

University Chair Final Report (2018-2021)

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Internationalizing the uOttawa Campus: A Mapping & Mobilization Exercise

Introduction

Internationalization in higher education is a crucial pathway for preparing the next generation of leaders to work in a global world. Students who receive an education that focuses on global citizenship and international education are better positioned for working in cross-cultural contexts, intercultural spaces and diverse work environments. They are also better informed and prepared to be engaged and active citizens in their communities. When I began my three-year term as University Chair in Teaching in April 2018, I had a vision for mapping and mobilizing internationalization at the University of Ottawa focussing on three features of internationalization: 1. educational experiences of international students studying at the University of Ottawa; 2. study/learn abroad opportunities and impacts for University of Ottawa students; 3. pedagogy, course design and teaching opportunities (decolonizing and internationalizing the curriculum) and community-based global learning (internationalization at home). Over the past three years, I have been able to research and document all three of these themes. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the way we study internationalization and the changing nature of opportunities for global learning. In this report I outline some of the major learning outcomes and outputs from these three areas of research.

Background to the Study

Universities across Canada have committed to internationalization strategies. University of Ottawa engaged in a review process (2017-2018), and a renewal process (2020-2023). In 2020, the University of Ottawa unveiled its 2020-2023 *Transformation 2030 Strategic Plan*, which commits to several vital internationalization strategies including building “an interconnected world by fostering relationships between the University of Ottawa and the global community”; promoting and implementing “sustainable practices” in all areas of operations, and in playing “an impactful role in raising the profile of international education and contributing to internationalization in all its forms on campus and [around the world](#)” (University of Ottawa, 2020).

Leading up to the *Transformation 2030 Strategic Plan*, an advisory committee to the Vice President and Provost underscored the need for better data and information about current internationalization strategies at uOttawa including service learning options, international research collaborations, internationalized curriculum, increased support for international

students, study abroad and international practicum options, and e-courses that link students from different countries in a virtual classroom, to name a few.

Report on Findings

1. International Student experiences at uOttawa

In 2018 the research began on international student experiences and their pathways to English language training at the University of Ottawa. To conduct this research, we carried out focus group discussions with more than 50 international students to better understand the language needs and gaps. We conducted a systematic review of the literature on pathways to second language training and carried out interviews and meetings with key informants at the Telfer School of Business and at the International Official Languages Bureau (ILOB) at uOttawa. The final product from this research was an 80-page report presented to the VP and Provost: David Graham and a presentation to the Chief Internationalization Office: Adel El Zaim. The findings were also presented as a conference paper and presentation at the Canadian Association for the Study of International Development (CASID) in June 2019 at the University of British Columbia. The findings were also prepared in a separate presentation for the International Studies Association conference in March 2019 in San Francisco.

Several recommendations are provided in the full report but one in particular is now being adopted: English language training support for students in large first year classes.

Rebecca Tiessen “Pathways for International Student Learning”, A report for University of Ottawa VP and Provost”, December 2018.

The Executive Summary of the Pathways Report is provided here:

Executive Summary

International students enrich campus life, bringing diverse experiences, competencies and knowledge. Attracting and retaining high caliber international students remain important priorities for the University of Ottawa. The purpose of this report is to provide a set of recommendations for improving the intensive language training programs at the University of Ottawa.

The report begins with an overview of the challenges experienced by international students who travel to Canada for their post-secondary studies and to examine opportunities for improved international student transition to campus life. The report summarizes findings from research conducted between July and December 2018. Information was collected through document and literature review, focus groups with 55 international students (August 9th and December 4th), and consultation with knowledge experts at the University of Ottawa.

Section 1 of this report provides a general context and summary of findings, including an overview of the literature and the distinctive contributions international students make to campus

life in Canada and at the University of Ottawa, as well as some of the challenges they face. The first section ends with a brief introduction to the current intensive language training cohorts at the University of Ottawa. Section 2 provides an overview of the different Pathways Models adopted in Canada and the strengths and challenges of the Pathways model currently employed at University of Ottawa. The final section (Section 3) summarizes recommendations for revising and improving the Pathway programs at the University of Ottawa and elaborates on some additional considerations that are needed to ensure that international students have an improved educational, academic and campus life experience at University of Ottawa.

