



GVSU Internationalization Task Force
2012-13 ACE Internationalization Lab

Global Learning at GVSU

Executive Summary

GVSU faculty has long valued global learning, and has demonstrated that commitment in the General Education program. GVSU's Internationalization (IZN) Task Force (www.gvsu.edu/internationalization) has worked since fall 2012 to create a strategy to improve student global learning. Now, the IZN task force asks the GVSU faculty to consider doing two things:

1. Update the specific goals of the GenEd Cultures courses—especially the World Perspectives designations -- since that requirement has not been revised in over 13 years.
2. Support a plan that assures each and every GVSU undergraduate major will intentionally provide global learning opportunities for students.

Global Learning at GVSU

In this document, we explain global learning, why it is important for university graduates in general and GVSU students in particular, and suggest ways to strengthen it within GVSU's undergraduate degree programs.

What is Global Learning?

Global learning is a critical analysis of and engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people's lives and the earth's sustainability. Through global learning, students should

1. *Become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences*
2. *Seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities*
3. *Address the world's most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably*
--Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U),¹

¹ Source: Global Learning VALUE Rubric; aacu.org; 2013

More concisely, global learning is:

*"...the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students acquire through a variety of experiences that enable them to understand world cultures and events; analyze global systems; appreciate cultural differences; and apply this knowledge and appreciation to their lives as citizens and workers."*²

--American Council on Education (ACE)

In order to develop a definition particular to GVSU, the Curriculum Sub-Committee of the IZN Task Force created the "GVSU Definition of a Globally Educated Student," which can be found as Appendix II at the end of this document.

Global Learning in GVSU General Education

Since 1989, the GVSU faculty has mandated in GVSU's required curriculum that every student complete at least one course from Group B of the College Section in the GenEd program: a course focusing on "Foreign Culture and Multicultural Approaches."³ A second course was added to the universal Global Learning requirement after the GenEd revision in 2000. Now, all students must complete two Cultures courses—one on World Perspectives, and the second on U.S. Diversity. This is the current home for global learning in GVSU's curriculum. For many students, it is their only exposure to global learning.

The faculty General Education committee has crafted a GE curriculum to achieve student learning outcomes that align with the LEAP goals generated by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U). See the Appendix, attached, for details on LEAP goals. Employers want graduates who have achieved the LEAP goals and global learning goals. This was confirmed by an extensive employer survey conducted for the AAC&U.⁴ Indeed, 96% of respondents rated intercultural skills as "important," with 63% rating those skills as "very important" (p. 6).

GVSU Programs That Integrate Global Learning

Many Bachelors of Arts degrees directly address global learning. They require that students take several courses that teach the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success in diverse and global careers. Majors include language degrees offered by the Department of Modern Languages & Literatures, Chinese Studies, International Relations, International Business, Anthropology, and others. Minors programs offered by the International Area Studies in Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies also address global learning goals. Students in Middle East Studies, Latin American Studies, and similar programs are exposed to significant global learning. The proposed major in Global Studies is designed to provide global learning to its students.

² From "Definition of Global Learning," in *At Home in the World: Bridging the Gap Between Internationalization and Multicultural Education*. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 2007. p. 9.

³ Source: Grand Valley State University Catalog, 1989-1990

⁴ Hart Research Associates. "It takes more than a major: Employer priorities for College Learning and Student Success." Online survey results. 10 April 2013. http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/2013_EmployerSurvey.pdf

The ITC (Intercultural Training Certificate) program offers students of all majors a pathway to global learning. It is an elective program that has been welcomed by many employers because it provides professional development to help people be successful working with diverse teams and clientele. See www.gvsu.edu/itc.

Other, less intuitively obvious GVSU programs also foster global learning. The Padnos School of Engineering prominently features global learning, noted in Goal Six of its strategic plan. Objectives include targets for high-impact student experiences outside the USA, increased international student enrollment, and a more internationalized engineering curriculum. The IZN Task Force believes that all GVSU undergraduate programs should have global learning goals in their curriculum, to meet GVSU's goal of graduating globally competent individuals.

What Next?

