From Student Mobility to Internationalization at Home
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Abstract
In today’s interconnected world, a central goal of international education must be to educate students to be productive citizens of not only their country, but of the world. Student mobility – that is, importing international students and exporting study abroad students – is one vehicle of international education. In itself, however, it is inadequate. Further, for student mobility to be effective, it must be imbedded in institutions committed to intentional internationalization that begins at home.

This paper focuses on two aspects of Beloit College’s approach to international education: 1) connecting study abroad and on-campus teaching and learning, and 2) extending international education to all students through the curriculum and co- and extra-curricular activities, in which students serve not only as audience but also as actors. Beloit’s approach relies on a commitment to internationalization at all levels of the campus, a critical mass of international and returned study abroad students, and an office and a committee charged with facilitating internationalization.

Historical Overview
Beloit’s international activities began soon after its founding in 1846 through missionary activities. Faculty and alumni serving as missionaries returned to Beloit to lecture and teach and also sent their children and students to study at Beloit, beginning an on-going practice of enrolling students living in other countries. In this phase of its international history, Beloit College paralleled many other liberal arts colleges, whose interest in foreign countries and cultures was awakened by missionaries who found that to convert people, they needed to understand them.1

Although Dean George Collie in 1924 called for the creation of a world college at Beloit to help settle the world’s ‘racial’ problems,2 the college’s first comprehensive program of international education was put in place in 1960.3 Again, Beloit was not alone in reacting to the horrors of World War II by creating educational programs to foster international understanding.4 The Fulbright Program had already been established in 1946 to foster “mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...”5, while in Japan, Kansai Gaidai University had been established in 1945 to foster a sense of internationalism among its graduates. By 1960, colleges and universities across the U.S. were establishing programs to increase their students understanding of the wider world. Very often, a period of study abroad was included.

Beloit’s liberal education would be “specifically designed to produce enlightened citizens who are more fully aware of man’s common store of knowledge and thought, the interrelationships and interdependence of the aims and aspirations of the nations of the world.”6 This comprehensive program would bring faculty and students from abroad to Beloit, introduce new curricula, add faculty in key disciplines, and send students abroad to study. A World Affairs Center was established to coordinate these activities and to administer a study abroad program.7

A more radical step was taken in 1964, when the Beloit Plan was put in place. Under the plan, all students were expected to undertake part of their education off-campus. Declining enrollments
and financial difficulties led the College to abandon the plan in the 1970’s. However, a commitment to off-campus learning, including study abroad, remained.

In 1989, the College recommitted itself to international education, expressed through the appointment of a full-time director of the World Affairs Center. New study abroad programs, including exchange programs, were established as well as the Center for Language Studies, which provides intensive summer language instruction. International student enrollments increased through efforts on the part of the Admissions Office and the establishment of exchange programs.

During this period, study abroad enrollments once more increased. However, to some degree, the success of the College’s international educational program had come to be measured by student mobility figures. How many students were studying abroad? How many international students were on campus?

As the College again expressed its commitment to international education in its 2001 strategic plan, a decision was also made to reexamine the College’s approach by asking: what are we doing, why are we doing it, and what are we gaining?

**Internationalization at Home**

The concept “Internationalization at Home” was introduced by Bengt Nilsson at the 1999 annual meeting of the European Association for International Education. Nilsson was responding to what he saw as the failure of the European Union’s Erasmus to achieve its objectives of enabling “the higher education sector to adopt new methods and commit itself wholeheartedly to the provision of lifelong learning” in order to educate students for citizenship in a Europe that increasingly would demand new competencies and qualifications in response to increasingly changing needs.

Not only was the Erasmus goal of 10% of European students studying in another European university unrealistic, but the reliance on student mobility as a vehicle for international education left institutions off the hook. Faculty did not need to change what they were doing, the curriculum did not need revision, nor did institutions need to commit resources to internationalization. Further, why were only 10% of the students to benefit? Were the remaining 90% not to be educated for citizenship in a Europe constantly facing new challenges? Were they not to gain the intercultural communication skills that would enable them to effectively interact with people from other countries?

