

# THE NISOD PAPERS



An occasional publication dedicated to topics of interest to community and technical college educators.

## Why and How to ‘Globalize’ a Community College

There is a growing mindset that community colleges, grounded in their local communities, are uniquely situated to build students’ global competencies.<sup>i</sup> In this paper, we go a step farther. We believe community colleges have an obligation to bring global thinking to local communities. Global competencies are vital to the success of students, their communities, and their employers who compete locally and globally.<sup>ii</sup>

Global competencies are an array of skills and perspectives that augur success—interest in other cultures, geography, and international events; inquisitiveness about learning opportunities; robust comfort with ambiguity; a grounding in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and design, and math); a willingness to withhold negative judgment about unfamiliar situations; and more. These are universal competencies that help people succeed and prosper in our changing world.

How do community colleges become more global? What approaches are most effective, and how do theories work in practice? We dug deeply into the successes and impediments of one large urban community college in its efforts to introduce global learning to its 90,000-plus students on multiple campuses. We wondered how its experience aligned with the American Council on Education (ACE) model for internationalization, so we began by dissecting the problem.

### Problem: Preparing Students for a Global Future

Twenty years ago, the American Council on Intercultural Education and the Stanley Foundation sponsored a conference boldly titled, “Building the Global Community: The Next Step.” It generated one of the earliest visions of community colleges as agents for preparing our nation for a globally connected future. Its report declared:

*The ‘why’ of global education is, simply put, the survival of our communities. If community college educators care about the communities they serve, global education is an imperative, not an option. Without it, we could become relatively insignificant as individual human beings or as a society . . . Globalizing our students and our communities has direct economic benefit and reduces the inevitable fear created by the ongoing internationalization of business.<sup>iii</sup>*

This position traces back to 1977, when the Board of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (known today as the American Association of Community Colleges) resolved that “international education” should be a part of the community college experience. AACJC issued guidelines, including participating in international conferences and assisting in the “internationalization of American community college curricula.”<sup>iv</sup>

After September 11, 2001, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) amended its statement on international education to include this call to action:

*[T]he citizenry must be prepared to engage in worldwide activities related to education, business, industry, and social interaction. To ensure the survival and well being of our communities, it is imperative that community colleges develop a globally and multi-culturally competent citizenry.<sup>v</sup>*

In 2006, AACC and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) issued a joint statement calling for community colleges to play a vital role in developing the global competencies of their students.

Reams of studies and articles since the end of World War II reported on how best to internationalize institutions of higher education. In the headiness after the war, academic exchanges of faculty and graduate students were coordinated through the Fulbright Program and organizations like the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars (CIES), with an emphasis on the exchange of elite academics and future political leaders. Two-year institutions were largely omitted from the discussion. Internationalization of community colleges still lags behind four-year institutions, but times are changing.

Today, corporate America is increasingly concerned about the lack of student preparedness to join the global workforce—and community colleges are deeply involved with future cohorts of the workforce. With the increasing calls for community colleges to take on global education, to what extent have community colleges met these calls for globalization? What have been the barriers? What have been the successes? And what can be learned and shared from community colleges that have attempted to offer a more global education? To determine the answers to these questions, we began with a review of literature that identified a number of perspectives and strategies on the problem.

## A Common Language

Though the terms are often used interchangeably within the literature, there can be a drastic difference between the “internationalizing” and “globalizing” of community colleges.

*Internationalizing* is often used to describe student and faculty *mobility*, particularly through exchange programs. Internationalizing a community college implies the institution can better compete for international faculty, students, or funding (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). In contrast, *globalizing* community colleges refers to a *student experience* that enhances consciousness of living in a 21st-century “global village.” It implies the process of making globally competent learners. A *global* community college supports student success by enabling students to respond to rapidly changing market conditions—in a market that requires not only math and technology skills, but also the mindset needed to compete and thrive in the highly competitive global economy.

