Faculty Survey Summary Report

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Background Information and Demographics

This document represents a summary of the information and data gathered through the use of the Faculty Survey for the American College of Education Laboratory Collaborative. The survey was administered through a web portal generated with the “Survey Monkey” service. Questions for the survey were developed through the efforts of the International Education Council and its associated faculty members. A snowball/respondent driven sampling method was used, where the faculty and staff of Western Michigan University were made aware of the survey through e-mails, general announcements at meetings of various administrative councils, communications from Dean level administration, and through peer recruitment. Out of a total of 4255 Western Michigan Employees, 19% of the total faculty, 1.2% of graduate assistants, and 10.8% of staff responded to the survey. The total percent of respondents (490) out of 4255 was 11.5%. This represents a sample size that is capable of producing data that is accurate to a 95% confidence level.

Of the College of Arts & Sciences, 11.1% of the total employees responded. From the College of Aviation, 5.7% of employees responded. Of the College of Business, 33.5% responded. From the College of Education, 9.3% responded. From the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, 15% of the total employees responded. From the College of Fine Arts, 8.5% responded. From the College of Health and Human Services, 13.8% responded. Finally, from the “Other” category, which included units related to Library services, Counseling, Physical Plant, Campus Safety, and other units not directly related to a specific academic college, 8.5% of total employees responded. 29 respondents did not specify any affiliation to category.

Of the 490 respondents, 55.6% were faculty, 2.2 percent were graduate assistants, and 42.1% were staff/employees (there will be an inconsistency later in this report due to the fact that the employees and graduate assistants are differentiated from the staff category later in this document, due to having to rectify data format with the format of the official university statistical report).

Of those who attempted the survey, roughly 30% did not answer all questions. Although under a highly rigorous study this would technically create two sample sets (full responders and partial responders), it is will be assumed for the purposes of generating basic information that respondents answered questions with good faith. A follow up survey could triangulate the results obtained from the survey.

The basic demographic information of responders who chose to answer the demographic questions indicate that the survey respondents were 55% Faculty, 41% Staff, and 4% “other” (dining staff, aviation staff, research staff, etc.). The aggregate demographic contains 49.7% Teaching Faculty, 5.9% Non-teaching faculty, 26.4% Professional Staff, and 14.5% Clerical Staff. Graduate Associates represented 2.2% of the respondent demographic. For purposes of this report and analysis, Faculty, Staff, and Other were differentiated, in order to begin to consider two points: “Are faculty utilizing strategies for internationalization and are they receiving support for internationalization?”, and “Are staff creating an environment that is conducive to internationalization efforts?”. Survey respondents include a distribution of 41.5% Tenured, 13.5% Non-tenure/Tenure Track, 7.5% Non-Tenure Track, and 37.5% Not Applicable.

Of the faculty respondents to the survey, 19.3% have spent less than 5 years in higher education, 22.3% have been in higher education for 5-10 years, 15.6% have been in higher education for 11-15 years, 10.9% have been in higher education for 16-20 years, and 31.8% have been in higher education for greater than 20 years. Faculty respondents indicated that 27.4% have spent less than 5 years teaching at Western Michigan University, 25.6% have spent 5-10 years at Western Michigan University, 18.2% have taught at Western Michigan University for 11-15 years, 6.2% have taught at
Western Michigan University for 16-20 years, and 22.6% have taught at Western Michigan University for greater than 20 years.

The respondents were also analyzed in relationship to their college or administrative unit. Of the individuals who identified their college or administrative unit, The College of Arts & Sciences represented 28% of respondents. Second in number of respondents was the Haworth College of Business at 11.6%. Library Services represented 8.5%; Engineering and Applied Sciences represented 7.88%, Health and Human Services 7.9%, Education 6.8%, Haenicke Institute for Global Education 4.4%, Fine Arts 3.5%, Student Affairs 3.1%, Extended University Programs 2.8%, and Office of Information Technology 2.2%, Vice President for Business and Finance Office 1.8%, and College of Aviation 1.3%.

Analysis of the languages and cultural exposure portion of the survey indicate that 51 languages are spoken by Western Michigan University employees. Of the 490 respondents to the survey, 46% reported having a working knowledge of more than 1 language. Spanish ranked as the number 1 most frequently spoken language among the staff at Western Michigan University.

