

ACE INTERNATIONALIZATION LAB IMPACT PROFILE

Western Washington University (2013–15)



Western Washington University serves the people of the state of Washington, the nation, and the world by bringing together individuals of diverse backgrounds and perspectives in an inclusive, student-centered university that develops the potential of learners and the well-being of communities.

GOALS FOR THE LAB

Western Washington University's (WWU) internationalization initiatives are coordinated by the Institute for Global Engagement, but are not centralized by any sort of authority or funding model. Going into the Lab, we knew there were many internationally focused endeavors underway across campus, but we had never captured their breadth or depth. Thus, a primary goal for the Lab process was **to better understand what kinds and what levels of internationalization activities were taking place**, and how we compared to peer institutions. To accomplish this, our Lab Task Force established the following objectives:

- Collect data from across the institution, from peer institutions, and from community partners about WWU's internationalization efforts.
- Report that data to the university community in a very public way.
- Create an action plan with a set of internationalization goals—both immediately actionable and aspirational.

LAB TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lab Task Force successfully accomplished its three objectives, including drafting an action plan. Recommendations focused on three main areas: **student mobility, resources for faculty, and organizational structures** to support internationalization. Specific steps included:

- Increase the number of international students at WWU.
- Increase the number of students studying abroad.
- Provide resources for faculty to internationalize their courses.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Institute for Global Engagement, and better publicize this information.
- Create an Internationalization Advisory Board to set policies and communicate across the colleges.

OUTCOMES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

All of the Lab Task Force's recommendations have been realized to at least some degree. In terms of student mobility, the **number of international students at WWU is now at its highest level in more than 30 years**, and the university has entered into an agreement with Study Group, a pathway program provider, to help us recruit students from around the world. Recently, the Education Abroad Office, under new leadership, has revamped and refocused its recruitment activities, and is on track to **increase the number of underrepresented students who study abroad**.

The provost's office now funds periodic **workshops for faculty interested in internationalization**, and the Institute for Global Engagement produces an annual **resource guide** that highlights our work to university colleagues and external stakeholders. The **Internationalization Advisory Board**—successfully established shortly after WWU completed the Lab—continues to meet regularly, and is currently helping define university policies for approving, implementing, and assessing international partnerships.

In some cases, the timeline for accomplishing our goals has shifted due to funding challenges or human resource constraints, but we have made good strides, and are proud of what we have achieved so far. We plan to continue implementing the Lab Task Force's action plan, but also recognize the need to **assess the work we are doing** so that we can demonstrate our success to our colleagues, our students, and the university. Conducting such an assessment is a top priority for us.

ADVICE AND LESSONS LEARNED

The Lab can be a powerful **mechanism for organizational change**, and definitely brings greater visibility to campus internationalization efforts. However, it is important to recognize that while the Lab process provides a platform for change, it does not make the change for you. Success and sustained impact require an **investment of time and resources**, and a **clear understanding of what the institution hopes to accomplish**.

Being part of a cohort is a key benefit of the Lab, and making use of **opportunities to network with colleagues** from other participating institutions is an excellent way to enhance your own campus expertise. Having worked with so many colleges and universities in the Lab, ACE advisors are a great source of guidance and support, and we continue to use ACE's online resources and information as we carry our internationalization efforts forward.

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE LAB?

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