I want to report to you this morning about some of the results of my recent research and share a few thoughts about dimensions of it that are relevant to the subject of this conference. My subject is the Prospects for Internationalizing Teacher Education, and it is funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title VI of the Higher Education Act. The first phase focused on the undergraduate training of secondary school teachers. My current grant is extending the study to the preparation of elementary school teachers.

Backing up a bit, what got me into this? I worked for many years at the Department of Education, in the office that funds university-level programs to strengthen international and area studies and foreign language instruction: Title VI. We were constantly urging grantees to strengthen their linkages with Schools, Colleges, or Departments of Education, but year after year the grantees’ reports indicated little improvement. After leaving the Department, I was involved in an evaluation of the long term impact of the Title VI program for strengthening international and foreign language studies at the undergraduate level. Unfortunately, that research revealed little about what approaches might work with teacher education. As those results were published, the press was having a field day describing the shortcomings of teacher preparation, so I wanted to learn more about why teachers might be ill-prepared to introduce their students to factors contributing to both conflict and cooperation in today’s world.

With the help of a small advisory board, I am collecting information through a series of open-ended but structured interviews – over 300, so far, in both phases – with deans, faculty, student advisors, students, and a variety of senior administrators at research and comprehensive universities and liberal arts colleges in various parts of the country. I have tried to do as many interviews with deans, faculty, and advisors in Arts and Sciences as in Education because, in fact, roughly 75% of teacher preparation instruction is normally in the liberal arts curriculum. In addition, nearly 70 current teachers have been interviewed or have completed an interview protocol as a questionnaire.

This research must be considered exploratory, since the numbers of people in several of the subgroups – such as advisors – are relatively small. However, the overall results in the phase dealing with secondary school teachers pointed to several recommendations that could make a difference in preparing
students to be effective teachers in our increasingly interconnected world – in other words, how to build an internationalized undergraduate context for training teachers. The handout is a summary about that part of the project and its findings. You will see that the topics cover curriculum issues, foreign language study, programs for study and internships abroad, faculty development, and the roles of offices of international programs. Briefly, summarizing the summary:

1. According to more than 80% of the respondents – and nearly 100% of the senior administrators – the advising system could use much more attention, starting with the admissions process and pre-freshman orientation. Close to 80% of the current teachers said that undergraduate advising should include special advising about international options. I’ll come back to this in a few minutes.

2. Language instruction was a hot topic. Few of the campuses visited have an across-the-board undergraduate foreign language requirement, but many do have requirements for students in the liberal arts that do not apply to students in teacher education programs. Many people – deans, students, and faculty – wish there were stronger requirements for prospective teachers. While I sensed that both faculty and administrators would anticipate resistance by students, the education students themselves were nearly unanimous in wishing that they had been able to have more foreign language training. These results were also strongly corroborated by the recommendations of current teachers, 84% of whom felt that their preparation should have included foreign language study. A little more later on this too.

3. Study abroad was the “internationalization” activity most cited in the early discussions about the project, and it was available – in principle – for students on every campus visited. But very few Education students participate. Internships abroad for education students seem almost as rare.

4. Consistent with the conclusions of the previous Title VI study on internationalizing the undergraduate curriculum, faculty development was considered a successful strategy for program strengthening.

5. A related finding was that many felt that adding international courses or revising current courses to include international content would be an important approach, in both Education and A&S.

6. Although nearly all the campuses visited have offices of international programs, knowledge about the mandates of such offices was very uneven. More about this, too, in a minute.

7. Current teachers found the certification and re-certification processes to be lacking in elements related to knowledge about other countries, their interrelationships, and globalization.

I have a few copies of the report with me if any of you would like to have it, and can also send it to you electronically.
Today, with the added benefit of some of the newer interview data, I want to talk about differences – on the same campus – among responses to certain questions. That key people would give me different answers to what seemed like straightforward questions was something of a surprise. This phenomenon was repeated on many occasions as the interviewing process proceeded, so, in preparation for this conference, I have been reviewing data comparatively within each institution, with some interesting – and very tentative – results that I want to share with you. You also may have noticed that a few people on your campuses may not seem to be fully informed, and perhaps with numbers attached – albeit tentatively – this may be something of a wake-up call.

The interview protocols vary somewhat for each category of respondent, so I have chosen three questions that were asked of all interviewees and that required a yes or no answer. I am not sure how the interviewees on each campus were chosen, but do have a feeling that most were relatively internationally-oriented, and most of the institutions chosen for visits were also quite internationally-oriented, so one would have expected well-informed respondents vis-à-vis international questions. My approach in this analysis has been to guess from the preponderance of responses what the consensus answer (yes or no) was for each campus, and then to count the answers that were different from the consensus.

The first interview question I looked at is “Must undergraduates take at least one international or comparative general education course?” The consensus response was “yes” for 20 campuses and “no” for 14, but more importantly for purposes of this paper, there was complete agreement, on either yes or no, for barely a quarter of the institutions visited. Although I think that the sample is too small to provide meaningful statistical correlations, I did wonder whether types or sizes of institutions might seem to make an obvious difference. Indeed, one might expect consistency to be more likely at liberal arts colleges and at institutions with enrollments less than 5,000, but (so far) this does not seem to be the case. However, position at the institution may make a difference – while faculty members (both Education and Arts and Sciences) comprise a bit less than 50% of the total number of people interviewed, they are nearly 60% of those disagreeing with the consensus on the question of whether the undergraduate general education requirements include an international course. The second position whose percentage of dissenters is higher than their representation in the survey is Education deans.