Many GVSU students will not elect a major that is rich in global learning goals, nor the ITC program. For these students, the curricular home for global learning occurs in two areas:

1. The General Education Program, specifically, the Cultures requirement.
2. Their Major curriculum.

The IZN task force asks the GVSU faculty and campus community

1. Update the specific goals of the GenEd Cultures courses—especially the World Perspectives designations – because that requirement has not been revised in over 13 years.
2. Support a plan so that every GVSU undergraduate major intentionally provides specific global learning for students.

Revised 11 October 2013

Mark Schaub, on behalf of IZN Task Force

APPENDIX I: LEAP Goals and Global Learning

The connections between LEAP goals and Global Learning are detailed on the AACU website [<http://www.aacu.org/meetings/global/index.cfm>], and summarized below

Calls that invoke the U.S. desire to remain a “global leader” and workforce demands for collaborative understanding and skills serve as constant reminders that global learning matters greatly in the twenty-first century. Yet much more remains to be done if students’ demonstrated global knowledge and engagement are to become essential to work on campuses and essential to national accountability frameworks in higher education.

How do colleges and universities ensure that a liberal education prepares students—with the help of educators, scholars, and researchers at home and around the globe—to meaningfully test their deepening knowledge and developing skills against the big, complex questions and urgent challenges that transcend boundaries and invite collaboration? How and where are students learning about the cultural and geopolitical contexts in which these urgent challenges exist? As advances in technology, communications, and trade connect people and resources across great distances, what are the concomitant implications for both personal and social responsibilities for the common good? What efforts are underway to address questions of diversity and equity as students explore contested definitions of the common good through global learning? How is the concept of “Global Commons” understood and differentiated from multiple vantage points and what is its role in global learning? And how can we leverage our efforts to articulate the theory and practice of global learning in order to reimagine the dominant—and still largely Western—structures and designs of undergraduate education?

AAC&U offers the [LEAP Principles of Excellence](#) to help campuses frame global learning to:

Aim High—and Make Excellence Inclusive

Give Students a Compass

Teach the Arts of Inquiry and Innovation

Engage the Big Questions

Connect Knowledge and Choices and Action

Foster Civic, Intercultural, and Ethical Learning

Assess Students’ Ability to Apply Learning to Complex Problems

APPENDIX II: Definition of Globally Educated Student

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Preamble

Our world is characterized by continuous change and immediate access to information, domestic and international, where events in one country can affect events in others. Against this backdrop, globally educated students will promote diversity and global responsibility, foster relationships across national boundaries, and understand, appreciate, and harness the universal about all people and the specific characteristics of individual peoples.

Definition

Globally educated students are students who have internalized the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to operate effectively in an interconnected changing world of diverse ethnicities, religions, languages, institutions, and cultures.

Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Supporting Global Education

Globally educated students have acquired **knowledge** of:

- global issues, processes, trends, and institutions, such as economic and political interdependency among nations; environmental-cultural interaction; and global governance bodies
- other cultures (beliefs, values, perspectives, practices, and products) besides their own
- the relationship between local and global issues
- the perception and practice of their intended field (academic/professional) in different cultural contexts and the placement of their own culture in global and comparative contexts.
- the effect of cultural differences on perceptions and behaviors

These students possess the **skills** to:

- interpret issues and situations from more than one cultural perspective
- use knowledge, diverse cultural frames of reference, and alternative perspectives to think critically and solve problems
- adjust to and cope with unfamiliar and challenging situations without compromising their core ethical standards
- adapt their behavior to interact effectively with those who are different
- maintain or improve their language abilities and identify and use information from other languages and/or countries - that is, they employ:
 - language skills to enhance learning in other academic areas
 - the study of a foreign language as a window to cultural understanding
 - learning in other academic areas to enhance language and cultural knowledge

- technology to participate in global exchange of ideas and information

Globally educated students demonstrate **attitudes** that allow them to:

- accept cultural differences and manage cultural ambiguity
- resist cultural stereotyping
- learn from others who are culturally different from them
- be flexible, open to change, and pursue personal growth
- seek out international or intercultural opportunities