

Curriculum Subcommittee Report

Boston University aspires “to become one of the great international universities of the century,” as indicated in our mission statement. To fulfill this aspiration, our University must develop curriculum and curricular initiatives that distinctively integrate contemporary insights about the nature of the world. In particular, our approach must cultivate global knowledge – and knowledge about globalization-- and then implement this knowledge in courses that are accessible to – and even required of – all of our students.

Today, Boston University has enrolled some 30,000 students in 17 schools and colleges, and ranks as the fourth-largest private university in the country. Given our scale and complexity, we must proceed aggressively, thoughtfully, and with sensitivity for our diversity. This document describes our vision and goals and several parallel initiatives that we recommend as essential to become a great international university.

What is a “global curriculum”?

We envision a time when all students entering Boston University will follow a curriculum that not only prepares them for a future career but exposes them to the richness and complexity of the world they live in and teaches them how to learn about the world for the rest of their lives. This is the essence of a “liberal education”, based on the history of inquiry and accomplishment that has continuously transformed our society, while looking out to the future in a bold, liberating, and empowering manner.

A global curriculum applies *cultural insight* to universal concerns. It understands “cultural insight” as one of the most powerful, most underutilized resources of humanity. Whether the problem is loss of bio-diversity, the spread of disease, or the threat of weapons of mass destruction, cultural insight is a sine qua non for our survival as a species.

Our vision for a new fundamental learning structure at BU will begin by enriching the existing curriculum, throughout the schools and colleges, in a deliberate manner. We will create a pathway for our students to learn at every stage in their careers, from first year through professional study, about the many forces of globalization sweeping across the world, to understand the technical advances in science and engineering that make it possible to communicate almost instantaneously, circumnavigate the globe in little more than a day, and prevent and cure disease as never before, and to negotiate, through cultural insight, diversity and differences in languages and cultures while honoring our common heritage and aspirations.

No longer will our educational view be focused predominantly on a monolingual Western civilization, with an introduction to Eastern thought, but rather on civilization itself in all of its complexity and the contributions of the past and present from all parts and peoples of the entire world. No longer will the “diversity” of the U.S. be seen as separate from the diversity of the world. Our entering students may see themselves as

citizens of one or another nation but our vision is that they will graduate from Boston University as global citizens, with proficiency in other languages, prepared and ready to take their place in our complex world and involved in shaping a better future for themselves and all others around the world.

To accomplish this for all Boston University students, regardless of the school they are enrolled in, whether undergraduate, graduate or professional, we envision a process of curricular expansion and development involving faculty and students over a sufficient period of time to allow for the creation of new courses, opportunities and pathways for learning about the world. By engaging in this process now we envision a time, ten years from the present, when the individual curriculums of all the colleges and schools will approach their objects of study, when appropriate, from a global perspective, and all graduates will be globally literate citizens of the world. Their knowledge of other cultures and their enhanced proficiency in other languages will go beyond mere acknowledgment or “appreciation” for diversity and will lead to the cultural insight that can deal successfully with global issues and problems.

We also believe that two concepts of the “global” must be brought into alignment at Boston University. The University’s symbolic and real status as a community of students, teachers, and scholars who represent –ideally--the entire “universe” of human learning (medicine, education, the liberal arts, communication, business, music, the fine arts, etc.) *must be brought together into a more coherent interdisciplinary community of teaching and learning* (the “local” global). Second, the curriculum of the “global” community at BU must engage more effectively with the international community. In other words, *globalization must occur locally at BU at the same time that BU is engaging with the rest of the world.*

Curricular Change

Rather than attempting to impose a new, one-size-fits-all, globally oriented curriculum on the faculty and students of Boston University, we recommend that change occur from within, initiated by the creative power of the BU faculty. We recommend the creation of two innovative programs which will encourage faculty across the schools to engage with curricular issues, initiate improvement, and allow curricular development to occur incrementally, as an organic process, through procedures the faculty has already elaborated. These two programs will serve as curricular “yeast,” allowing the faculty’s own ideas to “rise” while clearly demonstrating the University’s commitment to its global vision.

The two programs recommended are:

- University Global Scholars Program
- Global Curriculum Development Grants.

Coordinated by the Institute of Global Studies, both programs will enliven the curriculum while also helping to improve the quality of intellectual life of faculty at BU.

By drawing together and giving a common direction to scattered initiatives, they will also facilitate fund-raising and have an impact on the retention of faculty, graduate students and staff with global perspectives, and would serve as a draw in the recruitment of globally-oriented faculty.

