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Faculty Attitudes toward International Education: A Campus Experience

Susan Carley  
*Kennesaw State University*, scarley@kennesaw.edu

Sutham Cheurprakobkit  
*Kennesaw State University*, scheurpr@kennesaw.edu

Daniel Paracka  
*Kennesaw State University*, dparacka@kennesaw.edu

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Faculty Attitudes toward International Education: A Campus Experience

Susan Carley
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Daniel Paracka

Because of the important role of the faculty in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and curriculum development, a crucial component in internationalizing the campus is the internationalization of the faculty itself. Despite the important role played by faculty, little is known about their current support for and interest in internationalization, and available information is largely qualitative and anecdotal. To learn more about faculty views, the authors conducted an empirical study on faculty attitudes about international learning, perceptions of institutional support, perceived benefits of international learning, and the impact of demographic factors and prior international experience on faculty perceptions. Policy implications and recommendations are drawn from the findings in the hope that institutions of higher education can benefit from one campus experience.

In recent years, the terms campus internationalization and international learning have become increasingly familiar refrains on U.S. college campuses. Although the term internationalization may be defined in different ways, its benefits to students and faculty are generally recognized. Proponents of internationalization agree that international education is an important part of the educational process, since it works to improve understanding and appreciation of people from different cultures, helps one develop various problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and is useful in producing more globally responsible college graduates (Aveni, 2003; Leask, 2004).

With increases in the numbers of students studying overseas in the past decade and greater use of information and communication technologies in delivering education, many higher education institutions advocating international learning have sought the opportunities to connect with international faculty and students and create international partnerships with other universities (Leask, 2004). Kennesaw State University (KSU), a strong internationalization proponent, has strengthened
its international thrust via increased numbers of study abroad programs, an increase in foreign-born faculty, and more internationalization seminars, just to name a few. With a realization that achieving the outcomes of campus internationalization requires specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes in students and faculty through active engagement with different cultures (Knight & de Wit, 1995), KSU has tried to increase student and faculty involvement in its international efforts. In fact, the focus of KSU’s campus internationalization strategy is on the faculty because of their several academic roles on campus, their connections and interactions with students, and their impact on university curriculum.

There is no doubt that greater faculty engagement not only increases the likelihood of the success of campus internationalization but also helps sustain and expand the level of international networks and connections. It is important to examine how faculty think about international learning, since their perceptions and attitudes can be used by university administration to improve support systems and develop informed university policies in this area. However, a review of the literature reveals the lack of empirical studies relating to faculty roles and perspectives. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore these dimensions and to answer the following questions:

1. What are the faculty's general views on internationalization?
2. How do the faculty view their campus’s support for internationalization?
3. To what extent do faculty believe in the benefits of international learning education?
4. What impact do previous study abroad experience and demographic factors have on faculty’s attitudes regarding internationalization?

Current Status and Support for International Learning

The importance of international learning has been widely touted in academic circles in recent years as U.S. colleges and universities respond to the need for producing more interculturally competent workers and citizens. The U.S. public is also increasingly supportive of a stronger international thrust at the college level, according to a recent national survey (Hayward & Siaya, 2001). Student interest in international learning runs high as well, among both those who are college bound (Hayward & Siaya, 2001; Green, 2002) and current college students who are participating in study abroad programs in increasing (albeit still small) numbers (Carlson, Bum, Useem, & Yachimowicz, 1991; Marklein, 2003).

While interested parties agree on the importance of international learning, a considerable gap appears to exist between rhetoric and reality in terms of internationalizing the campus (Altbach & Peterson, 1998; Green, 2002; Lovett, 2003; Green, 1994). International education continues to be a low priority for federal and state governments (Altbach & Peterson, 1998; Green, 2002). Security and immigration concerns since the attacks of September 11 have led to declining
enrollments of international students on U.S. campuses (Dennis, 2004), depriving U.S. students of one important form of intercultural exposure. Higher education institutional policies also lag behind what is needed to internationalize education. According to recent research by the American Council on Education (ACE), only a minority of colleges and universities include global education in their mission statements while fewer than three in ten cite international learning as a top priority in their strategic plans (Green, 2002).