The core findings (elaborated in Section 3 in the recommendations section) and summarized here highlight priorities for University of Ottawa to:

- 1. Maintain our strengths in offering diverse program models with respect to language training to match the diverse needs of international students. The OLBI's English/French Intensive Programs are well-developed models that offer essential support and services to students who have low language scores (below IELTS 6.0 overall/6.0 writing).*
- 2. Consider opportunities for scaling up Curriculum Adjustment pathway models that offer streamed pathways for international students (hybrid language/academic content courses) to ensure students are exposed to academic content and the vocabulary related to their field of study earlier in their programs, while also gaining more academic credits in their first year than the current model allows. Building on the successes in Telfer, this model of streamed pathways could be scaled up in other faculties.*
- 3. Enhance and scale-up opportunities for language proficiency training with broader experiential and work-integrated learning opportunities to ensure deeper immersion and development of appropriate vocabulary, skills and competencies. Building on the success of existing activities such as the Michäelle Jean Centre for Global and Community Engagement (MJCGCE) days of service activities, more opportunities for experiential learning will enhance cultural integration of international students.*
- 4. Improve communication with international students before they arrive and during their time at the University, in order to ensure information about resources is available and notifications about important information are clearly communicated. The introduction of an app such as "icent" is highly recommended to improve communication with international students. In addition to the excellent resources already provided to international students, more information could be made available and current University of Ottawa students are developing a handbook of resources that could benefit international students. Crowdsourcing information about practical information such as location of specialty food stores, etc., from the University of Ottawa community would be of great benefit to international students.*
- 5. Facilitate improved student and faculty involvement in the strategies used to ensure international student academic success. Learning from faculty members about the effective practices already in place in their classes is vital to sharing strategies and training programs for current and incoming professors. Current and in-coming faculty members require a toolkit, training and/or resources to help them better support international students. Language instructors at the University of Ottawa are a*

particularly valuable resource for sharing information, skills, resources and techniques with the broader university faculty. They can provide training on linguistic and cultural adaptation challenges that will help inform professors of the distinct experiences faced by international students.

- 6. Build a strong university community that promotes internationalization and a welcoming environment for international students would benefit all students. Offering additional opportunities for student-to-student interaction through a scaled-up Buddy program and online/e-volunteering between students could enhance the integration experience of students and improve writing skills through email exchanges. Involving University of Ottawa students in the design of these social innovations is also recommended (see student report attached).*

2. Study abroad and international experiential learning

A second area of focus for this research portfolio included analysing outbound student mobility. For this research, we examined global service learning program modalities, student civic responsibility outcomes from study abroad, and framed this in the context of fair trade learning principles.

The research expanded to include an analysis of the impact of international experiential learning on gender equality programs in 10 countries in the Global South. The research and writing on this are ongoing. In 2018-2019, I secured additional funding to send or hire 10 researchers to conduct data analysis in 10 countries (Peru, Guatemala, Nepal, Vietnam, Ghana, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, Senegal and Uganda). I hired one research assistant locally in Nepal and sent 9 university of Ottawa students abroad for 2 months of research and data collection in the other 9 countries. These placements gave students experiential learning and research acquisition skills. Students were given training on how to conduct research, how to write up findings in reports, how to analyse data and also (for 7 of the researchers) how to produce academic publications out of this work. We started this project with the development of an ethics application. To assist with the project, I travelled to Ghana, Vietnam and Tanzania to take part in data collection, meet with partner organizations, design the research, finalize ethics applications in country, etc. in 2019.

Findings of the research were presented in Rwanda in October 2019 at the International Volunteer Cooperation Organization (IVCO) conference, in November in South Carolina (Global Service Learning conference), in November in San Diego (ARNOVA conference, November 2019). In 2020 I presented findings of research in Fiji (online conference), IVCO conference in October. In 2021, I presented findings at the Las Vegas (online conference), International Studies Association conference in April. An additional presentation given on this research was to Haverford College on “Title: The Roles and Impacts of Transnational Actors in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Programs”, February 25, 2021

Major activities as part of this project included mentoring students to prepare final papers to be published in a *Voluntaris Journal* special issue (January-April 2021) and editorial work to assist students to publish these papers May-onwards 2021. The papers will be published in September 2021.

