

Report of the University Council Committee on International Programs

A two-year report, Spring 1991 and Academic Year 1991/92

When the roundup of 1991-92 Reports of Council and Independent Committees was published January 19, 1993, the report of the Committee on International Relations was undergoing review. It is published in the pages that follow.

The Committee was chaired by Richard J. Estes of Social Work. Its faculty members were Anne P. Keane, Nursing; Mahin Khatami, ophthalmology/Med; Samuel Z. Klausner, sociology; George B. Koelle, pharmacology/Med; Pedro Ponte-Castaneda, mechanical engineering; Gerhard A. Schad, parasitology/Vet; Franklin C. Southworth, South Asian studies; and Peter Steiner, Slavic languages. Student members were Jae Hyup Lee and David Olaleye, both of the Graduate Arts and Sciences, and Jennifer Stein, College '94. International Programs Director Joyce Randolph served ex officio.

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The charge to the University Council Committee on International Programs was modified in Fall 1990 in response to the establishment by central administration of the Provost's Council on International Programs. The Committee's current charge is to review and monitor issues related to the international programs and other international activities of the University. In carrying forward its new mandate the Committee met twice during Spring 1991 and five times during AY 1991/92. During these seven meetings the Committee concerned itself with a broad range of matters including: improving services for international students and scholars; faculty, staff, and student exchange programs; the quality of the international environment at Penn; and, the University's cooperative undertakings with foreign universities.

Penn's International Presence at Home

The University's *local* international infrastructure consists primarily of its programs of international education and research, international students and visiting scholars, a large network of nationality clubs and other internationally-oriented student organizations, and the University's steadily increasing international library holdings and other information resources. Penn also has a large, complex and sometimes difficult to access administrative infrastructure that both advances and supports the University's far-reaching international activities (especially in the areas of alumni relations, development, study abroad opportunities, international scholarships, etc.). In addition, many schools, departments and other units of the University operate separate and distinct programs and services in support of their own international activities.

Hence, the international resources at Penn are extensive and multifaceted. The existence of so many international resources reflects positively on the University's commitment to significantly enhancing its international activities. The apparent lack of coordination among many of these resources, however, reflects the University's history of decentralization and school/departamental autonomy. The fuller coordination, perhaps integration, of some of these resources may be necessary if the University is to realize the ambitious objectives embodied in its new international mission statement (*Almanac* 3/24/92).

A. International Students

International student enrollment at Penn has increased steadily each year over the past decade. In AY 1991/92, for example, approximately 3000 students from more than 70 countries enrolled in the University's undergraduate and graduate programs. Current enrollment patterns reflect an increase of more than 31% in international students matriculation at Penn since AY 1987/88 (OIP, 1992).

Currently, international students make up 14% of the University's student body, i.e., 8% of the undergraduate population and 20% of the graduate and professional student population. The 1991-92 edition of *Open Doors*, the annual census of international students conducted by the Institute for International Education, identified Penn as:

- having the sixth largest foreign student population overall;
- the fifth largest enrollment of foreign students among four-year institutions; and
- the second largest enrollment of international students among Ivy League institutions, but the largest enrollment of undergraduate international students.

Of particular relevance to the University at this point in its history is the predominately East- (34.4%) and South-Asian (7.6%) origins of students from the ten top feeder countries to the University [Japan (N=291, 9.8%); China (N=248, 8.4%); Korea (N=238, 8.0%); India (N=226, 7.6%); Taiwan

(N=185, 6.2%); Hong Kong (N=60, 2.0%)]. By comparison international students from Europe (9.2%) and Canada (6.1%) represented only 15.3% of students matriculating during AY 1991/92 from the University's top ten feeder countries [Canada (N=181, 6.1%); United Kingdom (N=127, 4.3%), France (N=96, 3.2%); Spain (N=50, 1.7%)].

