover, I was equally delighted when Dean Wendy Wenner asked me to write a “Concept Paper on the Establishment of a New Center for Global Studies,” including curricular and other activities relating to global studies. Having served as GVSU’s Dean of International Education from 2001-2003, when efforts were made unsuccessfully to establish a rubric for the integration of GVSU’s various global studies programs, I was honored and excited to perform the assignment. This is because I still firmly believe that the establishment of a Center for Global Studies would provide GVSU with the opportunity to become a leader in global studies. Thanks to Provost Gayle Davis for finally providing a rationale academic home to house GVSU’s various global studies programs. So, with the structural issue resolved, efforts can now be directed towards the development of the organizational framework for global studies at GVSU.

This "Concept Paper" reflects my years of experience in teaching, research and administration in global studies; so, it is based on my thinking about global studies. Accordingly, it is not definitive or "set in stone." As a work in progress, it is opened to discussion and changes. However, the only core caveat is the imperative of creating a Center for Global Studies at GVSU.

Finally, I would like to thank Dean Wendy Wenner for her support and cooperation in the performance of this important assignment for Grand valley States University and the College of Interdisciplinary Studies. Also, I would like to thank my "old" colleagues on the Steering Committee--- Jim Goode, Curtis Smith, Veta Tucker and Cliff Welch---that worked assiduously to establish a center for housing GVSU's various global studies programs for the insights they provided during our work in 2001-2002. Last, but not the least, I would like to thank my "new" colleague Jack Mangala, Director of the African and African-American Studies Program at GVSU, with whom I have had the privilege and joy of working, for his ideas and insights about the establishment of the Center for Global Studies at GVSU.

## INTRODUCTION

There have been ongoing discussions about “the best organizational rubric” for the global studies programs---currently African and African-American Studies, East Asian Studies, Latin American Studies and Middle Eastern Studies---at Grand Valley State University. Until 2004, the various global studies programs were dispersed among the former academic divisions---African and African American Studies and East Asian Studies were housed in the Division of Arts and Humanities and Latin American and Middle Eastern Studies were based in the Division of Social Sciences. There was no clearly articulated rationale for such an “organizational structure.” The “organizational structure” made the various global studies programs to operate as isolated enclaves without any structured relationship with one another. Clearly, the rubrics created several problems: 1) There was the lack of an integrated approach to global studies as evidenced by the lack of an overarching organizational framework for integrating the constituent units; 2) although the various area studies programs had their individual corpus of faculty affiliates, there was the absence of a structured interdisciplinary network of GVSU faculty members with interests and expertise in global studies; and 3) the corollary was the absence of a structure for promoting university-wide teaching, research and public affairs activities in global studies.

Being cognizant of the shortcomings of the organizational structure for global studies programs and the attendant adverse impact, the issue of a more rationale organizational structure for global studies program was put on the agenda of the university-wide Task Force on Internationalization in 2000. In its final report, the Task Force, among other things, recommended that the scope of the responsibilities of the

Dean of International Affairs/Education be expanded to include the current and future global studies programs---area and functional or thematic studies programs.

Against this background a national search was conducted for a new Dean of International Education. At the conclusion of the search, George Klay Kieh, Jr. was appointed as the new Dean of International Education of Grand Valley State University in July 2001. One of the new dean's major responsibilities was the development of an organizational rubric for global studies programs within the ambit of the expanded Division of International Education. In this vein, in October 2001, the Dean of International Education established a steering committee consisting of the then Dean of International Education and the Coordinators of the various area studies programs to design an organizational structure for global programs. After months of deliberation, the steering committee made the determination that a Center for Inter-Cultural Studies (Global Studies) be established to house the current and future area studies and functional or thematic studies programs. The Center was to be a companion unit of the Padnos International Center (with the responsibilities for study abroad, international partnerships, faculty-led programs and international student and scholar services). Both centers were to be the twin pillars of the Division of International Education. Unfortunately, the effort to implement the new structure was undermined both by the unimaginable opposition of some faculty members and the ambivalence and equivocation of the Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. So, in effect, the effort to establish a Center for Global Studies was stymied and consequently shelved.