Several publications came out from my research on this theme during my tenure as University Chair including:

Rebecca Tiessen, Katelyn Cassin, Benjamin J. Lough, International development volunteering as a catalyst for long-term prosocial behaviours of returned Canadian volunteers, *Citizenship Teaching and Learning*, Volume 16, Issue 1 (2021)

Rebecca Tiessen, Jessica Cadesky, Benjamin J. Lough, and Jim Delaney, Scholar/practitioner research in international development volunteering: benefits, challenges and future opportunities, *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, Volume Online first (November 2020) [doi: 10.1080/02255189.2020.1841606](https://doi.org/10.1080/02255189.2020.1841606)

Rebecca Tiessen, Sheila Rao, Benjamin J. Lough, International Development Volunteering as Transformational Feminist Practice for Gender Equality, *Journal of Development Studies* (November 2020) [doi: 10.1177/0169796X20972260](https://doi.org/10.1177/0169796X20972260)

Sheila Rao, Rebecca Tiessen, Whose Feminism (s)? Overseas Partner Organization's Perceptions of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), *International Journal* (Sage, September 2020) [doi: 10.1177/0020702020960120](https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702020960120)

Benjamin J. Lough, Cliff Allum, Peter Devereux, Rebecca Tiessen, The Global Research Agenda on Volunteering for Peace and Development, *Voluntaris: Journal of Volunteer Services*, Volume 7, Issue 1, 113-123 (April 2019)

Rebecca Tiessen. WE's International Development Identity Problem, McLeod Group Blog, (July 2020) Canada, Ottawa <https://www.mcleodgroup.ca/2020/07/wes-international-development-identity-problem/>

Additional publications that are forthcoming include an edited book collection called:

Rebecca Tiessen (editor) *Innovations in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Understanding the Role of International Development Volunteers (IDVs) as Transnational Actors* for *Voluntaris*. I have written the Introduction and co-authored all papers in the collection (10 in total) as well as the conclusion.

3. Pedagogy, Course Design and Teaching

The third area of focus for the Research Chair on “Internationalizing the uOttawa Campus: A Mapping & Mobilization Exercise” involved research on pedagogy and course design. Over the three years of the research chair, I conducted focus groups, meetings, research, presentations and report-writing.

In May 2019, I co-hosted a workshop with the Teaching and Learning Support Services (TLSS) at the University of Ottawa. The focus of this workshop was to gain insights into the strategies employed by instructors and TAs on campus to learn more about existing strategies for internationalization of the campus. The TLSS workshop brought together 25 members of the

University of Ottawa community to share their experiences with internationalization of the curriculum. The workshop allowed participants to share their knowledge with each other. Following the workshop, several participants (13) sent in summary reports highlighting strategies they plan to use or currently use to improve internationalization of the curriculum. Examples included: including cultural components in courses, providing opportunities for students to share their cultural experiences with each other, linking community service learning to global understanding, providing better support and mentorship for international students, increasing the number of international examples and case studies used in class to create better cultural representation, etc.

Over the three years of the University Chair, I also worked with a team of research assistants and co-op students to complete literature reviews of pedagogical possibilities for better internationalization and to help design internationalization course content for the uOGlobal program. I regularly met with faculty members, staff and students to learn about internationalization strategies offered on at the University of Ottawa.

In summer 2018, I arranged for a leading expert on internationalization to visit University of Ottawa. With funding from the Vice President Research and the University Chair funding, Dr. Eric Hartman came to campus to meet with members of the campus community and provide ideas for improving internationalization of curriculum and experiential learning.

The research assistants and I prepared reports, conference papers and journal articles. Among the presentations made from this research work included a presentation in Las Vegas (Online) for the International Studies Association conference where I presented on three panels on pedagogy related to internationalization (April 2021).

Over the three years as University Chair, I also created a Social Innovation (University of Ottawa Ventures program) course that involved community partners in Canada as well partners in four countries (Malawi, Kenya, Nepal and Mexico). In 2019 students worked on project proposals to promote internationalization on campus and in 2021, students in my DVM 2106 course worked with these four partners to development literature reviews and project proposals to develop solutions to local problems in those countries. The students in this course completed public presentations (online) to community judges as part of the Social Innovation Showcase at University of Ottawa.