The University Global Scholar appointment would be a rotating, three-year faculty appointment with a minimum of two semesters of course release (or one semester and a summer of funding.) Terms of the course release would be negotiated between the Provost's Office, the Director of the Institute of Global Studies, and the department chairs and deans of the UGS's units.

The UGS would be awarded at all faculty ranks – assistant, associate, and full professor-- to those who meet the criteria of:

- Scholarly distinction and accomplishments in the faculty member's field
- Demonstrated teaching excellence and the ability to lead and inspire others by their work in the classroom;
- Ability to carry out a well-planned project with the potential to help globalize the curriculum
- The ability to involve colleagues in the project and to work well with others to lead BU toward a more global curriculum.

To encourage participation across schools, colleges, and departments, University Global Scholars will propose curricular change in groups of two. For example, a GS in SMG would collaborate with one in CAS or the School of Public Health on a particular project, involving other colleagues in the project.

In all cases, the primary role of these Scholars would be an *active* one: to design and implement (or begin to implement) *courses and programs of study* which contribute directly to internationalization, interdisciplinarity, language study from a global perspective, cooperation between schools and colleges, and the pursuit of diversity and difference on the local and global levels. The UGS (=University Global Scholars) Program would serve as BU's most visible, effective incubator of courses with a global outlook and outreach. The UGS program would help to insure that there is a continuous dialogue among BU faculty --across the campuses-- about global renovation of the curriculum, and that BU's faculty has the both the time to think about curricular change (course release) and the means to act on its ideas (funding).

University Global Scholars would ideally be appointed in cohorts of 10 teams per year for five years, so that by AY 2011-12 there would be a cadre of faculty thinkers and doers at work on different projects, and a significant number of projects underway throughout the schools. The plan must yield – over a ten-year period – (1) a slate of distinguished, multi- and inter-disciplinary courses available to students from every school and college of the university; (2) integration of these courses into faculty-approved programs of study.

BU must draw on the *collective strength* of the University Global Scholars group. In order to ensure synergy and bring about a visible, unified effort, as a condition of their appointment the Scholars will meet regularly *as a consultative group*, to discuss their individual and collective efforts, measure progress, and identify new opportunities for programs of study. This cadre of Global Scholars would constitute, in effect, BU's first faculty group systematically engaged in the elaboration of an ever richer web of global courses and programs. Given the quality of our faculty, its importance would transcend BU. Projects will also be disseminated to the entire BU faculty and beyond BU through the Institute of Global Studies. Coordinated by the Institute, over a ten-year period this faculty group would also develop considerable shared expertise and experience (know-how that would otherwise be scattered across the campus) on how best to initiate and consolidate change in the global curriculum.

In the competition for these UGS appointments, each team of applicants would submit a proposal for curricular change. The proposals – which would eventually be brought to fruition *through the normal departmental and college channels* (e.g., department and college curriculum committees)--would be evaluated at the initial selection stage by a faculty panel at the Institute for Global Studies. Examples of projects would be:

- the establishment of a new “global” track in a traditional major
- modifications to the general education requirements within a school or college
- a college-wide program like language across the curriculum: e.g., a plan to integrate language/culture courses into health education or management
- modification of some aspect of the language program to bring it more fully into line with BU's global mission. For example: outreach from CAS to other schools; or the utilization of ESL methodology in foreign language courses; the implementation of higher standards of proficiency...
- an innovative course or course cluster which will affect a considerable number of students and provide a model for other such courses or clusters
- collaboration with International Programs, the departments, or area studies programs on new coursework
- Interaction with the community or public schools on global issues
- New instructional partnerships with non-U.S. institutions of higher learning resulting in new courses resulting in faculty and student exchanges
- Curricular change resulting from faculty exchanges with other institutions
- The training of graduate students in teaching with a global perspective

These curricular initiatives will also allow faculty, across the schools and colleges, to pursue common funding opportunities from private and public sources. In many cases, the funds expended will be “seed money” for broader change.

Twice a year, the Institute would consider and competitively fund projects

proposed by faculty (but often involving graduate students and staff) that contribute, on a more modest scale than the broad projects suggested above, to the enhancement of BU's global curriculum. Each of these projects would lead to the creation of a new interdisciplinary global studies course or to the infrastructural improvement needed for such a course. These grants would range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 in funds for development of technology, course materials, research/instructional travel to gather such materials. For example, over the summer a faculty member works with a graduate student assistant and a staff member to identify, gather, and digitize materials needed for a global course, or visits one of BU's foreign partners, returning to BU with new curricular plans.

What Resources Are Needed?