The admission of such a large number of students from non-Western countries can be expected to have a profound impact on all aspects of the University's educational, research, and administrative support activities. These students, and in time alumni, can be expected to significantly influence the University's current and future efforts in world regions with which the University community has been less familiar.

B. International Visiting Scholars

In addition to international students the University welcomed some 1146 Visiting Scholars from 74 countries during AY 1991/92 (OIP, 1992). This figure represents a significant increase over the 769 Visiting Scholars reported as being in residence in February 1991. During AY 1990/91 Penn ranked:

- seventh in the Ivy League with respect to the number of visiting scholars;
- seventh in the number of international scholars sponsored through exchange visitor visas (J-1); and
- fourth in the number of international scholars sponsored on work authorization visas (H-1) [OIP, 1992:85].

During AY 1991/92, 64% of the University's visiting scholars originated from nine countries: China (N=235), Japan (N=159), India (N=85), United Kingdom (N=57), Germany (N=52), France (N=44), "USSR" (N=34), Korea (N=33), and Israel (N=31). As in the past, the majority of visiting scholars from these countries are citizens of countries located in either East- (N=427, 37.3%) or South-Asia (N=85, 7.4%). Substantial numbers of scholars, however, are currently being attracted to the University from newly-organized Commonwealth of Independent States. These European scholars are in addition to the traditionally large number of visiting scholars that the University receives from Northern and Western Europe.

The majority of visiting scholars participated in either international research projects or in one of the University's more than 100 international exchange programs (Provost's Council on International Programs, 1992:28-40). The length of these visits varied from only a few weeks or, in the case of post-doctoral scholars, to programs expected to last several years. All visiting scholars are hosted by one or another University department or school.

Table 1 [next page] summarizes the number and distribution of visiting scholars by major sponsoring unit at the University for AY 1991/92.

In addition to processing the myriad legal and other papers required to bring nearly 1200 visiting scholars to campus, during the AY 1991/92 the OIP also obtained H-1 status for over 60 new employees. In addition, the OIP initiated the process of obtaining U.S. permanent residency for 31 faculty and staff members.

The presence of large numbers of international scholars on campus is understood to significantly advance the University's international mission. Further, visiting scholars often continue to contribute to the University long after they have left Penn by helping to strengthen the University's ties to the scholar's home country (e.g., assisting with screening future visiting scholar applicants, giving leadership to the University's extensive network of international linkage programs, assisting with local development efforts, etc.).

Clearly, as ambassadors "without portfolio" visiting scholars represent important international resources for Penn both while they on campus and, again, following their return home. Consequently, careful attention

to the support needs of scholars while at Penn is important to the larger University community. In general, these needs are similar to those of international students, i.e., for visa assistance, orientation to the U.S. and to Penn, access to library and laboratory resources, for housing, child care, health insurance, and so on. Visiting scholars also require hospitality in order to minimize the social isolation that often accompanies temporary stays in a foreign country.

The Committee finds that considerable unevenness exists throughout the University with respect to many of the matters bearing on the "quality" of the visiting scholar experience at Penn. Matters pertaining to housing, compensation, health insurance and hospitality appear to be particularly uneven, even problematic, for many scholars. Also, the Committee believes that the special competence of many Scholars is underutilized by academic units other than the Scholar's sponsoring department/ school. Clearly, as the University seeks to implement its new international mission statement greater attention and resources will need to be devoted to enriching the experience of Penn's international visiting scholars. Failure to do so will likely weaken, rather than strengthen, the University's efforts to build new research and educational infrastructure in the visiting scholar's country of origin.

Selected Issues Confronting International Students and Scholars at Penn

The Committee undertook the review of a broad range of issues affecting international students and visiting scholars. Several of the most important of these issues bear more centrally on the University's international commitments and, therefore, are discussed below.

A. Health Insurance

Access to adequate health insurance continues to be a major problem confronting international students, visiting scholars, and their dependents.