In January-April 2021, I co-created a new course at the University of Ottawa in the School of International Development and Global Studies to offer students international practicum placements (virtual) through international internships with partners around the world. This course was first offered in May-June 2021.

I also attended several seminars on decolonizing and indigenizing the curriculum offered by our Indigenous colleagues. I have also worked with the Director of my School to develop a strategy to focus on decolonizing and indigenizing all course syllabi for our School.

I regularly took part in the ASOTL meetings including the workshop on September 3, 2020.

Between 2018-2021, I worked closely with the Development Studies Association (Student Society) to assist with the International Development Week conference (a student-run conference

that brings together more than 150 students, practitioners, scholars and thinkers on issues pertaining to international issues). I helped students design panels, secure funding and deliver the conference events.

Several publications came out of this research work including:

Rebecca Tiessen (2021) “Teaching Social Innovation to Address ‘Wicked Problems’: Combining Problem Solving with Critical Analyses” in *Teaching and Learning in a Time of Disruption*, Heather A. Smith and David J. Hornsby (eds), Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rebecca Tiessen (forthcoming) “Integrating International Experiential Learning into Educational Design in International Studies: Addressing Old Challenges, Creating New Opportunities” in *Oxford Handbook of International Studies Pedagogy*, Marc Boyer, Heather Smith and David Hornsby (eds) (forthcoming).

Other Outputs that were generated from the Internationalization work included the design of new course materials for the uOGlobal course (GLO 49011/49012 and 1901/1902 - bilingual online resources). These resources were created in English and French in summer of 2020. The material was offered in the academic year 2020-2021.

I also designed a set of microcredit courses for the Faculty of Social Sciences that focus on internationalization and experiential learning. As part of this work, I created a handbook on micro-credit course options with information about what is required (including readings and assignments) to receive the microcredits.

Between 2018-2021 I was actively involved in the setting up and design of uOGlobal. I worked with a team of students, scholars and staff to design the initial uOGlobal course. I attended the Saturday workshops and events for uOGlobal in 2018 and 2019. In 2020, I took over this course, updated the materials, put resources, recorded lectures, etc. online and added an academic course option for uOGlobal. I worked closely with the staff at the International Office over this three year period to make sure that the experiential learning opportunities as part of uOGlobal were well linked to the course material. I also co-designed the live sessions with staff from the international office.

In 2020-2021 (the first year of offering the uOGlobal recognition + academic credit), there were more than 180 students enrolled in this program from more than 8 faculties (Social Sciences, Arts, Law, Engineering, Health Sciences, Medicine, Business Administration and Science) across campus. Students registered in uOGlobal included undergraduates, Master’s students and PhD students. Students were able to learn important concepts including global citizenship, valuable skills such as intercultural communication and important insights such as anti-racism.

In preparing the updated resource for uOGlobal, there were several outputs generated including:

Rebecca Tiessen and Leva Rouhani “uOGlobal Module 1: Global Citizenship and Community-based Global Learning”

Rebecca Tiessen and Leva Rouhani “uOGlobal Module 2: Intercultural Interconnections and Critical Reflection”

Rebecca Tiessen and Leva Rouhani “uOGlobal Module 3: Understanding Active Global Citizenship”

A significant focus on racial inequality and antiracism was added to uOGlobal in 2020 and a report to the Provost in February 2021:

Rebecca Tiessen “Changements à uOGlobal pour intégrer l'apprentissage sur l'antiracisme”. Report to the Provost, February 2021.

To better inform my understanding of uOGlobal and community-based global learning, I organized a workshop with leading thinkers on this area of research to consider the future of locally based global learning. The workshop resulted in improved resource material for uOGlobal as well as a research initiative to track the learning outcomes of students who take part in global learning experiential learning. Over these three years, I also served on the Steering Committee for the Community-based Global Learning Collaborative (designing initiatives to promote education and research on this topic globally).

I presented my findings from research on community-based global learning at several conferences including the Global Service Learning conference in South Carolina in October 2019.

Other publications that came out of this work included:

Adrian Murray, John Cameron, and Rebecca Tiessen “Making the Next Wave of Canadian Students more Globally Minded”, *Open Canada*, September 11, 2018:

<https://opencanada.org/making-next-wave-canadian-students-more-globally-minded/>

Rebecca Tiessen, Leva Rouhani and Benjamin J. Lough (in development) “Global Service Learning Program Modalities, Student Civic Responsibility Outcomes and Considerations for Fair Trade Learning Principles”.