Boston University aspires not only to train its students as citizens of the world, but also to offer training of such quality and effectiveness that our university becomes renowned for our global curriculum. Just as Columbia University's identity is shaped in part by its undergraduate "great books in western civilization" core curriculum, Boston University will become known for cultivating a global perspective among its students.

The development of a global curriculum of unparalleled quality in an institution of our size will require a significant commitment of well-administered resources. We must unleash the creative power of our faculty in curricular experiments, some of which will inevitably fail. We must create an infrastructure for developing faculty, testing ideas, improving our courses incrementally, identifying successes, and ultimately implementing requirements for global curriculum across our diverse schools and colleges. Our faculty, students, and staff must acquire a global perspective of sufficient nuance and depth to yield insights that can be enacted in the classroom. Collaboration and teamwork across units of the university will be essential to achieve the curricular quality to which we aspire.

The resources needed to develop a global curriculum over the forthcoming ten years are significant, and include:

1. The University Global Scholars Program supported directly by the President and Provost and designed to promote curricular development. This program must receive sufficient support to attract the most energetic and committed of the faculty of the university. A Global Scholar would hold his or her appointment in a home school and would receive this additional designation during the period of the curriculum-development effort.
2. The Global Curriculum Development Fund, with support for course experimentation, development and integration led by an ever-widening and more varied number of faculty across BU.
3. A faculty-led Institute to review proposals by faculty from the various units of the University for course development following a set of clear criteria that reflect the ten-year goal.

4. The authority and financial resources to release faculty Scholars with approved proposals from some of their primary teaching obligations in their home schools to pursue course-development initiatives that are aligned with the global-curriculum plan.
5. An Institute for Global Studies, with classroom and common space that can be utilized by Global Scholars from various schools during the period of curriculum development. The purpose of this shared space would be to stimulate dialogue, encourage faculty development, and nurture understanding about the best teaching methods.
6. A mandate from the President, extending across the University, to distinguish Boston University through its global curriculum.
7. An evaluative mechanism – e.g., the advisory panel of the Institute for Global Studies—to assess, each year, the University’s progress toward a global curriculum.

INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL STUDIES

As Boston University’s guiding body in the realization of its global mission, the Institute’s primary goals would be to

- Continuously inform all BU faculty, students, staff, and the world beyond BU, about the diverse global learning initiatives that are now scattered often invisibly across our campuses in departments, centers, institutes, area studies programs, International Programs, etc.
- Work with the faculty and with other BU units to explore possible partnerships with non-U.S. institutions in the area of global teaching, learning and research. Collect and analyze information, and provide advice to the President on such partnerships and on faculty and student exchanges
- Create dialogue and routine collaboration BU units involved with global learning and among BU’s schools and colleges.
- Draw faculty and students to an inviting common intellectual, social, and physical space for the development of global teaching and learning.
- Help BU faculty obtain the resources it needs to develop and offer global courses and programs of study.
- Provide the President and others with strategic advice and planning on BU’s global future (targeted hiring; the curriculum; structure; relevant

initiatives at other universities; the development of area studies programs, etc.) and collaborate with him on fund-raising opportunities

- Stimulate the development of a global curriculum that contributes to BU's global mission through a variety of activities including the University Global Scholarship Program and the Fund for Development of a Global Curriculum
- Conduct a yearly assessment of BU's progress toward fulfillment of its global mission in all areas: administrative structures, partnerships and exchanges, curriculum, faculty hiring, etc., and issue ongoing strategic recommendations
- Develop faculty and student awareness and skills through sponsorship of a variety of events and programs. These could include interdisciplinary symposia; one-semester or one-year research/teaching opportunities for "Global Institute Fellows"; an ongoing daily program of lectures and round-tables –involving BU and the community-- on global topics (ecology, health, the arts, technology, immigration, world literature, international business, etc.); targeted, specialized language instruction for staff and faculty (e.g. refresher courses); faculty-development workshops on "teaching globally."

Building

The Institute of Global Studies should be located in a distinctive new building, a symbol of BU's commitment to global teaching and learning. This much-needed physical space would help reconfigure intellectual space, facilitating dialogue and influencing the interaction of campus units, students and faculty in the common pursuit of interdisciplinary knowledge on issues of global concern. The Global Studies Building would house the Institute's small staff, International Programs, the language departments, and other BU organisms closely connected with global learning, but would be primarily devoted to classroom and meeting space, serving as many *students and faculty* as possible. It would be a 24/7 center of global teaching and learning, a visible symbol of our quest.

Staff

Director, Associate Director, Faculty Advisory Board, Administrative Staff