In the course of our research, we found that even institutions that are not highly international—that is, those that lack the resources for significant exchanges or coursework—can nevertheless achieve the goals set forth by AACCC and ACCT for creating globally competent citizens.

## ACE Model for Advancing Global Education

A 2012 survey conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE) found moderate to high involvement in internationalization by nearly one in four community colleges. ACE correlated responses with its comprehensive, six-stage model for internationalization.

### ACE SURVEY OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES 2012<sup>vi</sup>

<u>Stages in ACE's Model</u>	<u>Percent Reporting Initiatives</u>
1. Institutional Commitment/ Have Plans	21%
2. Administrative Structure and Staffing Led by a Senior Administrator	56%
3. Curriculum Development/ Infusion	55%
4. Faculty Policies, Practices, and Funding Steady/Increasing • And Awards for International Activities	47% 6%
5. Student Mobility/ Exchange Programs	44%
6. Collaboration/Partnerships or Guidelines for Developing Partnerships	26%

Community colleges can no longer be insulated from global concerns, nor can students be educated without

some global knowledge and the expectation of living in a global environment.<sup>vii</sup>

## Solution: A Comprehensive Sequence of Initiatives

We used the ACE model to explore a sequence of steps community colleges can take to advance their role in developing their students' global competencies.

- **Institutional Commitment.** Any serious commitment to globalization must be reflected in the college's mission statement and strategic plans. This can be as simple as including statements resembling “Creating global citizens” or “Developing a globally competitive workforce” in the institutional mission. To accomplish this, the college's strategic planning process must include such questions as, “How will we meet the call for developing global competencies?” Or, “Who will educate our community about the value of a globally competent citizenry?”
- **Organization.** Budgets reflect a college's strategic priorities. When institutions develop strategic plans for globalism, they are inclined toward a systems-based perspective. However, colleges should not pit globalization against competing needs for limited budgets and resources, but instead *integrate* globalization into programs, course offerings, perspectives, and the identity of an institution.
- **Faculty and Curricula.** Globalizing an institution is not simply about expanding international exchange programs. While a vital undertaking, the expense of travel unfortunately means that only a small percentage of students study abroad (usually under five percent). Deliberate processes are necessary to bring global perspectives to existing courses and to develop new curricula. Allen asserts that faculty members are the single most critical factor in achieving a more internationalized campus.<sup>viii</sup> They are essential to expanding student global competencies. Strategies must be put in place to engage and reward faculty for their involvement. After all, the faculty is responsible for creating and delivering curricula, framing and conducting research, and promoting interest from students and community partners. Our work suggests that faculty curriculum councils could accelerate the movement by scaling infusion so it fits seamlessly into department and district level efforts.
- **Salzburg Global Seminar.** Colleges that fund faculty to attend the [Salzburg Global Seminar](#) can effectively “leapfrog” into globalism. The annual event in Salzburg, Austria, is a premier opportunity to engage with people from around the world on solving issues of global concern—in education, health, environment, economics, governance, peace-building, and more.

## Solution in Practice: One College Making Progress

To illuminate globalization in action, we completed an interview-based study of a large, urban community college that has answered the call for globalization. We selected this

institution because its president is involved in the process, its faculty attends the Salzburg Global Seminar, and its board of trustees and president were willing to participate in our study. However, to protect the confidentiality of the study participants, we will refer to the college as “Alliance Community College” (ACC). We sought the participants’ candid thoughts on the roles played by ACC’s board, president, administrators, and faculty.