In July 2002, Gayle Davis became GVSU's new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Her appointment, *inter alia*, heralded a new dawn for interdisciplinary

studies, including global studies. This is because Provost Davis has both academic training and interest in interdisciplinary studies. Against this backdrop, Provost Davis was apprised of the travails of global studies at GVSU. In response, Provost Davis agreed to make the issue of the state of global studies an integral part of the discussions about reorganizing the Academic and Student Affairs Division. After two years of university-wide discussions, the Academic and Student Affairs Division was re-organized. As part of the re-organization, area studies programs and the Padnos International Center were made units of the new College of Interdisciplinary Studies. However, one of the major remaining challenges is the need to design an organizational rubric for the global studies programs. In short, the re-organization of the Academic and Student Affairs Division resolved the major structural problem for global studies programs and provided an opportunity for the development of an organizational rubric to integrate the current and future area studies and functional or thematic studies programs.

### **THE RATIONALE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTER FOR GLOBAL STUDIES**

The rationale for the establishment of a new University-wide Center for Global Studies is anchored on three major pillars:

1. To serve a University-wide interdisciplinary tapestry for mobilizing and harnessing the competencies, skills and interests in global studies of GVSU's faculty members from various colleges and academic departments.
2. To provide an overarching structure for the integration of the teaching, research and public service activities of the various area or regional studies and functional or thematic studies programs at Grand Valley State University.

- 3. To provide a rubric for the supervision and coordination of the activities of the various global studies programs so as to help enhance the internationalization efforts at GVSU.

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PROPOSED CENTER FOR GLOBAL STUDIES AND THE PADNOS INTERNATIONAL CENTER**

The proposed Center for Global Studies and the Padnos International Center will serve as the University-wide twin pillars of international education. Within the framework of a “division of labor,” the proposed Center for Global Studies will focus on the faculty-based academic aspects of international education---teaching, research and public affairs---, while the Padnos International Center will continue to focus on the student-based academic services components of international education---study abroad, international partnerships, faculty-led programs and international students and scholars services. Importantly, the two centers will cooperate in the performance of their respective responsibilities.

In view of the proposed new structure, the Inter-cultural Studies Faculty Development Grant will be transferred to the new Center for Global Studies. The grant will be renamed “The Global Studies Faculty Development Grant.” The grant will support research and teaching activities in global studies. All other faculty-based grants relating to international partnerships, faculty-led programs and study abroad will remain the Padnos International Center.

**THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROPOSED CENTER FOR GLOBAL STUDIES**

The proposed Center for Global Studies will be housed as an academic unit within the College of Interdisciplinary Studies. The Center’s organizational structure will consist

of the Office of the Dean of the College of Interdisciplinary Studies, the Center's Steering Committee, the Office of the Center's Executive Director and the current and future area or regional Studies and functional or thematic studies programs.

### **The Office of the Dean of the College of Interdisciplinary Studies**

The Office of the Dean of the College of Interdisciplinary Studies will serve as the overall supervisory entity of the proposed Center for Global Studies. The Executive Director of the Center will report to the Dean of the College of Interdisciplinary Studies.

### **The Center's Steering Committee**

The Center's Steering Committee will consist of the Executive Director as Chair and the Directors of the current and future area studies and functional studies programs as members. The Steering Committee will serve as the policy-making body of the Center.

Some of its responsibilities will include:

- 1) The Establishment of new global studies programs (area or functional studies). The Committee's decisions in this area will be submitted to the Dean of the College of Interdisciplinary Studies for review and approval.
- 2) Curricular Matters---the review of the curricula of the various area and functional studies programs; and the approval of new courses. The decisions of the Steering Committee on curricular matters will be submitted to the Curriculum Committee of the College of Interdisciplinary Studies.
- 3) Budgetary Issues---The Committee will formulate the annual budget of the Center and submit it to the Dean of the College of Interdisciplinary Studies.