It seems that the internationalization of higher education will require a considerably larger effort than what has been undertaken thus far. As many observers have noted (Schoorman, 2000; Altbach & Peterson, 1998; Green, 2002; Ludeman, 1999), this will involve a comprehensive, multifaceted effort, rather than some piecemeal approach. A number of elements must come together, including internationalizing of the college curriculum (see Burn, 2002; Haigh, 2002; Schoorman, 2000; Smuckler & Sommers, 1989), increasing participation in student and faculty international exchange programs (see Lane, 2003; Marklein, 2003; Green, 2002; Klenk, 2004; and Washington, 2002), more utilization of international resources from the local community (Green & Olson, 2003), and of course, greater engagement in internationalization efforts on the part of faculty.

Through classroom instruction, student advising, scholarship, and community service, college faculty have a key leadership role to play in this process. Institutional efforts will have limited success if faculty fail to support and implement international learning. In the existing literature, observers suggest deficiencies that U.S. campuses need to address before they can claim to support international learning. Lovett (2003) notes the lack of global scholarship and the shortage of U.S. academic experts on key regions of the world, particularly the Middle East and western Asia. Faculty reward systems have been cited as inadvertently discouraging globally-oriented scholars “because it is easier and less costly to work on subjects and materials close at hand so a publication record accumulates more quickly” (Smuckler & Sommers, 1989, 45).

In a fourteen-nation study of the academic profession conducted by the Carnegie Foundation, U.S. faculty were found to be less committed to internationalism than colleagues in other countries, as evidenced by low rates of participation in foreign travel for study or research, and by “lukewarm” support for internationalizing the curriculum (Altbach & Petersen, 1998). Faculty recruitment practices contribute to the dearth of faculty with international competence, according to Smuckler and Sommers; as universities increasingly specialize, they have tended to recruit faculty highly focused in a topical area rather than those with broad, especially foreign, experience. The discipline-centered structure of U.S. higher education is another factor contributing to the lack of international outlook and reported insularity of college faculty (Lovett, 2003; Altbach & Petersen, 1998).

Despite this speculation on the state of the U.S. professoriate, there is limited empirical information on what U.S. faculty currently think and how (or even whether) they are responding to calls for greater internationalization of higher education. Assessment of educator responses to internationalization will, after all, be crucial to gauging progress, yet there is a gaping absence of actual benchmarking efforts in the literature on international learning.
Faculty Impact on Campus Internationalization

Aveni (2003) identified seven key components of the campus internationalization model. They include:

1. Curriculum (courses in a degree program with content that is entirely or partly international)
2. Programs (any campus-sponsored activity that helps promote international learning for faculty as well as students)
3. Study abroad (courses or programs that allow students to travel to other countries and experience different cultures)
4. International student contact (interactions between U.S. and foreign students that occur on or off campus)
5. Faculty (either international faculty or U.S. faculty with international experience)
6. Administration (academic leaders whose commitment, guidance, and policies can determine the success of campus internationalization)
7. Integration (the extent to which the components of international learning work collaboratively toward the common goal of campus internationalization)

Although each of these elements is important, faculty may be considered as most important. Due to their various academic-related roles, faculty can significantly affect the success of campus internationalization. Other than sharing their international experience through teaching, faculty also play important roles that affect not only the functionality of the other components, but the outcomes as well. For example, faculty, who usually serve as chairs and members of various levels of the curriculum committees, decide whether courses in a program or their contents should be changed. Faculty may also lead or simply participate in a campus-sponsored program such as a symposium or seminar on an international, cultural, or religious issue. Often times, extracurricular programs on campus require faculty’s cooperation in announcing the programs to students and encouraging their attendance at such programs. Furthermore, faculty can also have a direct role in creating new study abroad or exchange programs.

In sum, these various and integrated faculty roles can obviously impact the campus’s internationalizing effort. Faculty may also fill administrative positions on a rotating basis and, through these positions, play an even greater role in internationalizing the campus. If most faculty believe in the concepts and benefits of international learning and support it, the outlook for campus internationalization will become more promising. Therefore, assessment of faculty attitudes about international learning can provide useful information needed for developing informed campus policies in this matter.
Internationalization of the Faculty at Kennesaw State University

This study reports on the efforts of one institution to assess faculty perceptions of and responses to internationalization. While every college or university may be considered unique in some respects, most face similar challenges when it comes to internationalizing their respective campuses and faculties. Any institution of higher education can benefit from what another has learned in assessing internationalization and establishing benchmarks for the future.