Internationalization at home is an intensely individual matter. That is, each institution will have its own approach, based on its history, mission, location, resources and the composition of its faculty, staff and students. For Beloit College, among others, it means connecting internationalization to the goals of liberal education. At the same time, some commonalities will exist across campuses. No matter where internationalization at home takes place, it will require

- opportunities for faculty and staff development,
- resource development to deliver international education,
- a curriculum rich in international and domestic content, and
- vehicles for the development of intercultural communication competencies (including but not limited to language).

Above all, internationalization must be intentional and purposeful.

**The Beloit Approach to Internationalization**
Beloit College enrolls 1200 students, 9% of whom are international students and 45% of whom will have studied abroad for a semester or academic year before graduation (the 2001 strategic plan calls for an increase in study abroad to 55% of a graduating class). Students in all majors are able to study abroad, and faculty regularly incorporate subject matter from around the world in their teaching.

Following the publication of its strategic plan in 2001, the College, led by the academic dean, began to be more intentional in the approach to international education. A focus on the number of students who studied abroad or who came to Beloit had led to some extent to complacency. Key questions concerned not only whether the College’s approach was adequate, but whether every student was getting an international education, not just those who studied abroad or came from abroad to study at Beloit. Moreover, could it be assumed that study abroad was educational?

In 2001 and 2002, following upon a number of smaller discussions, campus-wide faculty conferences were devoted to the international education. The Office of International Education’s role in supporting campus internationalization was made more explicit. The charge to the Committee on International Education changed to reflect this broader responsibility and its membership increased. For some years, the committee had primarily selected students to study abroad. It would now have greater responsibility for study abroad policy and programs, the preparation of students for study abroad and follow-up upon their return, the integration of international students, and would address curricular issues, faculty and staff development, and other matters related to international education.

In the text below, I concentrate on two aspects of Beloit’s approach to internationalization in order to discuss how Beloit goes about internationalizing at home, to use Nilsson’s term. These are connecting study abroad to on-campus teaching and learning and extending international education to all students through the curriculum and co- and extra-curricular activities. I conclude by discussing some challenges to Beloit’s approach.

**Connecting Study Abroad to On-campus Teaching and Learning**

While a number of reports discuss the long-term benefits to individuals and society of study abroad, in recent years, study abroad has increasingly come under criticism as well. In the *International Educator’s* Winter 2004 edition, Karen Jenkins and James Skelly write that “Education abroad programs are in the main failing to meet the avowed responsibilities to help foster global citizenship.” Among others, Jenkins and Skelly are concerned about the commodification of study abroad, which has led to the development of programs which offer more opportunities for tourism than immersion in the local culture. American students’ poor or non-existent language skills are seen as a further failure to educate for participation in an increasingly interconnected world, as is colleges’ and universities’ failure to determine what they are trying to achieve by sending students abroad. More recently, an article in the *New York Times* reports on study abroad students’ bad behavior abroad, stemming not only in many cases from excess drinking, but also from indifference to local people. Indeed, concern about the quality of study abroad programs led to the establishment of the Forum for Education Abroad, a membership organization whose mission is to “promote the greater good of the field of education abroad,” by “advocating standards of good practice,” “promoting excellence in curricular development and academic design,” and “encouraging outcomes assessment.”

Nilsson’s internationalization at home is useful here. I would argue that unless colleges and universities internationalize at home and study abroad is linked closely to the institution’s academic program, study abroad may fail as a vehicle for international education. First, it may be
reduced to tourism. Second, it may reinforce stereotypes of the host country rather than unpacking them. Third, it may not enable students to understand their relationship to the world, much less understand complex issues. And fourth, it will leave little impact on the institution and the students who do not study abroad.