On behalf of the Committee, Professor Anne Keane of Nursing undertook an analysis of the current insurance situation vis-a-vis the health coverage needs of international students and visiting scholars. Her report identified five major problems associated with the health insurance needs of international students and scholars at Penn: 1) the cost of health insurance; 2) the lack of comprehensive dependent coverage, especially for married students; 3) the system of exclusions, deductions, and other limitations on covered illnesses imposed by the insurance underwriters; 4) the exclusion of "pre-existing conditions" from coverage; and, 5) the apparent ability of some international students to avoid University-approved health insurance coverage of any type.

The situation is especially critical for those students and scholars who fail to purchase health insurance of any type. Others, for reasons of economy and even poverty, are unable to purchase adequate health insurance at the level of coverage required either for themselves or their families. Still others are forced to leave the University when a serious illness occurs. The Committee also believes that many acceptable applicants from developing

countries are unable to matriculate at the University on learning the cost of mandatory health insurance (an item that many foreign governments and other educational sponsors fail to include in their grants and fellowships to students studying abroad).

Health insurance will remain a continuing item on the Committee's agenda. Plans are underway to initiate a dialogue on the health insurance crisis with representatives from the new Office of the Associate Provost for University Life (whose oversight responsibilities include both student health insurance and the Student Health Service). In extending invitations to visiting scholars, however, departments and schools will likely need to include the cost of adequate health insurance in their compensation packages. This matter will also be pursued by the Committee during the next academic year.

B. English Fluency Certification of Foreign Teaching and Research Assistants

In accordance with the requirements of a recent Pennsylvania Commonwealth law, the University has taken steps to insure a high level of English fluency for all persons engaged in teaching and research at the University. Concern existed throughout the University that the University's implementation procedures could adversely affect the large number of graduate teaching and research assistants who speak English as a second or even as a third language.

On behalf of the Committee, Professor Samuel Klausner of Sociology sought to identify the major issues associated with the University's compliance with the law. He was assisted in this effort by Stephen Steinberg, Assistant to the President, who discussed the matter at length with both Professor Klausner and the Committee.

In general, the Committee judged that the implementation machinery did not pose an immediate threat to either the number or distribution of existing international graduate teaching or research assistantships at the University. However, the Committee judged that a potential threat could exist for future cohorts of international students, especially those who may be denied teaching or research assistantships because of the University's inability to adequately assess their language fluency prior to arrival at Penn. In such cases, departments may do the "safe thing" in offering assistantships only to persons who speak English as a first or primary language. In such cases, the Committee is concerned that some otherwise qualified international applicants may be denied the *functional opportunity* to study at Penn simply by being denied access to funding opportunities that were previously available to them.

Given the decentralized way in which the implementation machinery will be administered (i.e., by departmental chairman or deans), the Committee is concerned that it may not be possible to identify shifts that may occur in either the number or distribution of research and teaching assistantship opportunities to international applicants following their acceptance for admission. The Committee, however, will seek to identify some means for monitoring these trends in consultation with appropriate administrative and academic units at the University.

C. Diversification of Locust Walk

The Committee has long expressed concern about the near "invisibility" of international students on the Penn campus—a reality that continues to exist despite the high numbers of international student at Penn. This invisibility is reinforced, in part, by the absence of a centrally-located "international house" or other internationally-oriented facility located in the heart of the campus. Unfortunately, recent recommendations concerning the University's desire to diversify Locust Walk failed to reflect the legitimate needs of international students for a central "spot" of their own on campus.

On behalf of the Committee, Professor Franklin Southworth of South Asian Studies initiated a series of communications with the Chair and members of the Committee on the Diversification of Locust Walk. The purpose of this effort was to encourage the adoption of a recommendations from that Committee in response to the request from groups of international students for inclusion in the final diversification plans. Professor Southworth was joined in this effort by supporting letters from the Committee and from various nationality student groups. Unfortunately, the final report from the Locust Walk Diversification Committee failed to contain any recommendations concerning the request of international students and this Committee for a highly visible internationally-oriented resource of some type on Locust Walk.