Our investigation examines the faculty role at Kennesaw State University (KSU), a large, state-supported comprehensive university that might be considered somewhat “ahead of the curve” in its efforts at internationalization. Compared with other institutions, KSU has placed more emphasis on international learning using the type of comprehensive, multifaceted effort called for by many observers and experts on internationalization.

The institution has increased faculty involvement in study abroad, for example, leading to an increase in the number of faculty with international experience, many of whom have subsequently turned these experiences into scholarship through conference presentations and journal publications. Over the past ten years, KSU has seen dramatic growth in both the number of students participating in study abroad and the types of study abroad programs offered. Currently, there are more than 250 students studying abroad each year at KSU. The university manages study abroad programs to Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and expects to expand the number of programs in all of these regions. There exists a clear process for proposing and approving new programs, and the KSU Office of International Services and Programs (OISP) provides significant support in establishing sound safety and liability policies for all study abroad programs. All programs are required to conduct multiple pre-departure orientations, and all programs are required to conduct evaluations.

KSU has articulated clear policies and procedures for hiring international faculty, and as a result, they now comprise 15 percent of the total full-time faculty. The institution has also made available to faculty a variety of opportunities for participating in faculty development programs abroad, so that KSU now leads the state university system in faculty involvement in system-sponsored internationalization seminars. Faculty resource groups have been established to coordinate programs on Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe, and KSU has developed strong institutional linkages with partner institutions abroad that complement faculty expertise. International faculty have played a key role in establishing these linkages while the work of the faculty resource groups has lead to the establishment of area studies majors. Global learning has thus become a defining characteristic of the university and an important aspect of its image and identity. Kennesaw’s international thrust
is one reason that it was selected along with seven other undergraduate institutions in the U.S. for participation in the “Global Learning for All Project,” a two-year study conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE) through a grant from the Ford Foundation. Through its involvement with this project over the past two years, KSU has come to articulate a set of global learning outcomes for students and conducted a campus-wide internationalization review.

Methodology

Participants

The sample for this study consisted of full-time faculty at Kennesaw State University. In January 2004 all deans and academic department heads were notified in writing about the purpose of the study and plans for subsequent distribution of the questionnaire. Copies of the survey were then sent to each department head, with an accompanying request that the surveys be distributed at forthcoming department meetings. After a reminder letter, fifteen out of thirty academic departments participated in the study and returned 202 completed surveys, which was a response rate of 43 percent of faculty overall.

The breakdown of participants included 72 percent Whites, 10 percent Blacks, 10.1 percent Asians, and 7.9 percent Hispanics and others. Fifty-two percent were males; 48 percent were females. Regarding the sample's age, 20.3 percent were younger than 37 years, 15.5 percent fell between 37 and 40 years of age, 19.3 percent were between 41 and 45 years, 12.8 percent were between 46 and 50 years old, and 32.1 percent were older than 50 years old. Forty percent of respondents were tenured faculty, whereas 60 percent were either non-tenured or non-tenure track faculty. About one-fourth of the respondents (19.3 percent) were international (or foreign-born) faculty, while the other 80.7 percent were not. Based on a comparison of these demographic traits with those of the faculty as a whole, the sample appears to be representative of the population.

Survey Instrument

The survey questionnaire for this study was constructed based on a set of Global Learning Outcomes developed by a faculty steering committee whose tasks include documenting Kennesaw State University’s potential future goals in producing globally competent graduates. After several reviews and feedback from the committee members and international education experts and several revisions, the final version of the questionnaire was produced. The questionnaire consists of twenty-eight Likert-type statements that are used to measure faculty’s attitudes in the following five categories: (1) general attitudes about internationalization; (2) support for internationalization; (3) perceived benefits of internationalization; (4) interest in international learning; and (5) participation in study abroad programs. However, the question items in the interest in international learning category are
related more to the personal and behavioral than to the attitudinal aspects; therefore, they were excluded from the analysis.