The College’s approach to study abroad is characterized by the following:

- 45% of the student body studies abroad and the institution hopes to raise the percentage to 55%;
- the College administers 15 programs, enrolling 1/3 of the students who study abroad;
- 12 of the College’s 15 programs are exchange programs, in which Beloit students enroll directly in a partner institution and students from that institution enroll at Beloit College;
- of Beloit’s programs, only one or two per year are directed by a Beloit faculty member;
- Beloit recommends a list of Beloit and non-Beloit programs but does not restrict enrollments to these;
- institutional financial aid applies to study abroad; and
- all study abroad takes place for a semester or academic year.

Beloit’s approach provides opportunities to students in all majors, allows students freedom to choose a program most appropriate to their background, interests and preparation, and encourages students to step away from Beloit for a portion of their studies. It also provides a number of challenges, among them financial, although this is not the subject of this paper. This paper does address the critical task of integrating a diverse program of study abroad with the College’s curriculum. As a small liberal arts college, Beloit can not offer courses each semester on the countries or regions where its students will study. It does not have a language requirement (although 6 and occasionally 7 languages are taught during the academic year and an additional 2 are offered in the summer). Its new pre- and post-study abroad courses are only taught once per year, and can enroll only a small fraction of the students who will study abroad. How then does it connect study abroad to on-campus teaching and learning?

Beloit’s answer to this question is to 1) articulate what we are trying to achieve and how, and 2) provide opportunities for students to prepare for and build on study abroad. Critical to the success of its approach are:

- leadership at the highest level in support of internationalization,
- a broad commitment on the part of faculty and staff to internationalization,
- an Office of International Education and a committee charged with facilitating and encouraging the involvement of the entire campus community,
- the presence on campus of a critical mass of students who have studied abroad or come from a country outside the U.S., and
- the curriculum and co-curriculum described in the next section of this paper.

Thus, in 2002/03, the Committee on International Education drew up a mission statement and circulated it for comment to the faculty. The mission statement reads:
In providing a program of international education, Beloit College aspires to graduate students who will engage other cultures, be sensitive to commonalities and differences among and within cultures, have the ability to understand multiple perspectives, be knowledgeable about global forces, both human and physical, and contribute responsibly to humane and positive change.

These goals are facilitated by a dynamic and comprehensive approach to international education. This approach includes the enrollment and support of students from around the world; study abroad and exchange programs for both students and faculty; a curriculum rich in international and global content; support for faculty, staff and other resource development; the hosting of international visitors; and the encouragement of a campus environment hospitable to international education, including a full range of co-curricular activities.

The mission statement for international education in fact closely connects to the College’s liberal education mission to produce graduates “whose thinking unites reason and knowledge with feeling, sympathy, and commitment” and who “are prepared for intelligent and responsible participation in the contemporary world of action.”

Further, learning goals were developed to inform students that when they study abroad, they are expected to:

- gain new perspectives on their fields of study,
- develop intercultural competencies and communication skills,
- learn others’ perspectives, and
- reflect on their own assumptions and values while abroad.

They are asked to prepare for study abroad through coursework, research, and other experiences and to demonstrate their preparation in a study abroad application and interview.

**Preparation for study abroad.** Beloit students are expected to take responsibility for their preparation for study abroad. They are asked to use campus resources wisely, to choose courses that will prepare them for study abroad, to consult faculty advisors, and to engage in activities on campus and off that will prepare them to live and study abroad. We consider a pre-departure orientation as inadequate preparation, although it is an important part of it. Instead, we emphasize preparation that takes advantage of the educational opportunities available to students who study at Beloit and encourages the maturation of the student. This has meant a shift from considering study abroad as right to study abroad as privilege, and has required informing the campus broadly about expectations, so that the message begins to be conveyed even before a student arrives on campus.