I presented findings from this research at conferences including: *Social Innovation and Community-Based Global Learning: Reflections on Course Design and Student Learning Outcomes* (paper to be developed for CASID 2019 and ISA conference 2020), and *Social Innovation or Social Distraction? Ethical Dimensions of Entrepreneurship in GSL Programming* (paper to be developed during writing retreat with international scholars in June 2019 in Seattle, to be presented at GSL – Global Service Learning – conference in Clemson, SC in November 2019, draft paper to be submitted as journal article for review by January 2020).

Over the three-year period, I also trained and mentored a large number of students. With funding from the University Chair program, I was able to support training opportunities and work placements for 6 co-op students (4 in year 1, 2 in year 2) and 16 Research Assistants. I co-created many training and pedagogical resources (3 course modules for uOGlobal), several recorded lectures and training materials, a new course on Education through Global Engagement: Rethinking Global Development (virtual international experiential learning placements), a Social Innovation course on International Project Proposal Development, and supported many professors in the design of internationalization of their syllabi. The vast majority of the funds from the University Chair were used to support mentorship and training of research assistants. Other outputs included 9 peer reviewed journal articles, 1 book, 2 op-eds, 4 reports and 10 conference presentations.

Conclusion

Internationalization of higher education requires a range of strategies from improved support for international students to enhanced opportunities for advancing global education. The University of Ottawa offers many important learning opportunities that will contribute to internationalization of the university campus. The research conducted for the University Chair in Teaching for “Internationalizing the uOttawa Campus: A Mapping & Mobilization Exercise” documents many of the existing strategies used by professors, teaching assistants, staff and students who are actively engaged in internationalization of the campus. Through the mapping exercise, this project uncovered a range of existing areas of strength in internationalization on campus including efforts to support international students through enhanced language training.

Additional opportunities for promoting and mobilizing internationalization were realized in the three-year period (from 2018-2021) including the design and delivery of the uOGlobal academic course and recognition program. Research carried out during the tenure of the University Chair also shed light on many important opportunities for expanding internationalization through new and innovative strategies to support ‘internationalization at home’ or community-based global learning. The COVID-19 pandemic and its implications for reduced travel opportunities for students has necessitated new ways of imagining international learning and global citizenship skills development. Innovations in course development from the uOGlobal recognition/academic credit to new course developments through virtual placements with partner organizations around the world have enhanced student learning opportunities at the University of Ottawa and helped to fill some of the gaps created by limited travel opportunities, while also increasing opportunities for global engagement for students who may have otherwise chosen not to go abroad. Global citizenship and community-based global learning skills are essential to the breadth of skills needed to compete in a global workforce. Strong cross-cultural communication skills are at the centre of effective learning and knowledge sharing and internationalization of the curriculum is a core strategy for building these competencies in students and preparing them for their future careers. Building on these valuable locally based learning opportunities through enhanced and expanded internationalization programming will be essential for the future of internationalization at the University of Ottawa.

Some opportunities to be considered in future program design include innovative internationalization programs that give students opportunities to study and work abroad, combined with solid wrap-around supports from the University of Ottawa to ensure that students can reflect on their time abroad (debriefing) and to receive counselling on how to market these skills when moving into careers. Other opportunities for enhancing internationalization of uOttawa programs include increased investments in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) to promote opportunities for students around the world to be linked with uOttawa students in a virtual collaborative learning environment. Finally, the expansion of opportunities for experiential learning in community-based global learning as part of the uOGlobal experience will give students valuable intercultural skills, linking them with community organizations and with students on campus to learn with and from each other. These skills are vital for preparing the next generation of leaders and citizens who require intercultural skills. Increased efforts are needed to promote the uOGlobal program on campus so that students can gain community-based global learning skills (through uOConnexion, Community Service Learning, etc). The uOGlobal program is an innovative university-wide initiative that sets University of Ottawa apart from other institutions in Canada. Students who take part in this program develop the skills and competencies they need for being active and engaged citizens and effective employees in a global workforce. Now that uOGlobal is a well-developed educational program (combining experiential learning with academic learning), the next steps include promoting this opportunity more widely on campus so that more students can develop these vital skills.