

Salisbury University



International Education Strategic Plan

2009-2014

Introduction and Overview

The last strategic plan for international education at Salisbury University covered the years 1999-2004. It was prepared by an ad-hoc committee of the Faculty Senate. The plan was never updated. Since 2004 the university has worked without an updated strategic vision for internationalizing the campus.

Since 2004 the university has taken some important steps in internationalizing the campus. The most important of these steps was the creation in spring 2006 of the SU Center for International Education (SUCIE). As the university community continues to move forward in the general direction of preparing students to succeed in an “increasingly interdependent world,” in the words of the current Salisbury University Mission Statement, the time has come to re-focus the University’s efforts in this area. In order to make informed decisions as to what international initiatives to pursue and why, the University must identify its most important priorities.

The International Programs Committee (IPC) of the Faculty Senate was created in 2000 following the recommendations of the 1999-2004 Strategic Plan. The charge of the committee includes “providing guidance in the development of new international initiatives for the University.” The following strategic plan was drafted by the staff of the SUCIE with full consultation and cooperation of the IPC.

For the purposes of the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan, International Education is generally defined but not limited to the following: experiences abroad, international students, international curriculum, international professional development for faculty, other international outreach and development. In order to continue to improve and develop international education at SU, the following goals are recommended:

Goals for 2009-2014

Goal #1 Incorporate international education in the University's mission statement

The current mission statement does not mention international education in any meaningful way. A strong statement should be added to the mission statement attesting to the University's commitment to preparing students to become citizens of the world and to helping them succeed in a global economy through increased opportunities in international education.

Goal #2 Increase number of study abroad students

a. Continue to improve excellent short-term faculty-led international programs

In order to maintain quality and allow for the continued development of short-term faculty-led international programs, the university must increase its support for these programs. This support is particularly needed in administrative areas like budgeting, registration, billing, collections, orientations, and student affairs. The resources and expertise of administrative offices on campus need to be marshaled to support faculty willing to provide these invaluable global experiences to SU students.

b. Develop semester programs abroad

In order to continue to develop meaningful global opportunities for SU students, the University must expand its offering to semester-length programs. Salisbury University currently offers no semester-length study abroad programs that either offer home SU academic credit, or which provide SU administrative, academic, or student support on site overseas.

c. Develop four or five key SU sites abroad for program development

Salisbury University has several quality foreign partners with whom it has functioning Memoranda of Understanding (MOU). These sites provide obvious opportunities to begin establishing comprehensive SU foreign programs. These existing partners, as well as others that can be developed, can provide the synergy of common sites for short-term faculty-led study abroad programs, semester and year-long programs, faculty and staff exchanges, and other international initiatives.

d. Develop advising and marketing

In order to continue to develop meaningful global opportunities for SU students, SUCIE and the whole University must expand its marketing and outreach to faculty, students, parents, and the whole University community.

e. Scholarships

The cost of study abroad programs makes them inaccessible to many students who could most benefit from such an experience. The University must continue to aggressively pursue scholarships for study abroad. These efforts might include private fund raising efforts through the Salisbury University Foundation, as well as improved advising on regional and national scholarships.

Goal #3 Increase presence of international students

a. Establish an effective recruitment plan

In order to increase the number of international students the University must be thoughtful and strategic in how it seeks these students. The recruitment plan must consider limits in resources (money, staff, time) and maximize “arm-chair” recruitment strategies.

b. Increase the number of exchange agreements with partners abroad

Because of the University’s relatively low tuition costs in comparison to other American universities, exchange agreements are an excellent tool to move students abroad and to attract foreign students. The agreements must be strategically planned to assure a proper balance of incoming and outgoing students as well as geographical diversity. An expansion of exchange opportunities also assumes the University’s acquiring of permission to offer the J-1 exchange visa from the US Department of State.

c. Develop Intensive English Language Program

Seventy percent of Salisbury University’s peer institutions maintain an Intensive English Language Program. At Salisbury University, such a program can be financially self-sufficient while providing the opportunity to increase our international student numbers. It can include a “bridge” element that would allow students to transition from the English Language Program to the academic program.

d. Improve international student support

Particular challenges in the area of international student support include: providing cultural, linguistic and immigration guidance for faculty to strengthen advising strategies; providing assistance with quality housing, transportation, community connections; providing successful adjustment and orientation activities; facilitating integration with SU community; fostering academic but out-of-classroom relationships between international student and American students and faculty with the same academic interests.

e. Strengthen ties with international alumni

International student alumni live and work around the world. Their ongoing friendship and support for international initiatives at their alma mater can be of substantial strategic value.