The Committee will pursue this matter during the next academic year through the Office of the Vice Provost for University Life. The Committee is particularly anxious that consideration be given to the location of a suitable site for international programming by the end of the next academic year.

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Table 1. Foreign Scholars at Penn and Affiliated Institutes by School/Institution, AY 1991/92

Primary Academic/ Administrative Unit	Number 1991/92	Total (N=1146)
School of Medicine	497	43.4
School of Arts and Sciences	250	21.8
School of Engineering	63	5.5
School of Veterinary Medicine	59	5.1
Wharton School	58	5.1
School of Dental Medicine	33	2.9
Graduate School of Fine Arts	26	2.3
Graduate School of Education	6	
Annenberg School of Communications	5	
The Law School	5	
The School of Nursing	5	
The School of Social Work	4	
The University Museum	2	
The Radiation Safety Office	2	
The Vice Provost for University Life	1	
The Institute of Contemporary Art	1	
Subtotal	1017	88.7
HUP, Affiliated Hospitals, and Research Institutes	129	11.3
Total All Units	1146	100.0

Source: Office of International Programs, 1992:80-81

D. Proposed Reorganization of the Office of International Programs

The Committee reviewed with Professor Jerry Wind of the Lauder Institute a report "On the Future of the Office of International Programs." The report was prepared at the request of the Provost's Council on International Programs.

The report, with its several pages of analysis and recommendations, is far-reaching with respect to implementation of the University's new international mission statement. In essence, the report calls for greater centralization of all international activities at Penn. The report also suggests the need for a senior-level appointment from the faculty charged with the responsibility of coordinating the University's myriad educational, research and related international resources. If implemented, the Subcommittee's recommendations would result in a significant re-structuring of all of the Penn's international activities, including those for which leadership is currently being provided by the Office of International Programs.

Professor Wind recognized with the Committee that the major obstacles in moving forward with the subcommittee's recommendations were organizational and fiscal. Professor Wind also recognized the need for additional research to determine the likely cost/benefit ratios to the University associated with the shift toward a more centralized administrative structure. This Committee expressed hesitation in endorsing the Committee's recommendations without additional prior research and planning, especially concerning the future role of the Office of International Programs vis-a-vis any other structures that may be created. Nonetheless, the general thrust of the report, with its emphasis on the need for increased coordination and integration of the University's international activities, is one with which the Committee is in agreement.

Committee Recommendations to University Council

1. Realization of the University's new International Mission Statement (*Almanac* 3/24/92) will require considerable coordination between all academic and administrative units of the University. Through their extensive networks of international research and collaborative relationships, faculty already are carrying a major role in advancing this mission. More will need to be done in the near-term, however, especially if the bold objectives contained in this mission statement are to be fully accomplished. In cooperation with the central administration, the University Council should provide sustained leadership to the further internationalization of the campus.

2. The University's efforts toward "internationalization" should be understood as consisting of the following elements:

- the continued presence on campus of substantial numbers of international students, visiting scholars, and faculty members;
- the strengthening of existing educational and research resources that are intrinsically international in character (especially area studies programs, selected departments in the School of Arts and Sciences, language education, etc.);
- the restructuring of existing curricular resources and educational programs so as to reflect more adequately the international nature of knowledge and knowledge development in contemporary higher education (especially in the humanities and social sciences);
- the identification of additional resources that are needed to enrich the international content of existing curricular, research, and other activities at Penn.

In recent years, the Committee judges that the University has made important gains with the first of these elements, i.e., in our continuing ability to attract substantial numbers of international students, visiting scholars, and faculty to campus. These accomplishments are viewed by the Committee as being both important and impressive. But much more needs to be done, especially on a sustained and purposeful basis.

