

Final Report
Title VI Grant for
College of the Atlantic International Studies
Program:
“Doing Human Ecology in International Studies”,
2004-2007

Submitted by Project Director:
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Abstract

The purposes of this Title VI project are: 1) to make our international studies program more effective and systematic at providing significant international experiences with the a long range goal of providing these to 100% of our students and 2) to develop a more systematically organized and coordinated curriculum for intermediate and advanced students so that they can achieve a higher level of professionalism in their internships, residencies, senior projects, graduate studies, and careers.

Funded, very successful activities focused on three key objectives:

- 1) Review and revision of all international studies and foreign language offerings through Faculty Curriculum Development Seminars. These included multi-day workshops in the summer and several afternoon sessions each trimester in which faculty meet in plenary with consultants or other visitors or work in task groups focused on particular curriculum projects.
- 2) Development of 29 new courses in International Studies (10 of which were in foreign languages and another 13 of which were at the intermediate to advanced level) and significant revision and enhancement of four other courses. The new courses include ones that offer new integrated programs abroad in Tobago, Guatemala, and Mexico; as well as, shorter programs in Labrador, Italy, Quebec, the Caribbean, Montreal, and Sri Lanka.
- 3) Hiring of a full-time language professor to teach courses in foreign languages in Spanish and French and to offer course units of coaching and support for lesser-taught languages using self-instructional language program models.

Work towards these objectives yielded a variety of very positive spinoff results including the development of a new program in International Environmental Diplomacy, plans for a international residency program for on-campus housing, and a broad based and well institutionalized commitment to the ongoing internationalization of the COA faculty and curriculum.

Objectives

Describe each of the objectives of the project and the progress made towards those objectives during the current reporting period.

Required field

(limit 5,000 characters and spaces)

Objectives

We are especially pleased with our dramatic progress on all 3 principal Objectives.

Objective 1. Review and revision of all international studies and foreign language offerings through Faculty Curriculum Development Seminars.

In 2005, 15 faculty continued the successful curriculum development seminars of the previous year with a full day plenary retreat in the summer, 2 days of small group work, and then seminar sessions twice a term through 05-07, These were enriched by broad based discussions of alternative language learning models with applicants for the new language position. Bi-weekly meetings of the International Studies Committee maintained continuity to discussions and secured implementation of resulting plans.

In years 2 and 3 of the grant we put into application in courses, tutorials and programs abroad the common understandings of appropriate criteria and pedagogy for advanced international studies across the curriculum which we had developed in the first year as well as a draft leadership manual for programs abroad, a clear definition and plan for our new language program, a more coordinated plan for intermediate and advanced course offerings in international studies, and new strategies for providing ongoing funding for programs abroad.

These patterns of ongoing review, planning and program development and implementation have now become internalized and institutionalized in the fabric of the College's committee structures, forums, annual International Studies retreats and All College Meetings.

Objective 2. Develop new courses & revise others.

In the second and third years of the grant, we were able to complement the 12 new and 3 newly revised courses developed in the first year with 29 new international studies courses, 10 of which are foreign language courses and a number of which were integrated in programs abroad in Guatemala, Mexico, Tobago, Canada and Sri Lanka as well as international treaties' Conferences of the Parties included in our International Politics and Policy program.

These include new courses that strengthen and integrate our intermediate and advanced offerings in International Politics and Policy: Introduction to Global Politics, Global Environmental Politics, Politics of the World Trade Organization, International Wildlife Policy and Protected Areas. Tutorial: The Convention on Biological Diversity, War & Terrorism: Advanced Seminar in Peace Studies, China on the World Stage, Europe: Old Continent in a New World, Gender in Global Perspective

They also include new courses that strengthen intermediate and advanced work in our field based study abroad programs in Mexico and Guatemala: Ethnography and Fieldwork, Cultura Maya, Advanced Projects in Human Studies, Writing It Up: From Fieldwork to Final Draft, Nationalism, Colonialism and Other Imagined States, Histories of Power, Intensive Spanish Immersion - Guatemala, Intensive Kaqchikel Maya, and Advanced Applied Spanish I.

In the second year of the grant the Guatemala related courses were offered as part of a very successful intermediate to advanced program of field based study in the winter term abroad.

In that same year we were able to develop and offer a new model for a term long Winter Term Spanish Immersion program in Merida, Mexico, including previously developed language courses and two new ones: Advanced Spanish I and Immersion Practica in Spanish and in Yucatan.

Courses designed to draw students in to international studies or broaden their interests were also developed: Watching Globally and Polar Ecology and Exploration. The program abroad on the Human Ecology of Newfoundland (This Marvelous, Terrible Place) was offered very successfully in the spring of 2007. A course developed on Botany in Sri Lanka is scheduled for fall of 2008.