- **Profile of ACC.** Like many community colleges, ACC was founded in the 1960s. Its student population exceeds 90,000 and its operating budget is more than \$400 million. ACC offers degrees for students whose goal is to transfer to an upper-level college or university; a wide range of basic, technical, and career skills; community service programs; and courses for the general public and working professionals. It has more than 650 full-time and 1,300 adjunct faculty members. Its faculty profile is 60 percent white, 20 percent African-American, and 11 percent Latino. Sixty percent of its credit-bearing students are female; 40 percent are male. Forty-two percent of students are white, 20 percent are African-American, 30 percent are Latino, and 6 percent are Asian. The average student age is 26.
- **Methodology.** In order to document factors that influenced ACC’s global education initiatives, we compared their initiatives with the ACE model for internationalization. Altogether, we interviewed 14 people involved with ACC, including four trustees, eight administrators, and two faculty members. We used stratified, purposeful sampling to choose the participants based on the role they played at the college, their previous experience with international education, and their ability to inform the research. We shared transcripts with the participants and invited verification and further reflection. Interviews were then coded and organized into themes and patterns.

- **ACE Model.** Our research coding process yielded 10 themes (bolded and italicized in the figure below) and three sub themes which we correlated with ACE’s comprehensive six-stage model for internationalization. One of our themes, “barriers,” was not noted on the ACE model and therefore not included below. Our questions for ACC leaders focused on successful strategies to advance global education, the challenges they experienced, and the future of their initiatives.

### Institutional Commitment

A simple solution to globalization is to ensure that global initiatives are included in the college’s strategic planning process. One ACC trustee emphasized, “We have to . . . put something in the budget . . . if it’s not in the strategic plan, it’s hard to get things going.”

However, achieving a high level of commitment can be tenuous. For instance, a former ACC mission statement brilliantly referenced “global education.” However, this reference was removed by a staff member who mistakenly believed the phrase conflicted with other information on the college’s website. This sort of slip-up causes people who toil over the precision of a mission statement to cringe. But these things do happen, especially when globalization has not yet been sealed into an institution’s soul.

Study participants largely asserted that the foundation for globalization was in place at ACC, including key programs, policies, and procedures. Some institutional leaders, however, don’t see a connection between globalization and workforce needs.

The interviews revealed disagreement on whether internationalization should be included in the mission statement. Regarding globalization, one ACC trustee said it is “not the mission of the college to internationalize, therefore, it should not be in the mission statement. The goal of creating global citizens would be more appropriate for a four-year institution.”

### FREQUENCY OF ACE THEMES IN ACC INTERVIEWS

<b>ACE Six Stage Model</b>	<b>Themes in ACC Interviews</b>	<b>Number of Occurrences</b>
1. Institutional Commitment	<b>Mission Statement</b>	24
	Strategic Plan	79
	<b>Board of Trustees Programs</b>	80 131
2. Administrative Structure and Staffing	<b>Organizational Structure</b>	54
	<b>Chancellor Leadership</b>	80
3. Curriculum Development	<b>Curriculum</b>	27
4. Faculty Policies and Practices	<b>Faculty</b>	70
5. Student Mobility	Study Abroad	108
	<b>Student Success</b>	36
6. Collaborations and Partnerships	<b>Partnerships</b>	47
	Sister Cities	23
	Salzburg	71

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Others are more prescient about incorporating “creating global citizens” into the institution’s mission and strategic plans, as demonstrated by the following ACC trustee statement:

*I would have said ‘no’ 10 years ago, but . . . all the companies that we have now have [in the community] have a global base . . . Yes, I think it has to be in the mission statement because we get bigger and bigger in our world of seven billion and growing; any companies that are hiring students most likely will have an international office.*

Our research suggests that there is a solution to concerns and conflicts: include global initiatives in the *strategic planning process*. As leaders discuss their concerns, they can adopt a common language—understanding the meaning of *globalization* and its relevance to the needs of the workforce allows for an informed debate about the effects to the communities they serve. Helping ACC is the overwhelming support for globalization it receives from employers in its district. Creating global citizens can only become a reality when it is part of the strategic plan, included in resource allocation and budgets, and has employer involvement.

## Organization

Yet, the interviews at ACC revealed that progress was slow and complicated by organizational issues. While some structures and systems are in place at the college, participants observed that there was room for improvement in the globalization process. One trustee described growing “traction” on globalization: “There’s momentum . . . I think it’s a little bit ‘crawl-walk-run’ . . . We’re more in the ‘crawl’ and ‘walk’ range. We’re not running.”