The general attitudes category was designed to measure faculty's attitudes about internationalization in general, and it consisted of eight items (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Frequency and percentage of faculty's general attitudes about and interest in internationalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly agree and Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly disagree and Disagree</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. International learning is an important element of the educational process.</td>
<td>187 (94.4%)</td>
<td>7 (3.5%)</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. KSU exchange programs with institutions in other countries foster internationalization of instruction, research, and service learning.</td>
<td>172 (88.2%)</td>
<td>20 (10.3%)</td>
<td>3 (1.5%)</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I frequently attend international activities such as international clubs, events, festivals, lectures, and films.</td>
<td>92 (46.5%)</td>
<td>37 (18.7%)</td>
<td>69 (34.9%)</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students can understand their own culture more fully if they have studied another.</td>
<td>180 (92.3%)</td>
<td>10 (5.1%)</td>
<td>5 (2.6%)</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Study abroad programs are the best way for students to encounter another culture.</td>
<td>142 (72.2%)</td>
<td>40 (20.4%)</td>
<td>14 (7.1%)</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I believe an understanding of international issues is important for success in the workforce.</td>
<td>167 (85.6%)</td>
<td>24 (12.3%)</td>
<td>4 (2.1%)</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Learning about people from different cultures is a very important part of education.</td>
<td>185 (94.4%)</td>
<td>9 (4.6%)</td>
<td>2 (1.0%)</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I enjoy having students whose first language is not English in my classes.</td>
<td>141 (71.2%)</td>
<td>43 (21.7%)</td>
<td>14 (7.1%)</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* The scale ranged from 1 to 5, with a lower number indicating stronger agreement. Totals vary by question due to missing values.
The support category measured the extent to which faculty believed they received support for internationalization from their campus, college or school, and department, and whether their course with international content included sufficient and relevant examples. It consisted of five items (Table 2.)

Table 2. Frequency and percentage of faculty’s attitudes on KSU’s support for internationalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly agree and Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly disagree and Disagree</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. KSU strongly promotes student engagement in internationalization.</td>
<td>108 (57.1%)</td>
<td>64 (33.9%)</td>
<td>17 (9.0%)</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I have been encouraged in my department to offer courses that incorporate international content.</td>
<td>93 (48.4%)</td>
<td>61 (31.8%)</td>
<td>38 (19.8%)</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. My courses with international content have provided examples from all regions of the world.</td>
<td>68 (35.1%)</td>
<td>79 (40.7%)</td>
<td>47 (24.3%)</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. My department/college/school encourages me to participate in a study abroad program.</td>
<td>71 (36.2%)</td>
<td>67 (34.2%)</td>
<td>58 (29.6%)</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. My department/college/school does not take advantage of community resources to enhance the international learning experience.</td>
<td>91 (48.1%)</td>
<td>56 (29.6%)</td>
<td>42 (22.2%)</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The scale ranged from 1 to 5, with a lower number indicating stronger agreement. Totals vary by question due to missing values.

The benefit category measured how much faculty believed in the benefits of international learning, and it included six items (Table 3). All of these three categories were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale, with one representing “strongly agree,” and five representing “strongly disagree.” Due to the different nature of the question items in each category and the relatively low reliability coefficients, each question was analyzed individually.

The participation category (2 items) measured how much faculty were involved and interested in study abroad programs. The faculty were asked if they had ever participated in the study abroad program. If not, they were asked if they wanted to participate in the future. The answer category was either yes or no. Of
184 respondents, 54 (28.6%) reported having participated in the study abroad pro-
grams, while 130 respondents (68.8%) said otherwise. For future involvement in
the study abroad programs, 92 respondents (73%) expressed their interest, and the
other 27 respondents (33%) did not.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage of attitudes on the effects of internationalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly agree &amp; Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly disagree &amp; Disagree</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. International learning helps prepare students to become responsible global citizens.</td>
<td>184 (92.4%)</td>
<td>11 (5.6%)</td>
<td>4 (2.0%)</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. International learning makes me appreciate other cultures more.</td>
<td>179 (90.4%)</td>
<td>18 (9.1%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The more we know about other countries, the better we will understand our own.</td>
<td>174 (88.8%)</td>
<td>18 (9.2%)</td>
<td>4 (2.0%)</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. International education helps me recognize and understand the impact other cultures have on American life and vice versa.</td>
<td>178 (90.8%)</td>
<td>13 (6.6%)</td>
<td>5 (2.5%)</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Learning other cultures helps me better tolerate ambiguity when communicating with a foreign person.</td>
<td>169 (88.0%)</td>
<td>19 (9.9%)</td>
<td>4 (2.1%)</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. International education can explain root causes of basic global problems such as population control, poverty, and disease.</td>
<td>151 (78.6%)</td>
<td>29 (15.1%)</td>
<td>12 (6.3%)</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The scale ranges from 1 to 5, with a lower number indicating stronger agree-
ment. Totals vary by question due to missing values.