With our new language professor, we were also able to strengthen Spanish offerings at the intermediate and advanced level and launch a program in French with Introductory French I and II and French Conversation and Applications. We also initiated a program in other and

less commonly taught languages with a course in Fundamentals of Second Language Acquisition, individualized learning programs and Introductory Beginning Japanese I.

Objective 3. Hire full-time language professor

We were very fortunate to have Dr. Camille Van de Berg join our faculty in the third year of the grant to head our program in Spanish, French and Less Commonly Taught Languages using a variety of methods in second language acquisition. She has already added 6 courses to our curriculum, is developing others, and, most importantly, has made great progress on developing and implementing a broad range of strategies for enriching student options for studying their many languages of interest. They are now pursuing study not only of French, and Spanish but Russian, Arabic, Kachikuel Maya, Kiswahili, Japanese, etc.

Adjustments to Project

For any planned activity that was scheduled to take place during the current reporting period, but did not, explain the circumstances. Indicate whether the activity will be rescheduled or if and how grant monies will be reprogrammed.

Required field

(limit 5,000 characters and spaces)

All of the planned activities for the grant were completed. The one activity which had been previously delayed was the hiring of a new language professor. Though a full search was mounted in the first year, it was not successful. The granting of a one year no-cost extension enabled us to mount a second full search in the second year of the grant and successfully hire someone for the third, extension year. With this we were able to not only complete the goals of the grant but continue on in further development of significantly more programs abroad and international studies courses than we had originally envisioned in the grant.

Accomplishments

Describe project accomplishments during the current reporting period.

Discuss expected accomplishments that did not occur as planned and explain why they did not.

Required field

(limit 8,000 characters and spaces)

The process of curriculum review, planning and implementation initiated with the grant sponsored Faculty Seminars has accomplished a series of very important steps in program development – and has been institutionalized as an ongoing process which will continue to yield refinements in current curricula and new, innovative programs.

For example, in plenary and small group meetings of the Title VI faculty, leadership for programs abroad was discussed at length. A leadership manual and packet of useful forms was developed for new leaders. New leaders were cultivated for programs in Canada, Guatemala and Tobago -- and new faculty leaders for our annual flagship program Mexico.

Also, very fruitful discussions of the challenges of offering intermediate and advanced work off campus led to the sharing of pedagogical strategies and the development of new ones, the coordination of old courses and the integrated development of a series of new programs abroad. These offer training in the field at advanced levels in public policy (in Tobago and in courses participating in international negotiations such as the Tutorial on Biological Diversity) and in anthropology and history (in Guatemala and Mexico). The discussions also led to the development of 12 new intermediate/advanced courses on campus including, for example, Advanced Projects in Human Studies, Writing It Up: From Fieldwork to Final Draft, Politics of the World Trade Organization, and International Wildlife Policy and Protected Areas, Tutorial: The Convention on Biological Diversity, and War & Terrorism: Advanced Seminar in Peace Studies. These courses and programs have strongly enhanced our offerings in Self Designed Concentrations in International Studies.

Also, the Faculty Seminar process was explicitly expanded, through regular meetings and special sessions of the International Studies Committee to include staff and students. This enhanced the course and program development originally envisioned in the grant. It led to programs that were more centered on student interests, programs that were more affordable for students, and pedagogical approaches more appropriate for their interests in, for example, public policy. It was helpful in developing materials and programs for orienting students for off campus programs and reorienting them on their return.

Discussions with staff and students also led to a very exciting initiative completely unforeseen in the original grant. The College is initiating a International Residency program as part of on campus housing that will integrate extracurricular activities into the student life experiences of students through variations on “language houses” and various international activities. The new campus housing being currently built will have special enhancements for this – e. g. multilingual signage, dorm areas designated for language immersion, etc.

Also, faculty discussions led to the articulation and coordination of courses and studies in International Politics and Policy as a major area and a concentration in International Environmental Diplomacy of a novel and exciting sort – allowing students to do advanced applied work directly involved in the research, lobbying and negotiations occurring around major treaties on biodiversity, climate change and other topics. As our external evaluators noted: “These are exceptional experiences for motivated and engaged students”.

The programs in Tobago and Guatemala each allowed faculty to work closely with students in intermediate to advanced work that they were able to prepare for on campus and follow up on after the program in courses, internships, residencies and senior projects. They proved to be very successful models for achieving our core goal of guiding, coaching and advancing student work at advanced levels in the field. The Guatemala program led to a variety of first rate senior projects. The Tobago program led to an online resource available at: <http://www.coa.edu/html/tobago.htm>

The program in Newfoundland was well subscribed and drew students who were experiencing study abroad for a first time, providing a taste for its challenges and possibilities and some basic training and confidence building to prepare them for future work. Faculty also developed internship opportunities in marine biology through the University of Padova in Italy and AGOASIS in Norway.