Emphasis is placed on the student demonstrating preparation at the time of application. Thus, the study abroad application uses targeted questions to guide students’ thinking and exploration as they prepare three essay applications. An interview by a member of the Committee on International Education supplements the information gained from the written applications. In broad brushstrokes, we ask students to tell us: “Where are you going?” “Where are you coming from?” “What do you hope to learn and how?” “What will you do when you get back?” These questions are meant to get at knowledge of the country and the academic setting, anticipating how one will integrate into the local community and learn from it, and having an understanding of the difficulties the student may encounter. They also are meant to challenge the student to think
about how their own position as Americans or as international students studying in the U.S. affects how they look at the world.

Students do get rejected when they fail to meet the criteria for participation in study abroad. Sometimes they fail because they do not meet a GPA or language requirement, but other times they fail because they do not know enough about the host country, or do not have a strong academic rationale. In that case, they are often asked to reapply, but to do further research first. Most recently, we have begun to ask students to prepare an annotated bibliography related to their study abroad plans as part of the reapplication process.

The process is labor intensive. Is it worth it? For Beloit College it is. More members of the campus community know what students are aspiring to do when they go abroad. They better understand the array of programs available to students. They know more about where we are succeeding in preparing students for study abroad and where we are not. More students hit the ground running when they arrive at their study abroad site, do more interesting work while abroad, and return as more mature, purposeful and engaged students.

**Reintegration.** More attention is being given today across the U.S. to the reintegration of students upon their return from study abroad. The Global Partners Project, which involves 42 small liberal arts institutions, in June 2004 sponsored a workshop at Birmingham-Southern University devoted to the topic of preparation and reintegration. At some institutions, courses have been established, sometimes mandatory, to help students adjust back to the U.S., make sense of the experience they have had abroad both intellectually and emotionally, and integrate the experience into their on-going lives. Other institutions hold single events, such as reorientation dinners, to facilitate a discussion of students’ experience abroad and their readjustment to the U.S.

Beloit College students are no less in need than any other students of opportunities to reflect, analyze and build on their experiences abroad. At the same time, Beloit students tend to be firmly individualistic and do not want to attend special meetings to address reintegration. While we offer feedback sessions to returned study abroad students, few take up the opportunity, and those who do tend to be the students who have also written the most lengthy and thoughtful evaluations of their programs. Instead, we have found that we need to offer a mix of opportunities for students to reintegrate. Further, these opportunities are intended to help the College evaluate our program of study abroad, give the students an opportunity to reflect and build on their experience abroad, and educate the wider College community. Among them are:

- Written evaluations that allow them to assess their particular study abroad programs, the degree to which they achieved their learning goals and how they did so
- Feedback sessions
- An interdisciplinary course offered each spring called “Study Abroad II: Reflection and Reintegration”
- Opportunities to contribute the experience and knowledge they gained abroad to classroom discussions
- Opportunities to develop academic projects that build on the experience and knowledge
• Co- and extra-curricular activities in which the students can share their experience and knowledge and maintain connections to them, both on campus and off.

• Assistance in planning the next steps in their future whether this will be through fellowships, such as the Fulbright, Marshall, and NSEP; graduate school; Peace Crops volunteering; or careers.

Beloit’s approach relies on the entire campus to assist in reintegration and asks the student to be pro-active in seeking out opportunities. This approach, however, also benefits the campus because it asks students to share their experience in a variety of formats.

Indeed, one of our latest and most successful approaches has been to make the learning that takes place through study abroad more visible by showcasing it in an International Symposium. This day-long event, in which students who have studied in another country become the teachers, was born in a meeting of the Director of International Education with the Chemistry Department about international education, at the end of which a faculty member said, “I want to know what the students do when they are abroad. What can we do about that?” This quickly led to the invention of an international symposium, held each fall, and modeled on a long-standing spring symposium in which students present their research. Classes are cancelled for the day in order for the entire campus community to be able to hear presentations that range from analysis of critical issues, the presentation of research findings, reflections on the experience of engagement with another culture, to panel discussions. Both returned study abroad students and international students are encouraged to participate.