Results of Survey

The first phase of data analysis was conducted by analysis of the personal and professional international experiences of the faculty and staff. Each respondent was asked six questions concerning personal international experiences, to which they were asked to provide “yes” or “no” responses. Each of these responses was subsequently coded by assigning one point to a yes answer and 0 points to a no answer. The number of yes responses were then totaled for the individual to arrive at a “Personal International Experience Score (PeIS).” The same method was used to identify and analyze the eight Professional Internationalization Scores (PrIS).” Finally, the PeIS and PrIS were added together to provide an Aggregate Internationalization Score (AIS).

Of the 490 respondents to the survey, 77.8% of staff answered yes to at least 1 of the personal international experiences. 80.2% reported at least 1 professional international experience. 60.6% reported an “Aggregate International Experience Score” of 1 or greater.

Also coded at the time were the answers to five questions concerning the respondent’s perception of Western Michigan University’s level of internationalization at the time of the survey. The respondents were provided a Likert scale ranging from -2 (strongly disagree) to +2 (strongly agree). Neutral responses were coded as 0. This provided a possible “Attitude” score for each respondent that ranged from -10 to +10. The scores for respondents were then averaged, and compared to the PrIS, PeIS, and AIS.

The comparison of Personal Internationalization Score and Attitude reveals that there was an extremely weak correlation between increase in Personal International Experience and “Perception of Internationalization” (r = .278). There was a slight negative correlation between Professional International Experience and “Perception of Internationalization” (r=-.08). It appears that the relationships between changes in Perception of Internationalization and Level of Personal and Professional Experience are weak at best. However, each chart indicates an overall range of “Perception of Internationalization” by faculty between 1 and approximately 3.5, indicating some positive feelings by faculty concerning the level of internationalization of the University. When comparing Aggregate Internationalization Score and “Perception of Internationalization” a stronger positive correlation is observed (r=-.441).

Respondents were also asked the question “How important is global learning for your department’s undergraduate students. Of the respondents, 55.7% were faculty who responded “very important” and 24.3% were faculty who responded “somewhat important”. 7.2 % were Staff respondents who indicated “very important”, and .9% was Staff who responded “somewhat important”. 3.4% were “Other” respondents who indicated “very important”, and .4% were “Other” respondents who indicated “somewhat important”.

When asked to choose whether it was better to “add an international element or theme” to an existing course or to “develop more courses that have an international or global focus”, 38% of faculty, 5% of Staff, and 33.3% of “Other”
respondents indicated that adding an international theme or element to an existing course was more important. 34.9% of Faculty, 6% of Staff, and 22.2% of “Other” respondents indicated development of more courses with an international focus was more important.

The survey respondents were given options to indicate from a list of items services provided by Western Michigan University that support internationalization. The items noted by the largest percentage of faculty respondents were Guest Speakers, Support for Presenting Research Abroad, and Interaction with Visiting Scholars. The three areas least cited (except for “Other”) were Curriculum Development Grants, Training and Development Workshops, and Short Term Contracts for Special Projects. Similar patterns were noted by staff respondents.

The survey respondents were also given options to indicate from a list of items services that needed to be provided more frequently by Western Michigan University. The items noted as being needed most were Exchange Opportunities, Support for Conducting Research Abroad, and Support for Presenting Research Abroad. Staff members most frequently noted Training and Development Workshops, Exchange Opportunities, and Networking/Mentoring.

The final area of analysis was focused around coursework and internationalization of the courses presented at Western Michigan University. The faculty respondents were asked the question “Which of your courses would you rate as “Extensively” Internationalized, “Moderately” Internationalized, “Slightly” Internationalized, and “Not at all” Internationalized. Responses were analyzed in a way where one course provided one data point in a category, even if two faculty members rated the same course in two different categories, the course was represented in each category.

For the Extensively Internationalized Courses, the content areas with the most courses identified were History, Spanish, and Anthropology. The content areas with the least number of courses represented were Business Communication, Business, Computer Science, Educational Studies, Finance, Holistic Health Care, Health/Physical Education and Recreation, Health Services, Material Science, and Paper Industry.

For the Moderately Internationalized Courses, the content areas with the most courses identified were English, History, and Marketing, Anthropology, and African Studies. The courses with the least amount of representation were Aviation Studies, Counselor Education, Engineering, Educational Studies, First-Year Experience, Material Science Engineering, Paper Industry, Physics, and Religion.

For the Slightly Internationalized Courses, Biology, Industrial and Mechanical Engineering, Marketing, and Nursing had the highest number of courses. The lowest representations included Environmental Sciences, First Year Experiences, Health/Physical Education and Recreation, Industrial Design, Journalism, Law, Paper Industry, Philosophy, Physics, Religion, Social Work, and Theater. For the Not at all Internationalized Courses, the top content areas with no internationalization were Mathematics, Health/Physical Education and Recreation, Imaging, Industrial and Mechanical Engineering, and Medical Science.