Our flagship annual introductory program in Human Ecology in Mexico was strengthened significantly by adding a Oaxaca component which provided a broader base for understanding the diversity of Mexican culture and landscape and for opportunities for internships and other advanced studies. The introduction of the new Winter Term Spanish Immersion Program in Merida, Mexico offered opportunities for more in depth, advanced Spanish work and for creating a more sustainable model for working with our colleagues in Mexico and staffing our programs abroad by drawing on faculty from Merida.

We have been able to further strengthen our introductory and intermediate offerings in international studies with other courses not originally envisioned in the Title VI grant by drawing on visiting and adjunct faculty who have developed very successful courses on Watching Globally: An Introduction to Viewing World Cinema, China on the World Stage, Europe: Old Continent in a New World, and Gender in Global Perspective.

The hire of a new professor who is from Sri Lanka has also enabled us to enrich the Economic Botany course through his international expertise and, more importantly, to develop a study abroad program in Sri Lanka which will be offered in the fall of 2008. We also have faculty currently developing programs in London/Paris and in Italy which are scheduled to be introduced in the 2008-2009. These are designed to provide international experiences in the arts and humanities in European settings.

The development of our program in second language acquisition was delayed initially by difficulty finding the right professor to head it up, but once we were able to, it began to develop wonderfully. Spanish offerings on campus have been added to allow students to continue in the language every term and move to the most advanced levels. Sustained offerings in French are also offered. Both programs are proving very popular.

Professor Van de Berg has also developed a new course on “Fundamentals of Second Language Acquisition” to help students understand how to learn whatever language they might choose and provide them with the appropriate pedagogical frameworks and resources to pursue those languages. Since 20% of our student body is from abroad and speaks over 30 languages and a high percentage of our students go abroad on internships, residencies and senior projects in which they would like to work in local languages, we have wanted to develop a program that empowers them to pursue all of these. Professor Van de Berg brings a wide expertise in languages and language learning and is systematically exploring, reviewing and adopting a wide variety of strategies and resources that have been developed at schools like Drake University and affiliates of the National Association for Self Instructional Language Programs (NASILP). These include the use of CD and DVD materials, materials available online, peer tutors made available by our international student body, independent studies, tutorials and classes using locally available teachers, and immersion programs and programs abroad through offered by other Colleges. We are quite delighted with the very broad range of languages (Arabic, Russian, Kiswahili, Maya, Japanese, etc.) in which students have already begun to

work and with the very significant number of students who have been able to pursue these kinds of opportunities.

Exemplary Activities

Identify and describe any exemplary activities that took place during the current reporting period as a result of having the grant.

Required field

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The Faculty Seminar process led to articulation of the curriculum in other important ways. While COA has no majors and students design their own concentrations, frameworks for doing so can be very helpful both to students and their advisors. One faculty group developed a framework in International Politics and Policy which now provides a coordinated set of introductory, intermediate and advanced courses for students in this area. Very significant student interest, especially in treaty negotiations, has led to a more specific concentration of courses in International Environmental Diplomacy which has enabled students to do advanced work in this area, not only in study but in applications – taking part in a variety of ways in international treaty negotiations in Nairobi, Brazil, New York and elsewhere. This is a quite exciting development. Students become delegates credentialed with international NGOs like Greenpeace or serving as UN Youth Delegates so that they can actually offer testimony at Conferences of the Parties. They also participate by lobbying in a wide variety of ways, serving as research staff, working with community based groups in Brazil and Mexico to lobby their nations' delegates, and directly lobbying other delegates at the conferences. Professors Doreen Stabinsky and Ken Cline work with cohorts of students to design tutorials, classes, independent studies, internships and senior projects that enable them to research the treaty topics and negotiation processes over a series of terms so that they are able to achieve a very high level of competence and take part in effective ways that give even more global significance to the College's motto of "Life Changing, World Changing". The College has become a model for this kind of student work and is seeking funding to disseminate it and support it at other colleges as well.

At the suggestion of our Title VI program officer, we explored ways to insure that new programs abroad would not undermine the annual

introductory program abroad in Spanish. This led new, unanticipated study abroad program, the Winter Term Spanish Immersion Program in Merida, Mexico, using our native language faculty member from there, Karla Peña, as the director. With training and support she was able to develop a 14 week program of complete Spanish immersion which proved to be exceptionally effective and popular. It has now become a biennial program. Besides offering students intensive work in Spanish, it also offers other COA faculty the opportunity to take part in a study abroad program without having to assume the full responsibilities of directing. This has expanded the pool of faculty who can take part – and develop their own language and program leadership skills.

We are very happy with the progress that has been made on our library holdings and offerings. Our library director, Jane Hultberg, has worked closely with Professor Van de Berg to target library development in language offerings as well as with other faculty to expand offerings in international studies more generally. Judicious choices, internet discounts and shifts to electronic formats in appropriate cases have all served to stretch our book, periodical and audiovisual budget very effectively.

