

2y2d Globalization Focus Groups: Summary and Recommendations  
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Process: From May-September 2010, Marisa Nickle and I conducted seven focus group sessions with groups of faculty, staff, and administrators groups in which a total of 92 faculty, administrators, and staff participated. In addition, a survey on the UW's global future was sent out to 35 people from a broader range of selected faculty, administrators, staff and students, and the 9 responses received were also incorporated into this report.

Note that the timing of the process, which took place largely over the summer, made it difficult to survey student opinion. We therefore plan to survey students about international issues over the course of fall quarter, and add their feedback as an addendum to this report.

The UW as a Global Public University in 2032: Key Themes

Several themes emerged consistently when discussing the global future of the University of Washington over the next two decades:

- Participants in the focus groups and survey are convinced that the globalization of our research, education and training programs will only intensify over time. Our long history of deep engagement in international affairs is seen as a key strength of the university, which should be leveraged more effectively going forward. The expectation is that UW activities in Asia, Latin America, and Africa are likely to expand further; at the same time, longstanding ties to European institutions and study abroad sites are unlikely to diminish substantially in the next two decades. Hence the UW, like most of our peer institutions, will increasingly become a genuinely global public university.
- The UW is seen as having legitimate claims to world leadership in several key arenas of global research, especially the fields of global health, global environment, and global communications and information technologies. The UW's "brand recognition" in these spheres should be promoted further in the years ahead.
- Several people mentioned the UW's high levels of student participation in study abroad as a major achievement, and many wish to expand study abroad numbers to an even higher level.
- UW faculty and staff emphasize the importance of a genuinely collaborative approach to international partnerships, in which each side learns from the other in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The UW is seen as very effective in developing such reciprocal partnerships abroad.
- The recent work of the Global Support Project and the Office of Global Affairs to coordinate UW's response to global travel emergencies, to streamline legal registration abroad, and to create databases of UW global partnerships and activities appears to be widely appreciated, both here on campus and at peer institutions. Participants encourage further efforts along these lines.

- Participants were proud of the UW’s breadth and depth of foreign language offerings. The importance of foreign language capacity for effective international engagement was emphasized by many.
- Nearly every focus group raised the issue of space as an obstacle to effective collaboration among diverse globally-oriented programs at UW, and several participants frequently suggested that finding donor support for a new campus building to house a number of them in a single location would be an inspiring 2Y2D goal.

In general, the UW is seen by participants as an institution that provides “global public goods” to the world community—and this is deeply valued across the UW.

### Surviving the Crisis over the Next Two Years: Key Themes

While enthusiasm for increased global engagement at the UW over the next two decades was palpable and widespread, UW faculty, administrators, staff, and students are also extremely concerned about the potentially damaging effects of recent and upcoming budget cuts, even while they understand that such cuts are inevitable and necessary during the current crisis. Participants expressed several key fears about such cuts:

- Several participants worried that the generally low indirect cost rates allowed by funding agencies that support global research, education and training—including the Gates Foundation, NSF IGERTs, NIH Fogarty Grants, Title VI Grants from the U.S. Department of Education, and so on—might prove problematic under the UW’s new system of activity-based budgeting. In particular, the problem of finding subsidies from Deans in UW schools and colleges to cover the potential gap between such low indirect costs and the new central tax on expenditures, especially in the current budget climate, stood out for many as a serious concern.
- Some participants expressed anxiety about the new visa fees required for hosting non-matriculated international graduate students under the VISIT and VISER programs, and worried that such policies would undermine reciprocal research ties between the UW and foreign academic partners.
- Faculty worried that budget cuts might imperil the genuinely interdisciplinary collaborations across the full range of UW departments, schools, and colleges that are crucial to success in global academic partnerships. In particular, those who work on international issues in the social sciences and humanities felt that UW does not sufficiently appreciate the importance of their work.

Participants also suggested several creative ways to raise additional revenues by leveraging the UW’s resources and reputation in the global arena:

- There was an overwhelming consensus that the UW should prioritize cultivation of international alumni as a future fundraising source, given the high status and deep loyalty of many prominent Huskies overseas. Participants emphasized that outreach to UW overseas alumni might be coupled with offerings for professional and continuing education specifically tailored to them. Such outreach, too, would

- likely further UW's institutional partnerships with the many prestigious foreign academic institutions where UW alumni now work.
- A general consensus also emerged that the UW should welcome a greater number of international students, both graduate and undergraduate, than at present, which would have a positive effect on the university's bottom line. However, it was emphasized that doing so would also surely place additional burdens on overstretched UW staff in admissions, advising, students services, and so on; participants therefore suggested that a portion of the revenues coming from increased international student matriculation at UW be devoted to alleviating these staffing burdens. The idea of founding of a "UW International House" to ease the problem of finding housing for international students—perhaps as part of the "UW Global Center" many would like to see built somewhere on campus—was raised by several individuals. Such an enterprise might in time be revenue-generating, recouping the rental income that now goes to local private landlords.
  - Participants were enthusiastic about the idea of providing more distance learning content to international users, some of which could be provided on a fee basis in coordination with the Office of Professional and Continuing Education. Indeed, providing training in such fields as global health, environmental science, or information technology through distance learning might in some cases help to ameliorate the "brain drain" from the developing world that is sometimes exacerbated by physical travel to the United States for study. At the same time, participants emphasized the need for careful oversight and quality control to ensure that the UW's rigorous admissions standards and criteria for certificate and/or degree completion are in no way weakened as distance learning programs expand. (There was rather less enthusiasm for efforts to open up "branch campuses" abroad, as several peer institutions have recently done; the track record of such efforts, both financially and intellectually, has tended to be mixed at best.)
  - Several people suggested topics for fee-based executive training seminars that could be covered by UW personnel and marketed to business executives and other customers, by leveraging the university's growing international reputation as a center for excellence in such fields as global health, global development, information technology, and international policy.
  - A desire was expressed for more effective communication from the UW central administration about funding opportunities in the international sphere, which might facilitate faculty efforts to raise money for global projects independently.

### Summary

The 2Y2D Globalization discussion highlighted the central importance of global engagement to the University of Washington's strategic vision and values for many UW faculty, administrators, staff, and students. The UW enjoys an excellent reputation as a global university, ranking in the top 25 of several prominent rankings in this field. A particularly positive conclusion that came out of the 2Y2D process is that a number of key global activities at UW—including study abroad, the Rome Center, distance learning, many international research collaborations, executive training programs, UW alumni tours, international alumni advancement, and

international student admission—can in principle become either self-sustaining or potentially revenue generating. With sufficient care and planning, therefore, it should be possible to limit cuts to core administration and staffing in this area by coupling them with further expansion in revenue-generating areas wherever possible.