Research on Internationalizing Teacher Education: The Role of OIPs, and Underrepresented Groups

For this AIEA conference I want to share with you two aspects of my current research on teacher education. The first is an update of a presentation for a Beloit College conference some 18 months ago, on intracampus connections for internationalization. The second will be a few notes about research findings that may be relevant for underrepresented groups. Of course, I hope to demonstrate some connection between the two parts of this talk.

But first, some background. My general research topic is the *Prospects for Internationalizing Teacher Education*, and the project 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, and many of you have seen copies of the resulting report. My current grant extends the study to the preparation of elementary school teachers.

Backing up a little more, I might mention that I worked for many years as a Title VI program officer in the U. S. Department of Education. We were constantly urging grantees to strengthen their linkages with Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education (SCDEs), but year after year the grantees' reports indicated little change. 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.² 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.

Which gets me back to the current research project. With the help of a small advisory board, I have collected information through a series of open-ended but structured interviews – nearly 400 in all – with deans, faculty, student advisors, students, and a variety of senior administrators at 41 institutions (research and comprehensive universities and liberal arts colleges) ranging in size from 1,300 to 52,000 students, in nineteen states in the east, west, south, north, and in-between. I have done nearly as many interviews with people in Arts and Sciences as in Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education because, in fact, roughly 75% of the instruction for teacher preparation is normally in the liberal arts curriculum. In addition, about 100 current teachers have been interviewed or have completed an interview protocol as a questionnaire. So I now have a daunting amount of data to analyze.

Because the numbers of people in several of the subgroups, such as advisors, are relatively small, this research must be considered exploratory. Nonetheless, the overall results point to several recommendations that could make a difference in preparing students to be effective teachers in our

¹ Ann Imlah Schneider, *Internationalizing Teacher Education: What Can Be Done?* Washington, DC, 2003. Available from the author, and at *www.internationaledadvice.org*.

² Ann Imlah Schneider and Barbara B. Burn, *Federal Funding for International Studies: Does it Help? Does it Matter?* University of Massachusetts at Amherst, International Programs Office, 1999.

increasingly interconnected world – in other words, for building a more internationalized undergraduate curriculum for training teachers.

The topics in the study cover curriculum issues, foreign language study, programs for study and internships abroad, faculty development, and the roles of offices of international programs. Briefly summarizing:

- 1. The <u>advising</u> systems could use much more attention to international exposure, starting with the admissions process and pre-freshman orientation. Close to 90% of the responding current teachers said that undergraduate advising should include more attention to international options. Training for the advisors themselves could be a relatively low-cost place to start.
- 2. The <u>curriculum issues</u> include study abroad (which, realistically, is available to very few teachers-in-training), course content (and how it might be changed), and foreign language requirements (or lack thereof for the prospective teacher).
- 3. Consistent with the conclusions of the previous Title VI study on internationalizing the undergraduate curriculum, <u>faculty development</u> was considered a successful strategy for program strengthening and many respondents would like more of it.
- 4. <u>Policies</u> on "international" as part of the teacher certification process are scarce, but some SCDEs are initiating internationalization efforts, and are encouraged by senior administrators as well as colleagues in Arts and Sciences.
- 5. The research also explored some **governance** issues, and these are what I want to talk about today.

Consensus?

Although nearly all the campuses that I visited have <u>offices of international programs</u>, knowledge about the mandates of such offices was very uneven. Indeed, I was a little surprised to get, on the same campus, different answers to what seemed like straightforward questions about ways in which all students may receive international exposure. You too may have noticed that a few people on your campuses may not seem to be fully informed, so perhaps you may be alerted by some numbers on issues that need more attention.

The interview protocols vary somewhat for each category of respondent, so I have chosen to examine closely the responses to 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. 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. But this seemed not to be the case (which, of course, raises questions about institutions that may be less advanced in their internationalization efforts). My approach in this part of the analysis has been to guess from the preponderance of responses what the consensus answer (yes or no) seemed to be for each campus, and then to count the answers that were different from the apparent consensus. (I have not attempted to check the accuracy of what seem to be the consensus responses.)

The <u>first</u> interview question I looked at is "Are undergraduates required to take at least one international or comparative general education course?" (Most respondents seemed to recognize that a

multicultural requirement is not necessarily international.) The consensus response was "yes" for 28 campuses and "no" for 13, but more importantly for purposes of this paper, there was complete agreement, on either yes or no, at less than 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 this does not seem to be the case, for this question. Irrespective of size, the position of the respondent at the institution may make a difference – while faculty members (and advisors) (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, although the difference is less than for faculty.