Finally, the overview of course internationalization by college indicated that in each College, the combined number of courses rated as having at least slightly international content far surpassed the number of courses with no international content. The College with the most representation in the “Extensively international” category appeared in the College of Arts & Sciences (35% of courses). The College with the highest reporting in the “Moderately International” Category was again the College of Arts & Sciences (the second highest was College of Fine Arts). The college with the highest amount of courses in the “Slightly International” category was Health and Human Services, and the College with highest amount of representation in the “Not at all” category was the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

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Summary of Results

Based on the coding and analysis of the data from the faculty survey, results will be considered in five main areas: Perception of University Support for Internationalization, Perception of Need for Support for Internationalization, Diversity of Faculty and Staff, Internationalization of Curriculum, and Perception of Student Needs.

The perception of university support for internationalization includes identification of the “Attitude Scores” as noted above, and the question directly related to Perception of Current University Support for Internationalization. Based on the “Attitude Score” dimension of the survey results, it appears that faculty perception of support for internationalization is only minimally effected by the individual’s level of international exposure. The overall result is that there is a primarily positive faculty perception of Western Michigan’s current level of support. The areas where Western Michigan University seems to provide the most support include the use of external resources to improve contact with a diverse community of scholars and leaders in various fields. The areas where WMU is least effective include Training and Workshops.

The Perceived Need for Support for Internationalization appears to primarily focus on the use of funds to provide enhanced ability to “Conduct and Present Research Abroad”, as well as “Exchange Programs”. Also again noted is the need for improved “Training Workshops” and “Curriculum Development” Activities. This is corroborated by the data representing categorization of courses as having or not having international content.

The Diversity of Faculty and Staff at WMU appears to indicate that WMU employees are fairly diverse, speaking over 55 different languages, and hailing from all continents of the world. Many of WMU faculty members are speakers of more than one language. Many faculty and staff report having studied abroad, and have also reported studying languages in both Graduate and Undergraduate programs. However, a caveat to this information indicates that the more diverse culturally a faculty member is, the less diversity they tend to bring into the curriculum (from ACE Laboratory Conference Call information).

The Internationalization of Curriculum dimension supports an increasing amount of internationalization of the curriculum at WMU. The balance of courses were listed in at least the Slightly - Moderately international category, with all Colleges Surveied indicating a greater proportion of courses with at least some international content. Faculty perception also appears to indicate a belief in increasing the amount of international content within their courses, and/or development of more international course content. This is corroborated by the perception of a need for increased curriculum development grants.

Finally, the dimension of Perception of Student Needs appears to represent a view of student needs that provides a framework for future internationalization work. The majority of faculty appears to agree that internationalized coursework and learning opportunities will be critical for the future of the student in the modern workforce. When considered in light of the Perceived Need for Support for Internationalization data, it appears that more funding for development of internationalized curriculum would be favorably viewed by the faculty of Western Michigan University.

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis of the faculty data, three conclusions may be reasonably derived. The first concerns the level of internationalization at WMU, the second concerns future growth of WMU in terms of internationalization, and the Third concerns the need for continued assessment and development of internationalization strategies.

First, it appears that the faculty and staff of Western Michigan University believe that WMU has made definite progress towards the internationalization of WMU. The work of faculty to include international themes and topics to courses, the inclusion of exposure to diverse external sources of international information, the diversity level of the
faculty, and the work of the International Education Committee all contribute to ensure that WMU has made effort
toward achievement of its goals.

Second, the data suggest that there are many ways that WMU can improve its level of internationalization. The
primary ways indicated focus on improving support for development of internationally based research and provision of
funds for development of content. This indicates that WMU appears to be striving towards its goal of creating a student
centered university that can help its students prepare for future employment and success.

Finally, the indications of the data speak to a need to further assess efforts by WMU to internationalize the campus
and its programs. The drafting of a strategic plan should work to include further identification of the level of agreement
of faculty perceptions, actual university policy and procedure, and student perceptions of needs satisfaction. Future
efforts should focus around the development of measurable outcomes to assess whether WMU is producing “globally
competent citizens that can meet the challenges of an increasingly internationally focused world”.

References

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August 2009, from Haenicke Institute for Global Education: http://international.wmich.edu/content/view/1649/99