Findings

Faculty Attitudes and Interest in Internationalization

The existing literature on faculty attitudes suggests only lukewarm support
for international learning and the lack of an international outlook on the part of
faculty (Lovett, 2003; Altbach & Petersen, 1998). Given the important role of
faculty as teachers, mentors, and shapers of the curricula, such attitudes present a
significant roadblock to internationalization of the campus.

Responses to the series of attitudinal questions appear in Table 1. Overall, the
faculty expressed positive attitudes about internationalization, contrary to what one might expect based on the Carnegie study of U.S. faculty as a whole. This is not surprising, however, since this particular faculty is affiliated with an institution already recognized for its internationalization efforts.

Agreement was strongest in the three following aspects: the importance of international learning (94.4%), the importance of learning different cultures (94.4%), and better understanding of their own culture through studying another (92.3%), respectively. These items also had the lowest average scores, where a lower mean score indicates a more positive attitude about the statement.

Responses were somewhat less positive on three items. Although faculty appear to be interested in and supportive of internationalization, fewer than half (46%) say that they frequently attend international activities. Since internationally oriented symposiums, lectures, films, and the like can be important vehicles for faculty development, particularly in the absence of travel and other such developmental opportunities, it seems that “close-to-home” opportunities are not leveraged to full advantage.

Respondents were also less supportive of the role of study abroad programs as the best way for students to encounter another culture (only 72% agreement; mean score = 2.01). This may partly explain or at least be associated with the relatively low (though increasing) rate of faculty past participation in study abroad (28.6% of the respondents, and an estimated 10% for faculty as a whole).

Finally, respondents were found to be less positive about having students in their classes whose first language is not English. This item was included because interactions with foreign students represent good learning opportunities for a campus community. Several KSU faculty, for example, have developed significant and creative approaches for utilizing the diverse experience and perspectives that international students bring to the classroom. However, with the exception of attendance at international activities, this question had the highest (i.e., least positive) score (mean = 2.03) of all the questions dealing with attitudes and interests. The faculty may have responded less positively based on a belief that ESL students require more assistance, that they are more difficult to understand when speaking, or that it takes more time to grade and correct their written assignments. At any rate, given the less positive attitudes toward foreign students in the classroom, some faculty may be underutilizing this important international learning resource.

An important question is whether attitudes about internationalization can be explained in terms of demographic or experiential differences among faculty. One would expect that previous participation in study abroad or growing up in a country other than the U.S. would influence one’s international outlook, for example. Tenure status may also play a role, since achievement of tenure affords one some degree of freedom from faculty reward systems that often devalue and discourage global research and travel. At the same time, age of an individual faculty member may be associated with outlook, since older faculty came of age when globalization was perhaps less prevalent than it is nowadays.

To determine whether any differences exist in attitudes and interests according to faculty demographic characteristics and past experiences, a correlation
analysis was run on the series of attitudinal items. Pearson’s correlation coefficients for each survey and demographic question appear in Table 4; in this table, a negative correlation indicates stronger agreement with an item (i.e., a more “pro-internationalization” response).