The <u>second</u> question examined in this exercise is whether the institution has a university-wide foreign language requirement, of any sort. Actually, this question is a little less straightforward than it may seem, since institutions may define a language requirement in a variety of ways.³ Nonetheless, the consensus response seems to be that 13 do have a requirement and 28 do not. Again there was total agreement (either yes or no) on less than half of the campuses – in this instance, 17 – and again agreement happened at all types of institutions (research universities, comprehensive universities, and liberal arts colleges) and for any institutional size; the dissenters, however, were a little more likely to be at larger institutions. For this question the total number of dissenters was less than it was for the question on the international general education requirement, and here the faculty seem to be dissenting about as frequently as senior administrators. Arts and Sciences deans might be a little below average in consistency, but the differences are not remarkable.

The third question is "Can students do internships abroad?" Nearly all institutions seem to have possibilities for internships, but there was agreement that this is the case at only 16 of the 41 institutions. (The question is relevant, because a strategy discussed later in the interview was the possibility for teachers-in-training to do practice teaching overseas.) There seemed to be a little more likelihood of agreement at research institutions than at either liberal arts colleges or comprehensive universities. At the institutions where there was not agreement, faculty members were again a little more likely to be in disagreement about the facts on this, as were people in Education. Arts and Sciences deans were also a little more heavily represented among the dissenters than the percentage of their total numbers in the pool.

Advising, and Offices of International Programs

Another question with "yes/no" responses dealt with who does students' formal academic advising. Most of the institutions fit the NACADA model, with a professional advising center for undergraduates whose major is "undeclared" and faculty advising for students who have decided on a major (although I might note – again, with NACADA – that an increasing number of liberal arts departments at larger institutions seem to be turning to professional advisors). On a few campuses the response was emphatic that only faculty do advising throughout, including the "undeclareds," while

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³ Ann Imlah Schneider, *Language Instruction and Prospective Teachers: Preliminary Findings and Recommendations*, presented at the ILR Showcase, July 29, 2005; available at *www.internationaledadvice.org*.

A Roberta Flaherty, Executive Director, NACADA, interview by author, Manhattan, KS, September 26, 2001

another occasional response (usually from a dean) emphatically hoped that faculty would <u>not</u> 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 in Education, and perhaps in other specialized professional schools.

Indeed, for prospective teachers, advising is more complicated than for other majors because most do not only an Arts and Sciences major (or equivalent), for which they have an advisor, but also a certification program in Education – with separate advising. (Here it should be noted that in putting together the data for this paper I counted the few professional advisors interviewed 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. Yet I found some institutions where undergraduates are allowed to navigate requirements with no advising, often making expensive (wrong) choices. Another layer of complications appears for the increasing number of students who do their first two undergraduate years at community colleges – and we'll hear a little more about that in a few minutes.

So you see that with faculty in both Arts and Sciences and Education doing considerable formal advising for teachers-in-training (not to mention the likely informal suggestions), their full understanding of international and academic options and requirements is essential. Yet my small sample of data indicates that the faculty may be poorly informed on international options in the curriculum. The <u>intra</u>campus 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 better information about international options is very much needed to encourage better student understanding about the world beyond.

Moving to a somewhat different, but related, set of issues, I also asked questions related to Offices of International Programs, which I'll refer to as OIPs, which could be playing a key role. Most, but not all, of the campuses I visited have them, but even when I asked if the campus has an OIP the responses sometimes differed – and you may be interested to know that on campuses where there seemingly was <u>not</u> such an office serving the entire institution, some faculty, and even an Education dean (or department chair), reported that there is one!

Focusing on those campuses that do have OIPs, what are their roles and services? Here again there was great variety in the responses. Yes, the question was an open-ended one, and yes, I occasionally did a bit of prompting in this part of the interview, but among the 38 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 told about? Table 1 provides the data.

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.