The event accomplishes a number of good things: it lets the wider College community know what students learn while abroad; it provides students an opportunity to analyze their experience and learn how to convey it to an audience often unfamiliar with the subject matter; it demonstrates the intellectual and personal development that can come from study abroad; and it inspires younger students to seek out and prepare for similar opportunities.

**Extending International Education to All Students**

Since 2001, Beloit has increasingly viewed international education as integral to liberal education, and therefore, to its core mission. Therefore, every Beloit graduate should have received an international education, whether or not the student studied abroad or came to Beloit from another country.

International education therefore must permeate the institution, its curriculum and the activities that take place beyond the classroom. In this section I will highlight recent initiatives to become more intentional about how the college delivers international education.

**Curriculum.** Because of its small size, Beloit College encourages the inclusion of international perspectives broadly throughout the curriculum, while providing depth in selectively. To be vital and relevant to today’s world, however, the curriculum needs to be updated regularly. Several initiatives deserve mention:

• **First Year Initiative (FYI)** First year students begin their academic study 10 days before the start of classes in a program of advising, orientation, and teaching called FYI. Organized into seminars led by faculty leaders, FYI continues through the fall semester as one of the students’ four courses. Seminars are conceived of as introducing students to the three emphases in the Beloit College education: interdisciplinary, experiential and international. FYI gives faculty an opportunity to step outside their discipline to
teach new subject matter, and enables students from their first days at Beloit to engage with international perspectives.

- Fall faculty conferences on teaching and learning. As mentioned above, in 2001 and 2002, these conferences focused on international education. In 2003, the focus was on how we prepare students for world citizenship through the curriculum.

- American Association of Colleges and Universities Democracy and Global Citizenship Program. Three academic programs, political science, religious studies and women’s and gender studies, participated in a project to reform their curricula to better prepare their students for engagement in the democratic process and global citizenship.

- Faculty/Staff Development abroad. A small faculty development trip to Russia has led to collaboration in dance with Russian choreographers and dance companies. A Freeman Foundation grant funded-study trip took 12 faculty and staff to Shanghai in August 2004, and new subject matter are already being introduced into courses as a result.

Co- and Extra Curricular Activities. Similar to many colleges and universities, Beloit has a fairly extensive system of clubs and informal activities, some organized by students, others by staff and faculty. As a residential college, it offers a range of housing options, including language houses. What is perhaps unique are activities that extend international education to the campus broadly, outside the classroom. Four major such activities take place each year.

- Weissberg Chair. Through the generous support of a friend of the College, each year the Weissberg Chair brings a distinguished figure with experience in international affairs to the College for a one to two-week residency. The purpose of the residency is to enrich the education of the students and other members of the college community through interaction with a person who has first-hand knowledge of international issues and has played a direct role in international affairs. The chair’s activities during the residency including holding a major public address, visiting classes, making presentations to the faculty and to residents of the city of Beloit, meeting with small groups of faculty, staff and students, and participating in a panel discussion with other experts in the field. Past Weissberg Chairholders include Hanan Ashrawi (Palestinian spokesperson & democracy activist), Carlos Alzugaray (Cuban diplomat, faculty member at Cuban foreign service institute), Alain Destexhe (Belgian Senator and former Secretary-General Medecins sans Frontieres), Roy Gutman (Pulitzer-prize winning journalist, who broke the Omarska "death camps" story), and Dai Qing (Chinese environmental activist noted for opposition to the Three Gorges Dam).

- Theme years. Each year a theme is chosen to tie a variety of campus-wide events together ranging from performances to lectures to museum displays. The topic for the current year grew in part out of the 2003 faculty fall conference and is titled “The Year of World Citizenship, Science and Technology.” Past themes have included the Arts and Human Rights.

- International Education Week. International education week is celebrated worldwide in mid-November. In addition to international food, films, arts events and speakers, Beloit’s celebration of the week is highlighted by an international poetry reading, in which students, staff and faculty read poems in the original language, and an international dance festival of student performances. The center piece of the week is the International...
Symposium described earlier, followed in the evening by the Ivan and Janice Stone Lecture on an aspect of world affairs.