The second question examined in this exercise is whether the institution has a university-wide foreign language requirement, of any sort. The consensus response seems to be that 11 do and 23 do not. However – again – there was total agreement (either yes or no) on a surprisingly small number of campuses – in this instance, 12 – and again agreement happened at all types of institutions (research universities, comprehensive universities, and liberal arts colleges) and at any institutional size; the dissenters were similarly distributed. For this question the total number of dissenters was less than it was for the question
on the international general education requirement, but again faculty (Arts and Sciences and Education) were a little more likely to be dissenting than either deans or senior administrators.

The third question is “Can students do internships abroad?” Nearly all institutions seem also to have possibilities for internships but there was agreement at only 10 institutions. At the others, faculty members were again a little more likely to be in disagreement about this fact. On this question Arts and Sciences deans were also more heavily represented among the dissenters than their total numbers in the pool.

Another question that I asked was who does students’ academic advising. Most of the institutions fit the NACADA model of a professional advising center for “undeclared” undergraduates and faculty advising for students who have decided on a major. On a few campuses the response was emphatic that only faculty do advising throughout, while another occasional response was that the respondent (usually a dean) emphatically hoped that faculty would not do any academic advising! Interestingly, when asked whether undergraduate student advising is done in the same way throughout the university, the majority of respondents in the senior administrator category said “no” – one implication of this response being that it was not the same for students planning to be teachers.

Indeed, for prospective teachers, advising is more complicated than for other majors because most do not only an Arts and Sciences major, for which they have an advisor, but also a certification program in Education – with separate advising. (Here I should note that in collecting the data for this paper the few professional advisors interviewed were counted along with faculty, and also that some of the faculty were specially designated advisors for prospective teachers.) Because few electives are possible within the constraints of a 120 or 128 credit hour program that has many firm requirements – first for general education courses, then for the major, and finally for certification – there is little room for advising slip-ups.

So you see that with faculty in both Arts and Sciences and Education doing the bulk of advising for teachers-in-training, their full understanding of international and academic options and requirements is essential. My small sample of data indicates, however, that the faculty doing the advising may be poorly informed on international components of the curriculum. The intracampus variety of responses to three questions that seem important to internationalization for the prospective teacher, leads me to conclude that indeed, as noted earlier, advising systems need improvement – that improved connections for this essential campus activity are very much needed to encourage better student connections with the world beyond.

Moving to a somewhat different set of issues, I also reviewed questions related to Offices of International Programs, which I’ll refer to as OIPs. Most, but not all, of the campuses I visited have them, but even on this question there were a few different responses – and you may be interested to know that on
campuses where there seemingly was not such an office serving the entire university, some faculty, and Education deans, reported that there is one!

Focusing on those campuses that do have OIPs, what services do they offer? Here again there was great variety in the responses. Yes, the question was an open-ended one, and yes, I occasionally do a bit of prompting in this part of the interview, but among the 34 institutions reporting some kind of OIP, the variations in the reporting of their functions also seem striking. Again faculty members were more numerously out of step than their proportions in the entire survey – and here Education faculty may tend to be somewhat less informed than Arts & Sciences faculty. Arts and Sciences deans also seemed a little more likely not to be fully informed about the services that the university OIP could provide.

What were the functions that I was listening for?

- Just about all OIPs administer study abroad programs.
- Advising (and often recruiting) international students was a second important function, although on some campuses it is done in a different office.

The remainder, in order of decreasing frequency, were not cited by as many or as consistently as the first two. They are:

- Organizing the visits of international lecturers
- Negotiating exchange programs
- Facilitating faculty travel
- Running an ESL program
- Facilitating curriculum development
- Film and/or speaker series
- International festivals
- Study abroad program development
- Faculty seminars
- Fundraising
- Administering an international studies major

A few of these activities were cited by the OIP Director but by no others on campus! A function added by several recent respondents, in A&S and Education as well as OIPs, is responsibility for internship programs.

Particularly on campuses whose OIPs have many functions (four or more) – and there are at least 22 of them – some 62 people attributed fewer functions to them than their (OIP) Directors reported. For two institutions (one liberal arts college and one comprehensive university) the OIP has only one function, administering study abroad programs.
Although I also heard that OIPs need more staff, it does seem that those of you charged with institution-wide facilitation of a variety of activities and services may need to work harder to make your current services better known. Given the focus of my research on teacher education, I was wondering whether faculty and deans in Education were less informed about OIP services, but the data seem to indicate a need for improved connections between OIPs and both Education and A&S.

Interestingly, in their listings of OIP functions, until this week none of the interviewees have yet mentioned improving campus communication about international options. How do advisors get the information they need to share with their advisees? One person summed up the situation by responding simply “haphazardly.” Some shrugged and said, “Well, we read the catalog.” In the first phase of my interviews, meetings were the most frequently cited source, followed closely by e-mail, then newsletters, and memos; e-mail is now more frequently mentioned. Workshops were mentioned by only 28% of the respondents to this question. Several suggestions were made about how to get overseas experience for the advisors themselves, including those doing freshman advising.

I would suggest that training advisors about the international options for students, and the students’ need for them, should be added to the list of OIP functions, that OIPs should be more involved in the training and constant updating of all who do advising – the faculty, professional advising staff, and even admissions officers. Prospective students who are considering teaching careers need to plan for overseas experience (study abroad, classroom observation, and/or internships) from Day One of their undergraduate experience in order to fit it in; similarly, foreign language study can usually be worked in if it’s planned from the start.

So, in conclusion and to answer at least partially the question posed by the title of this paper, yes, to some extent there are special challenges to internationalizing the undergraduate experience of prospective teachers – most particularly the “time in curriculum” problem. However, the broader challenge is in the university context, the need for better communication for all concerned – so that all faculty and advisors can be reading off the same page as they advise their students – about the range of international options that truly are available, in humanities and social science course offerings (maybe even in the natural sciences), in foreign language instruction, and in overseas experiences.

I look forward to your questions and will welcome your suggestions.