## Faculty’s Pivotal Role in a More Global Curriculum

Far from a top-down approach, a move toward globalism can unleash and encourage faculty to take bold, relevant steps toward cultivating global competencies in their students. One trustee of ACC characterized the faculty as increasingly ready and enthusiastic, saying they “would embrace any opportunity, whether it be to travel or infuse their curriculum with a global perspective.” Participants also noted the sheer diversity of ACC’s faculty as an advantage. One trustee said that ACC “has an international and diverse faculty and this is very helpful in getting support for international programs.”

## Salzburg Global Seminar

ACC’s faculty development program provides funds for faculty to attend the Salzburg Global Seminar (SGS), as well as [Council for the International Education Exchange](#) (CIEE) workshops. Among nearly all participants in the study, there was broad agreement that attendance at Salzburg and/or sponsoring faculty professional development and study abroad were important to help cultivate faculty support for globalization. “Salzburg is the premier opportunity for faculty,” said one trustee. “It’s always eye opening because

you get to see things from a different perspective . . . [it allows] the faculty to put things in a different context.” ACC also has substantial student participation in their student exchange program. Students that attend are designated as ambassadors and educate other students about the value of a global education.

## Scaling globalism

Generally, at ACC, infusing courses with global concepts occurs course-by-course at individual faculty discretion. Imagine the impact of scaling infusion of global initiatives were it to take place at the department and district level. Led by faculty curriculum councils, we believe such an approach would dramatically enhance internationalization with a relatively modest financial outlay.

## Student Mobility

With an enrollment of 500 international students, ACC has a robust international student recruiting and retention program. ACC’s president has developed and staffed an international office, built exchange programs, and raised funds for study abroad scholarships, including travel to the Salzburg Global Seminar. Some participants viewed study abroad programs as a responsibility of four-year institutions and not community colleges, while others defended offering these programs by emphasizing the impact on student success in the global workplace. One trustee said, “University students are going to study abroad everywhere. And just because you’re in a community college, you should have that same experience . . . we’re a global world now.” Another trustee offered a different view: “The world has gotten so much smaller, but only a small portion of the student body will ever really get to go study abroad.”

The key is “for the curriculum to be reflective of . . . being part of a global society” upon a student’s return from studying abroad. Yet another trustee observed that curriculum infusion often takes a back seat to study abroad: “Most institutions believe that study abroad is really globalizing/internationalizing your institution.” He expressed that serious globalization “is about the curriculum and how you get the faculty to infuse global concepts into the curriculum.”

It hardly seems like these trustees are talking about the same institution—a sign student mobility is still embryonic. Such contradictory comments may reflect a certain hesitation on the part of trustees and administrators—a fear of overcommitting to international programs in various parts of the world, with little control or oversight, as well as a fear of using local funding for international purposes.

Similar to other colleges, student mobility at ACC is often linked to faculty travel. All international travel is approved through a council that includes faculty representatives from each campus. To gain approval for an international experience with students, faculty must submit information related to curriculum, airfare, accommodations, academic and cultural support, and safety/security measures. The

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college encourages faculty to work with their campus representatives for guidance on planning student international travel experiences. Vigorous promotion of opportunities to develop study abroad programs, as well as help with the proposal process, could increase the number of such programs, which might even generate additional revenue for future international ventures.

### Collaboration and Partnerships

Study participants also had significant interaction with the local community, serving on various business and community boards, and developing relationships with city and state officials. Participants felt that the local business community understood the need to prepare students for the 21st-century workforce. One participant, having travelled with the Chamber of Commerce and the Regional Commission, said that the organizations “really all understand a global workforce” and the need to prepare students with global skills to join that workforce. Several participants cited a local enterprise board as important. One said it is the “driver” of economic changes in the community—including globalism.

