Internationalizing the South Bend Campus

Although far smaller in population and resources than either the Bloomington or the Indianapolis campuses, IU South Bend expends a large amount of energy on things international. Its Office of International Programs (OIP) promotes internationalization of the campus through curriculum development, study abroad programs and exchanges, and social and cultural events. It fosters world knowledge and cross-cultural understanding among the students, faculty, and the broader community, and publishes a newsletter and directory of international resources on campus.

Fully one-third of the IUSB faculty has some international expertise, which is increasingly reflected in the curriculum. The International Studies Certificate, created last year, already has an enrollment of more than 30 students. Building on strong faculty resources, IUSB has recently added a Latin American Studies minor.

IUSB faculty have recently won prestigious Fulbright awards. Last year, political scientist John Penikis spent a semester in Latvia. This year, Don Marti of the history department is teaching and conducting research in Kazakhstan.

Also this year, Russian educator Jacob Kolker of Ryazan State Pedagogical University is working with Education's John McEneaney on a global education project as a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence. Kolker heads the English Language department and is deputy director of the internationally known Russian Center for Global Education. He has been at the forefront in introducing global themes into the curricular reform movement in Russia and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union.

Global education's theme-based approach to global issues play increasingly critical roles in education. For example, a unit on health might explore the influences of climate, cultures, and politics on public health. A unit on government might have students simulate "nations" with different political systems and national values, requiring them to address global issues.

OIP administers three summer study abroad programs and is developing new exchanges and affiliations. Its highly successful program in Cuemavaca, Mexico, in which more than 80 students have participated to date, is an intensive five-week summer language and culture seminar where students earn three credits of Spanish and three of social science.

In the professional schools, Nursing has reinvigorated IUSB's long relationship with the University of Ulster with a summer exchange for nursing students. SPEA's Leda Hall is working to create a direct enrollment exchange with the Universidad del Valle de Atemajac in Guadalajara, Mexico.

This year, IUSB's international enrollment went up to 233 students from 61 countries. As cultural ambassadors, they help our office by giving cultural presentations and organizing social events such as the international "Welcome Dinner" for new students, monthly coffee hours sponsored by local businesses, and our annual "Spring Festival."

A crucial part IP's mission is to reach out to the greater South Bend area's various international communities. It sponsors Hispanic poetry recitations involving local poets, attracting hundreds from the Hispanic community. It hosts the annual Diwali and Holi celebrations with the help of the India Association of Michiana. A few years ago, IP sponsored a benefit performance for the children of Rwanda, raising $3,500 donated to local charities. Last year, proceeds from a Chinese New Year Celebration went to the Homeless Shelter. IP also draws local high schools into its activities.

Sustained community involvement comes about through the International Programs Advisory Council, a group of local business and community leaders committed to promoting international education on campus and off.

The 1997-98 year promises to be particularly active since IUSB's new Chancellor, Kenneth L. Perrin, is strongly committed to international programs and is vigorously reaching out to all constituencies. His energy and enthusiasm will assure that IUSB continues to build on what has already become an area of excellence on the campus.

- Gabrielle Robinson
  Director, International Programs