Goal #4 Increase opportunities for international scholarly activities for faculty

a. Obtain authority to offer J visas

Currently Salisbury University does not have authority from the US Department of State to offer the J visa. That means that the University cannot host a visiting international faculty or scholar without the assistance of an outside agency like the Fulbright Foundation. The University must acquire this authority and then maintain it by sponsoring a minimum of five J visas per year.

b. Develop Visiting International Scholar Chair in each of the four schools

Once the University acquires the ability to offer the J visa, each of the four schools must actively seek opportunities to invite international scholars to campus to teach and conduct research. Using funding currently dedicated to hiring part-time adjunct faculty, the four schools should be able to set aside resources to bring at least one visiting international scholar per year. The international

scholar might teach a summer course or fill the position otherwise filled by a part-time contractual employee during the semester.

c. Establish faculty award for outstanding contribution to global education

International education has always been advanced first and foremost by dedicated members of the Salisbury University faculty. The university should create an award that recognizes faculty leaders in international education on campus. This kind of attention and reward will be valuable in encouraging faculty to continue to dedicate the time and efforts to internationalizing the University.

d. Increase flow of domestic SU faculty to key SU sites abroad

As the university develops strategic sites abroad for short-term, semester, and year-long study abroad programs, the opportunity will present itself to exchange faculty with our partners abroad. The university needs to encourage academic departments and faculty to engage with our foreign partners by sending faculty abroad to teach and conduct research.

Goal #5 Promote the further internationalization of the on campus curriculum

a. Create new area studies minors

Area-specific, interdisciplinary studies minors provide exciting opportunities to internationalize the curriculum for students of diverse academic interests. Opportunities to create area-specific studies minors that include a study abroad experience are particularly attractive. Some area-specific programs to be created might be Asian Studies, European Studies, Latin American Studies, Middle Eastern Studies and African Studies.

b. Increase course work in lesser taught languages

Coursework in foreign languages has been limited to Spanish, French, German, and low-level Russian for many years. Efforts to expand offerings in such languages as Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic, and other lesser taught languages must be supported. The challenge of low-enrollment for such courses might be confronted by expanding the offering of lesser taught languages through strategic partnerships with foreign institutions that might include online courses and remote location course offerings.

c. Encourage the enhancement of the international character of all courses

There are numerous ways to globalize the curriculum without foreign travel. Many courses may be augmented by adding an international component to their academic content. Such efforts will provide opportunities to include current international concerns in just about any scholastic environment.

d. Strengthen international experiences for international and foreign language majors

Current study abroad requirements in internationally focused majors like International Studies, International Business, French and Spanish may be satisfied by short-term study abroad programs. In order for students to develop comprehensive knowledge of the international content featured in their chosen majors, they must spend as much time abroad as possible. The University needs to maximize efforts to make available to students in these academic disciplines longer study abroad programs, such as semester or year long programs.

Goal #6 Promote the further development of awareness of international issues on campus and in the community

a. Develop service and volunteer projects abroad

While the University will always focus primarily on credit-bearing study abroad opportunities for students, the development of an annual service project abroad, particularly as an alternative spring break, is an excellent strategy for continuing to develop a culture of global engagement among the entire student body.

b. Establish grant for international development for staff

In addition to cultivating global opportunities for students and faculty, initiatives must be pursued to include staff. Through small grants, staff, especially those most integral in supporting administrative aspects of international education, can be encouraged to visit strategic SU sites abroad, participate on short-term study abroad programs, or travel with global service projects.

c. Develop international continuing education programs for the community and alumni

As the university develops continuing education opportunities for the community on campus, it must also pursue such opportunities abroad. The growth of the baby-boom retirement community on the eastern shore, and the aging of SU alumni provide tremendous opportunities for the University to reach out to the community and alumni to offer programs that feature Salisbury University's commitment to global education.

d. Increase private fundraising for international education

As the University reaches out to the community and to alumni with international initiatives, the opportunity will present itself to make friends that might support international education on campus. The university must intentionally and aggressively pursue these opportunities to win friends and donors for international education on campus.