Participants also frequently mentioned [Sister Cities International](#) as a key community partner. Working with local business and community partners is a key way for ACC to reach out to prospective students—and additional partnerships. There is a sense that Sister Cities and enterprise board relationships are the beginning of a larger collaboration with international organizations.

### Results

A community college’s legitimacy is based on meeting the local community’s market needs. Today, that need includes a workforce of global learners who can compete in the ever-expanding global workforce. To accomplish this, an institution must be flexible, its strategy globally informed, and its leadership attuned to the dynamic needs of the global marketplace.

Community colleges have been slow to initiate and sustain a commitment to global education. Where these programs do exist, however, they are usually championed by chancellors and presidents and, subsequently, not always fully integrated into the teaching, learning, and service mission of the college.

Globalizing the student experience goes beyond international travel and programs. The discussion must move from how to fund study abroad to how to prepare students to be global citizens with a global perspective. Globalization begins with a college’s mission statement and strategic plans. Community college leaders have a commitment to provide the infrastructure and resources necessary to implement, maintain, and sustain a comprehensive approach to globalization. Because this is a significant paradigm shift, the change is not quick and easy. The slow-but-steady tortoise reminds us of the value of persistence when attempting to transform an institution.

In this paper, we documented the progress of globalization

at “Alliance Community College.” Greater success is possible by scaling global infusion to each level of a college’s organization and departments. Led by faculty curriculum councils, we believe such an approach would dramatically enhance internationalization with a relatively modest financial outlay. Making global education a part of defining student success will help college leaders focus on the possibilities for creating global student competencies. For institutional accountability, global learning must be measured, evaluated, and rewarded.

As colleges expand their international footprint—and to avoid objections that could stall progress—we suggest administrators discuss the positive aspects of globalizing the curriculum, work with local employers that have with international operations, and bring international students to campus in order to benefit all students, not just the small percentage that are able to study aboard.

### Conclusion

In 1989, Tom Friedman jolted Americans with the idea that globalism is the central organizing principle of the post-Cold War world in *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*. He popularized the term “glocalization,” the combination of serving and preserving local communities while also globalizing business, social, and political strategies. The world has changed, and we have seen Friedman’s disruptive vision unfold. In his words, “the world is flat.” We are connected in ways most of us never thought possible. “Think global, act local” is more than a slogan; it is an imperative for community colleges as they work to prepare students for the rapidly evolving workplace.

Change is rarely easy. Fortunately, community college leaders needn’t go it alone. Participating in the Salzburg Global Seminar can help college leaders adopt a stronger global mindset. Faculty will likely answer the call and help lead the transformation. Growing numbers of globally-minded local employers will support, applaud, and help guide the change as they express their evolving workforce needs.

Finally, there are the tens of millions of students nationwide who are eager to learn and master new global competencies. They want educational experiences that prepare them to compete in our globally connected future—and it is up to us as community college leaders to provide them with those experiences.

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Visit [Internationalization in Community Colleges Workshop](#) for additional information about preparing students for success in the global economy. This two-part workshop, part

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of the [2017 NISOD conference](#), introduces pathways and resources to help internationalize your community college.

## References

<sup>i</sup> Treat, T. and Hagedorn, L.S. (2013). "Resuscitating the Community College in a Global Context." *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 161, 5-9, Malden, MA: Wiley Periodicals.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> Emphasis added. American Council on Intercultural Education (ACIE) and the Stanley Foundation (1996). Conference Report, "Building the Global Community: The Next Step."

<sup>iv</sup> Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), policy guidelines (1977).

<sup>v</sup> American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), Joint Statement on the Role of Community Colleges in International Education (2001).

<sup>vi</sup> American Council on Education (ACE) survey (2012).

<sup>vii</sup> Treat, T. and Hagedorn, L.S., op. cit. (2013).

<sup>viii</sup> Allen, C. G. (n.d.). *Role of Faculty in International Education*. Retrieved from:

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