The Center's Executive Director

The Executive Director shall be the chief administrative officer of the Center. He or she shall be appointed by the Dean of the College of Interdisciplinary Studies. The Center's Executive Director will be a senior faculty member---Associate or Full Professor---, who shall hold a joint appointment in the College of Interdisciplinary Studies and the home college for his or her discipline.

**The Area (Regional) and Functional (Thematic Studies Programs)**

The Center shall comprise the current (including the proposed expansion of the present East Asian Studies Program into an Asian Studies Program) area studies programs and future area and functional studies programs. Each program shall be headed by a Director, who shall be appointed by the Dean of the College of Interdisciplinary Studies, upon the recommendation of the Program's Faculty Fellows and the Center's Executive Director. Each program shall have a corps of "Faculty Fellows" from GVSU's various colleges and academic departments (some of the Faculty Fellows will hold joint appointments in their respective home colleges and the College of Interdisciplinary Studies). The Director and the Faculty Fellows shall have the responsibilities for conducting the teaching, research and public service activities of the program within the broader framework of the Center.

**THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PROPOSED CENTER FOR GLOBAL STUDIES**

As already indicated, the Center for Global Studies shall be a University-wide unit with overall responsibilities for the interdisciplinary teaching, research and public affairs activities (in global studies). Accordingly, the Center would undertake various activities, including: Internationalizing the University's Curriculum, the promotion of interdisciplinary teaching in global studies, the promotion of interdisciplinary faculty

research in global studies, the promotion interdisciplinary student research in global studies, Visiting Fellows Program, public affairs programs, community outreach and publications.

### **Internationalizing The University's Curriculum**

The Center for Global Studies will work with the various colleges and academic departments in internationalizing GVSU's curriculum. This would include the designing of new courses and the revision of existing ones in the offerings of the various colleges and departments. This would be a collaborative effort in which the various colleges and academic departments will play the "lead role."

### **Interdisciplinary Teaching in Global Affairs**

The Center through its various programs will serve as the forum for the promotion of interdisciplinary teaching in global studies. This would include the design and implementation of "team taught courses" in global studies.

### **Interdisciplinary Faculty Research in Global Studies**

The Center through its various programs will serve as the hub for the promotion of interdisciplinary research in global studies. This would include the designing and implementation of various initiatives that are intended to promote and enhance interdisciplinary research in global studies.

### **Interdisciplinary Student Research in Global Studies**

The Center through its constituent programs will undertake various activities designed to foster graduate and undergraduate student research in global studies. The activities would include: an annual student research conference in global studies; a faculty-student mentoring program in global studies; and student research fellowships

that would enable student fellows (graduate and undergraduate selected on a competitive basis) to conduct research in the Center's various programs for a semester.

### **The Visiting Fellows Program in Global Studies**

The Center will establish a fund that will support a number of visiting fellows, who would work in the Center's various programs for an academic year or semester. Also, the visiting fellows, depending on their qualifications, could teach (a course each), give lectures in courses in the various colleges and academic departments of GVSU and to community organizations and participate in the activities of the Center and its programs. The visiting fellows would be chosen by the Center's various programs. The number of visiting fellowships per academic year would depend on funding. The visiting fellows may be academics or practitioners in global studies based in the United States or abroad.

### **Public Affairs Programs**

The Center will undertake various public affairs programs, including conferences, a lecture series (four Center-wide lectures per academic year—two per semester), global studies roundtable series (these would be panel discussions on various global issues), global studies research forum series (this would serve as an outlet for faculty members to share their research activities in global studies with the GVSU community) and the student global issues forum—this would be a student-led activity involving the discussion of various global issues.