These are consistent with AIEA's survey data reported at the 2005 meetings and available on its website.⁵

Table 1
Functions of University Offices of International Programs
as reported by interviewees, compared with AIEA data

| Function | <u>OIPs</u> N=56 | All Others N=237 | AIEA Survey primary/secondary N=76 |
|---|---------------------|------------------|--|
| Study abroad | 38 | 190 | |
| Exchange programs, linkages | 23 | 44 | |
| Program development (for study abroad, exchanges) | 16 | 35 | |
| Internships abroad | 4 | 5 | |
| Study abroad, exchanges | | | 88% / 9% |
| International students | 33 | 158 | |
| International visitors, lecturers | 24 | 79 | |
| International students & scholars | | | 80% / 13% |
| Facilitating faculty travel | 19 | 78 | |
| Facilitating curriculum development | 11 | 32 | |
| Facilitating grant applications | 3 | 13 | |
| Faculty seminars | 2 | 6 | |
| Faculty/curriculum development | | | 24% / 53% |
| ESL program | 6 | 7 | |
| International training/ESL | | | 40% / 33% |
| Area, international, foreign language studies major/minor | 7 | 13 | 20% / 43% |
| Film, speaker series, festivals | 15 | 33 | |
| International house | 2 | 3 | |
| Passport application acceptance | 3 | 4 | |
| Fundraising | 2 | 0 | |
| Other | | | 44% / 44% |
| International representation | 2 | 0 | 80% / 20% |
| Community outreach | 4 | 4 | 59% / 24% |
| International contracting | 0 | 0 | 38% / 33% |

However, many of the categories of activity recorded by me and by the AIEA do not exactly match, because the AIEA survey used several categories that were either more general or more specific than what was reported to me in the interviews. Here I should note that my interviews did not include a menu of possibilities, as the AIEA survey did, but rather respondents were asked to give their own descriptions of OIP functions. This partly explains why the remaining data from my interviews and the AIEA survey are less congruent, as you can see in Table 1. For example, some functions, such as fundraising and international representation, were rarely mentioned in my interviews, and then only by people in the OIPs, while some OIP responsibilities that seem fairly

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⁵ www.aieaworld.org (under Campus and Administrative Programs)

numerous in my interview data do not appear, except perhaps as "other," in the AIEA data. That community outreach was mentioned by only 7% of my OIP interviewees (and by less than 3% of all my interviewees), compared with more than 80% of the AIEA respondents is a phenomenon that perhaps another panelist can explain – the difference seems greater than the methodological distinction between an open-ended interview and a simple menu on a questionnaire might explain.

Similarly, the AIEA menu did not include any activity related to advising – nor did my interviews reveal that function in this part of the conversation. However, later in my interviews, many OIP staff did report participation, for varying periods of time, in freshman orientation. Rather than training other advisors, OIP staff seem to be doing some advising themselves.

Education interviewees were asked how they were trained about the international needs of the pre-service teacher, and 70% replied simply that they are not. "How do advisors get the information they need to share with their advisees?" was I asked of both Education and A&S interviewees. One person responded 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 email, then newsletters, and memos; in the recent round of interviews, e-mail was much more frequently cited. Asked how advising might be improved, workshops were mentioned by less than 20% of the respondents – by 28% of the Arts and Sciences respondents, and by only 16% from the Education, perhaps a relevant difference. Several other suggestions were made about how to improve advisors' understanding of students' needs for international exposure and the international options for them. Among the suggestions are

- overseas experience for the advisors themselves (such as participation in evaluation of overseas programs), including those doing freshman advising;
- improvements in guidelines [and checklists] for advisors;
- more exposure of advisors to graduates who have been shaped by international training;
- more appearances by OIP staff at department meetings; and
- leadership at the deans' level.

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 and that OIPs should be more involved in the training and constant updating of <u>all</u> who do advising – the faculty, professional advising staff, and even admissions officers. If prospective undergraduates who are considering teaching careers are interested in foreign language study and/or overseas experience (study abroad, classroom observation, and/or internships), they must be helped by knowledgeable advisors to start planning for it even before Day One of their undergraduate experience.

Other OIP Activity

Another element that the AIEA data do not show is perceptions of the OIP in other parts of the institution – "All Others" in the second column of figures in Table 1 – and this is another point where my data are relevant to the teacher education question. About a third of my interviewees reported OIP help with international travel, but fewer than 25% of the responses told of other activities that would contribute to faculty development, such as help with grant applications, curriculum development, or a seminar program. In addition, it is interesting to note how few (5%) seemed to be aware of the OIP

work in the administration of area or international studies majors and programs, which was reported by nearly 20% of the OIPs themselves. Put a little differently, my raw data show that of the 14 campuses where the senior administrators reported OIP assistance for curriculum development, less than half were campuses where any other interviewees mentioned this possibility. Interestingly, at seven others, where OIPs themselves did not report providing encouragement for curriculum development, such OIP assistance was cited by other interviewees, although more likely by people in Arts and Sciences than in Education.