To this end, the Committee urges the University Council to collaborate with the University's central administration:

- promoting the development of more "internationalized" curricula and research experiences throughout the University, i.e., curricula that reflect the international, cross-sectoral, and interdependent nature of knowledge in contemporary higher education;
- providing incentives to schools, departments, and individual faculty members for reorganizing selected aspects of their programs and courses to reflect the international nature of knowledge, as appropriate to a given area of study; and,
- advancing opportunities within schools, departments, student clubs and organizations, as well as in the University's various administrative units, for University-wide exchanges of information and experiences relevant to the University's goal of internationalization.

Positive action on the part of the Council is judged to be essential if the University is to achieve its ambitious and far-reaching internationalization goals.

3. The Committee further encourages the University Council to consider a range of approaches that can be taken to accelerate curricular and other reforms that are needed to achieve the University's international mission statement. At a minimum, consideration should be given to:

- strengthening the foreign language dimensions of Penn's undergraduate and graduate programs;
- further strengthening the area studies, departments, and other academic units that are intrinsically international in their orientation (e.g., anthropology, folk lore, Asian and Middle Eastern studies, etc.); and,
- strengthening the international holdings and staffing resources of at least the central library;
- encouraging the development of structured credit-bearing opportunities for substantial numbers of undergraduate and graduate students to spend at least some portion of their education at a peer institution located outside of the United States.

4. Finally, the Office of International Programs needs enlarged support in carrying out its leadership role. At a minimum additional staffing, funding, and a more central location are required for the Office to fully implement the substantial international responsibilities with which it is charged.

Proposed Committee Agenda for AY 1992-93

1. The University Council Committee is urged to complete its work on a broad range of matters that affect the well-being of students on the campus. Central among these concerns are the health insurance needs of foreign students and their dependents. Work on this matter should be carried out in consultation with the Office of the Associate Vice Provost for University Life.

2. The Committee is urged to continue its recent efforts to achieve greater visibility of the significant numbers and roles carried by international students and scholars at Penn. This could be accomplished, in part, through the University's efforts to diversify Locust Walk including through the establishment of a residence for international students at a central location on Locust Walk. Inclusion of international students and issues in the annual multicultural orientation program would be another way of sensitizing all members of the Penn community to the unique needs and strengths of international students and visiting scholars. Committee activities on this matter should be carried out in consultation with the Office of the Vice Provost for University Life.

3. In order to provide a tangible focal point for Penn's increasingly important international community and activities, the Committee is encouraged to consider recommending the establishment of an International Center in the heart of the campus, if possible along a more diversified Locust Walk.

Among the entities that could be housed in such a Center are facilities for the Office of International Programs, area studies programs that are currently without a home, other internationally-focussed academic programs, short term visitors from abroad, student nationality clubs, the newly established Alpha Omicron Chapter of the international honor society Phi Beta Delta, and other internationally oriented student organizations. Meeting rooms and lounge facilities could also be available to other University departments and organizations for internationally oriented lectures, seminars and social events.

4. The Committee is urged to undertake work toward the preparation of a "white paper" that will review the range of issues impacting on the fuller internationalization of the University, including of curricula and other educational and administrative resources at Penn. In doing so, the Committee may wish to consider approaches to internationalization formulated by other units within Penn as well as those developed or undertaken by other peer institutions.

5. Some confusion continues to exist concerning the purpose and functions of the University Council Committee on International Programs and the Provost's Council on International Programs. The fact that this Council Committee on International Programs performs a monitoring function on behalf of faculty whereas the other exists as an arm of the administration is clear enough. The necessity for on-going communication and cooperation between the University Council Committee and the Provost's Council on International Programs is, of course, essential. Less clear, though, are those areas in which the two groups work separately from one another, especially this Committee in serving as a monitoring group representing the international interests of the University's faculty. In any event, clarification of the unique responsibilities of each should be pursued by the Chairs of both groups via the University Council.

References

- Office of International Programs. 1992. *Annual Report for 1991-92*.
Provost's Council on International Programs. 1992. *Factbook About International Programs at the University of Pennsylvania*.