### **Community Outreach**

The Center and its various programs will undertake activities in the Greater Grand Rapids Community. These activities would include: an annual summer institute in global

studies for area high school studies; an annual summer institute in global studies for area elementary, middle school and high school teachers of foreign languages and social studies; a global studies speakers bureau that would make the global studies expertise of GVSU's faculty, staff and students available to various community groups for lectures, etc; and a Model United Nations Program for area high school students. In addition, the Center could establish formal partnerships with area businesses, community organizations and schools.

### **Publications**

The Center will have various publications that would collectively serve as outlets for the dissemination of information. The publications would include the following:

**.The Journal of Global Studies (or another name):** The journal will publish peer-reviewed articles on the various aspects of global studies. The journal would be managed by an editor with the assistance of an editorial board.

**.The Global Studies Monograph Series:** The series will serve as an outlet for the publication of manuscripts (longer than normal journal articles and smaller than book length manuscripts) on various aspects of global studies.

**. Newsletter:** This would serve as a medium for the dissemination of information about the activities of the Center, its constituent programs and University-wide teaching, research and public affairs activities in global studies.

**.Faculty Research and Teaching Opportunities in Global Studies:** This would be a monthly publication that would disseminate information about grants, fellowships and teaching opportunities in global studies.

## **RELATED ISSUES**

This section of the concept paper addresses some of the related issues that are germane to the proposed Center for Global Studies. Some of the issue can be addressed in the short, medium or long-term.

### **New Area and Functional Studies Programs**

Given the availability of faculty expertise and interests and the current trends in global affairs, the three new programs need to be established: 1) Area or Regional Studies---European Studies Program; and 2) Functional or Thematic Studies---a) International Development Studies Program and b) Conflict and Peace Studies Programs

### **The Expansion of the East Asian Studies Program**

The current East Asian Studies Program needs to be expanded into a new Asian Studies Program. The rationale is that the current East Asian Studies Program is a sub-regional unit that focuses only on few countries in Asia, while leaving out others such as India.

### **The Creation of a Global Studies Major**

Given student interests and the current developments in global affairs, new bachelors and masters' degree programs in global studies need to be established.

#### ***The Proposed Bachelors Degree Program in Global Studies***

The proposed bachelors program in global studies would replace the current International Relations Major housed in the Department of Political Science. The major could be structured as follow: Every student majoring in Global Studies would have to fulfill the following requirements:

1. General Education Courses

2. Concentrations: Each major would select an area of concentration---an area or region (Africa, Asia, Europe or the Middle East) or a functional or thematic area (International Development or Peace and Conflict Studies) ---in which he or she would take the major courses (36 hours).
3. Capstone Senior Seminar in Global Studies.

### **The Proposed Masters Degree Program in Global Studies**

The proposed M.A. Degree Program in Global Studies would consist of a total of 36 credit hours to be distributed as follow:

1. Core Course---a course in research methods (3 credit hours)
2. Concentrations: Each student would concentrate either on an area (a region) or a function (a theme) (21 credit hours).
3. Electives (6 credit hours).
4. A Thesis (for which a student would receive 6 credit hours). Students would choose not to write a thesis would be required to complete 6 additional hours of elective courses.

### **Administrative Matters**

Various administrative matters would need to be addressed for the effective operation of the Center. They include the following:

1. Changing the title of the head of the Center's constituent programs from "Coordinator" to "Director." This change would place the heads of the Center's various programs on par with their colleagues at other universities and those in the Padnos International Center.

2. **Staffing:** The Center would need an office coordinator and at least two secretaries for the main office and the constituent programs.
3. **Office Space:** There would be the need for office space for the main office of the Center, including the offices of the Center's Executive Director and staff and the various programs (each program should have an office).
4. **Budget:** The Center would need an annual operating budget, including the budgets of its constituent programs.

### CONCLUSION

Grand Valley State University has a "golden opportunity" to become a leader in global studies. For example, it has the faculty expertise that could make it a model for research, teaching and public affairs in global studies. Significantly, this opportunity can be realized through the demonstration of the requisite administrative will and the provision of the resources that are needed to support the establishment and subsequent operation of a Center for Global Studies.