Indeed, on campuses whose OIPs have many functions (four or more, as reported to me) – and there were at least 29 of them – at least 80 people attributed fewer functions to them than their (OIP) Directors reported – and most of those who underreported were in Education. On the other hand, for a few, the OIP was attributed more capabilities by others than they themselves reported!

Interestingly, in their listings of OIP functions, very few interviewees (less than 1%) mentioned improving campus communication about international options. A conclusion I draw from this is that Offices of International Programs, charged with institution-wide facilitation of a variety of internationalizing activities and services, may need to work harder to make their current services better known. Given the focus of my research on teacher education, I was of course wondering whether faculty and deans in Education were less informed about OIP services, and while this may be the case, the data seem to indicate more clearly a need for improved connections between OIPs and both Education and A&S – and probably other university units as well.

The Underrepresented

Although the data I have reported so far show some tilt of attention away from SCDEs, there are other indications as well that students, and perhaps faculty, in Education are underrepresented in internationalizing activities. One is study abroad participation – the numbers reported to me by SCDEs are very low for teachers-in-training. I will also be looking closely at my data on overseas experience for faculty as I work on a final report for the project. Information from current teachers will be relevant here too.

Moving to the questions about other "underrepresented groups" in our internationalization efforts, I can report my general impression that many of the issues in the HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) and HSIs (Hispanic Speaking Institutions) that I visited did not seem significantly different from other campuses. But there are exceptions: The HBCUs that I visited were more likely than others to have a foreign language requirement, as did the HSIs. And the "international" or comparative courses that may be required by HBCUs tend to be limited to Africa – which, in turn, means that development of other area expertise is still very much needed at many HBCUs. Similarly, the HSIs may need encouragement to cover more world areas than Latin America.

In addition, there were likely more first-generation college students, more part time students, more needs for financial aid, and probably more transfer students at the HBCUs and HSIs – all of which provide added challenges to internationalization efforts. Increasing study abroad participation for these students probably requires more marketing, more pre-departure orientation for students and their families, and particularly careful advising in advance, during, and after the overseas experience. It also probably requires more programmatic flexibility – more options for short term introductory

overseas experiences. (Indeed, IIE's recent study abroad data show an increase in short term programs, indicating one kind of response to this need.⁶)

Most other characteristics, including the communication patterns (or lack thereof) seem to be similar.

Another "underrepresented group" challenge was also discussed in several of my interviews: the increasing enrollments at community colleges. We'll hear more about that from community college experts, but I do want to share findings on this topic at the four-year institutions I visited. I learned that the increasing numbers who transfer from community colleges – as many as 75% for one of the Colleges of Education I visited – need much more attention than they are currently receiving, and that including "international" for the transfer student is an added challenge. For example, in at least one state where the universities have a foreign language requirement students transferring from community colleges are exempted from it. Even with good advising, satisfying general education curriculum requirements, let alone the needed prerequisites for a major, or a teacher certification program, can be difficult, and adding international exposure to that may seem impossible. From students I talked with who had begun at a community college, I learned of significant disappointments with the advising available for their early college years. However, I also learned that in a few states efforts are being made to improve coordination and training for advisors in both systems. Do these improvements include exploration of international options? OIPs should make sure that they do.

So you can see why I would urge all OIPs to become more active in spreading the word – reaching out to advisors in both community colleges and in their own four-year institutions. It seems clear that much more can be done on most campuses to be sure that all parts of every campus are fully aware of international opportunities – for all faculty and for all students.

In conclusion, yes, to some extent there are special challenges to internationalizing the undergraduate experience of prospective teachers – most particularly the "time in curriculum" and the advising problems. However, the broader challenge is in the university context, the need for better communication for all concerned – so that <u>all</u> 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, in foreign language instruction, and in overseas experiences.

I hope that this brief research report has added a little to what you already know – and look forward to your questions and suggestions.

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⁶ Presentation by Peggy Blumenthal of the Institute of International Education on December 7, 2005 at the American Council on Education.