- **International Symposium.** The international symposium described above showcases to the entire student body as well as faculty and staff the contributions of study abroad to the campus.

**Challenges.** Rather than summing up the content of this paper, I will instead point to four challenges to Beloit’s approach to internationalization.

The first is communication and leadership. Because Beloit’s internationalization strategy depends so heavily on faculty and staff across the campus, communication about priorities, policies, opportunities and needs is crucial as is a commitment to internationalization at all levels of the campus. We rely heavily on a website maintained by the Office of International Education as the source for information on international education, particularly as it pertains to study abroad opportunities, procedures and policies. Annual meetings each fall inform advisors of Beloit programs and consortial programs about new developments, as do informational sessions with admissions and student affairs staff. We publish an annual report on our website to inform the campus of the last year’s activities and projected activities for the current year. Discussions held by the Committee on International Education are crucial to setting the agenda and evaluating in an on-going way what we are doing institutionally, as are collaboration with faculty and administrators to engage in projects to strengthen faculty expertise and the curriculum.

Second is maintaining a critical mass of international students on campus, who can help enrich teaching and learning through the diverse perspectives they bring. As is true across the U.S., Beloit is also seeing new challenges to enrolling international students. Changes in immigration rules and regulations regarding international student visas have discouraged students from studying in the U.S. Other English-speaking countries increasingly compete with the U.S. for international students, as do new educational opportunities within countries. In addition, for Beloit, where 1/3 of the international students are exchange students, maintaining Beloit students’ interest in exchange programs is key to receiving students from our partner universities.

Third, we need to better join experiential learning with classroom learning abroad and at home if we are to enable students to understand the world through others’ lenses. For study abroad, we are past assuming that by sending a student to a university in another country, the student will come back more knowledgeable about how the citizens of that country look at the world. How preparation and internationalization at home assure that they do is discussed earlier in this paper. However, we also need new curricula in our study abroad programs to enable students to engage with people unlike themselves, through field work, research or volunteering, and to bring that experience back to the classroom for analysis and reflection. This should also be done in Beloit, to prepare for doing so overseas, to extend what was done overseas, as well as simply being part of what they do at Beloit.

Fourth, faculty and staff development is critical to developing new curricula and resources, reinforcing the need for language learning and the development of intercultural communication skills, and building learning communities among faculty and staff to continue the internationalization project.
The Collie Plan was considered radical and attracted national attention such that the New York Times invited Collie to write an article explaining it. Dean Collie proposed to recruit small groups of students from countries around the world to study at Beloit College and to create seminars in which they and their American counterparts would “give expression to their national hopes and desires,” discuss “various plans of cooperation,” and determine “their validity and usefulness.” Collie, George L., (Dean), “Beloit – A Melting Pot? George l. Collie, Outlines His Plans For Composite College – New International Spirit Will be Created.” The Beloit Alumnus, April 1924, 1. At the time, Beloit enrolled students from 18 states and 3 foreign countries. The plan seems not to have been implemented; international student enrollments did not subsequently rise.

Summarized in a brochure entitled Education at Beloit . . . An Expanded View, the blueprint set “forth the College’s avowed purpose of providing a pattern of liberal undergraduate education specifically designed to produce enlightened citizens who are more fully aware of man’s common store of knowledge and thought, the interrelationships and interdependence of the aims and aspirations of the nations of the world through the bringing of the world to the campus by means of foreign teachers, lecturers, creative artists, and students, exchange of faculty and students, revision of curricular offerings, and through the provision of an opportunity to participate in the actual experience of living and studying in a foreign land as an optional part of the education of every student.”

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In the 1980’s, an intensive summer language program was started that led to the creation of an orientation program for entering students that included a 10-day foreign language program. For a variety of reasons, the language portion of the orientation program was suspended, but summer language instruction has continued.