By hosting the offices of the international Society for Human Ecology SHE, hosting its 2006 conference on campus, and participating very fully in it and related conferences in China and Brazil the College has been able to provide students as well as faculty with a rich range of opportunities for contacts and collaboration in human ecology around the world.

In assessing the results of exemplary activities undertaken during the grant, the external evaluators, Howard and Patty Lamson concluded:

“Over the past ten years we have witnessed the transformation of the College of the Atlantic as it has realized its vision of internationalizing the study of human ecology. The latest Title VI grant has helped them to take this vision even further. The college's dedication to the field of human ecology in its many dimensions has developed a kind of faculty solidarity and commitment to the overall internationalization projects and processes. Through this grant the faculty have developed new courses that take the students beyond the introductory levels. The school has also developed pluralistic approaches to off campus experiences, offering models of cultural immersion over an extended period of time to international policy issues such as the United Nations meetings, to something in between such as the model of Tobago.

“The students are curious, independent and self-motivated for the most part. They take pride in describing their accomplishments, and appreciate being agents of their education. They know that they are supported by a faculty that encourages and responds to individual initiative. The marriage is solid and vital.”

Director's Assessment

Provide an overall assessment of the project for the current reporting period.

Required field

(limit 5,000 characters and spaces)

We were able to exceed all our expectations for this grant including, first, a very productive review of the curriculum and implementation of plans to coordinate a systematic set of intermediate and advanced courses and programs abroad that enable students to pursue advanced study with a variety of kinds of faculty support and college resources.

Grant work also led to unanticipated initiatives including new, programs abroad (Winter Term Spanish Immersion in Mexico, Botany in Sri Lanka), the International Environmental Diplomacy program and the on-campus housing initiative in International Residency.

A key measure of success is that we have advanced significantly towards our long term goal of having every graduate have a significant undergraduate international experience. In 2007, 60% of our graduates had some significant experience abroad in a course, internship, residency, senior project, or term at another school. Perhaps more significantly, 30% had more than one such experience and 19% had 3 to 5 such experiences. We are moving to a distinctive model of repeated, increasingly in-depth experience preparing students as effective global citizens and change agents.

Students also pursue multiple foreign languages. They have opportunities to advance their studies in Spanish and French in every term and to define and implement appropriate strategies for studying whatever other language they choose. We are especially happy with the progress our new professor has made in developing a program in second language acquisition that allows students to design pedagogical approaches appropriate to their interests, abilities and target languages. This will continue to be a challenging process for her because it involves so many students and target languages. But our students self select for initiative and resourcefulness and our entire curriculum encourages the development of this. So the talents, expertise and leadership Professor Van de Berg brings serve as potent and effective catalysts to further language study.

The Title VI grant significantly advanced the breadth and depth of leadership among faculty in international studies. It drew 3/5 of our 25 faculty into collaborative work on the curriculum. Of those, 12 have become leaders of programs abroad and 3 others are developing future programs. Also, the new Winter Term in Spanish Immersion has expanded the pool of people who can direct our Spanish programs abroad and insure their long term staffing. We have also successfully cultivated 5 adjunct professors and Lecturers whose courses enrich our international and language courses in significant ways.

The process of revising our curriculum and introducing new initiatives in international studies is now institutionalized throughout the College in ways that make it a very dynamic, novel, effective model institution for internationalizing undergraduate education. Besides regular curricular coordination and the ongoing development of courses and programs, we also are pursuing grants to support International Environmental Diplomacy and the addition of faculty and resources in African and Asian studies and programs in Italy, London and Paris.

We continue to have healthy discussions and debates about central concepts – e. g. what is the difference between “international”, “cross-cultural”, and “global” education and what roles should these ideas play in defining our mission? We also continue to search for new ways to fund student travel abroad. We continue to work to balance rotations in the offering of programs and in staffing them, to develop and refine calendar models that integrate study abroad more effectively with on campus life, and to coordinate the timing and content of diverse courses in a systematic way.

Hosting the 2006 conference of the Society for Human Ecology provided an especially effective venue to share the COA pedagogical models with international colleagues and confirm our growing sense that the novelty and effectiveness of what we are doing in human ecology in general and international studies in human ecology in particular provides an important and distinctive model which merits broad dissemination and use at other colleges and universities. This was confirmed by our Title VI external evaluators, Howard and Patty Lamson, who concluded: “Our sense is that COA is now international to the core, and they are small enough to stay closely in touch with one another as they build new opportunities. COA's commitment to its special project of international education has produced some very rewarding and transformative results. . . . We think that COA is ready to jump to the next level and to serve as a model for liberal arts education.”