Table 4. Correlations of general attitudes about internationalization with various demographic variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Tenure Status</th>
<th>Inter. Faculty</th>
<th>Have Participated in Study Abroad</th>
<th>Like to Participate in Study Abroad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. International learning is an important element of the educational process.</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. KSU exchange programs with institutions in other countries foster internationalization of instruction, research, and service learning.</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I frequently attend international activities such as international clubs, events, festivals, lectures, and films.</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students can understand their own culture more fully if they have studied another.</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.17*</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Study abroad programs are the best way for students to encounter another culture.</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I believe an understanding of international issues is important for success in the workforce.</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Learning about people from different cultures is a very important part of education.</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I enjoy having students whose first language is not English in my classes.</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01  Gender (male = 1, female = 0); Race (White = 1, Non-White = 0); Tenure status (tenured =1, non-tenured = 0); International Faculty (yes =1, no = 0); Have participated in study abroad (yes =1, no = 0); Like to participate in study abroad (yes =1, no = 0)
Faculty gender, age, and tenure status appear to have no bearing on attitudes about internationalization. Race is a better predictor overall, with Non-White faculty in stronger agreement than their white colleagues on three of the eight items, including frequent attendance at international activities ($r = .23, p < .05$), learning about people from different cultures ($r = .18, p < .05$), and enjoying having students whose first language is not English ($r = .22, p < .05$). On all survey items, foreign faculty (i.e., those born outside of the U.S.) are more likely to express positive attitudes about internationalization than others; this difference is statistically significant on three items: the impact of study abroad ($r = -.16, p < .05$), learning about people from other cultures ($r = -.29, p < .01$), and international learning as an important element of the educational process ($r = -.19, p < .05$).

Among the demographic and experience variables, the one most strongly and consistently correlated with positive attitudes about internationalization is past participation in study abroad. Differences are significant on almost all of the items, although it is not possible to separate cause from effect in this relationship (i.e., whether study abroad experience increases positive attitudes or the inverse). Not surprisingly, interest in future participation in study abroad is also strongly associated (five out of eight items) with positive views of internationalization.

Perceptions of Institutional Support for Internationalization

As previously discussed, observers have noted shortcomings in institutional policies on the internationalization of higher education and a serious gap between rhetoric and action. Faculty attitudes and outlook can only have so much influence in the absence of broader institutional support for international learning. An important research issue is whether faculty perceived strong administrative support, particularly in an institution that prides itself on its efforts in the international educational arena.

Findings on a set of questions asked of the respondents regarding perceived support are presented in Table 2. Based on these results, it appears that, with the exception of support for student engagement (57% agreement), the institution is not perceived as particularly supportive of internationalization. Weakness is most evident in encouragement of faculty to participate in study abroad programs with approximately two-thirds (64%) not in agreement with the statement. This is an interesting finding in light of the faculty’s expressed interest in participation (73%) cited earlier in this paper. Whether perceived or real, the lack of support at the department, college, and school level may explain why many faculty fail to act on their expressed interest in study abroad.

A secondary area of weakness is the perception by more than half of the respondents (52%) that their departments have not encouraged them to offer courses that incorporate international content. This appears consistent with earlier findings and observations on the insular nature of U.S. higher education and the lack of overall support for internationalizing the curriculum.
A final interesting result pertains to the use of community resources to enhance the international learning experience, cited by ACE as an important element in internationalizing the campus. Although some (48%) felt that their departments, colleges, and schools availed themselves of community resources, the remainder did not. This series of questions on institutional support for internationalization was examined further to assess whether perceptions varied according to faculty demographic traits. Results appear in Table 5.

Table 5. Correlations of attitudes on KSU’s support for internationalization with various demographic variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Tenure Status</th>
<th>Inter. Faculty</th>
<th>Have Participated in Study Abroad</th>
<th>Like to Participate in Study Abroad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. KSU strongly promotes student engagement in internationalization.</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I have been encouraged in my department to offer courses that incorpo­rate international content.</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.35**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. My courses with international content have provided examples from all regions of the world.</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. My department/college/school encourages me to participate in a study abroad program.</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. My department/college/school does not take advantage of community resources to enhance the international learning experience.</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.22*</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01  Gender (male = 1, female = 0); Race (White = 1, Non-White = 0); Tenure status (tenured = 1, non-tenured = 0); International faculty (yes = 1, no = 0); Have participated in study abroad (yes = 1, no = 0); Like to participate in study abroad (yes = 1, no = 0)
Past participation in study abroad is strongly associated with perceived support. On three of the five items, faculty who have been involved with study abroad programs are significantly more likely to believe that the institution supports internationalization. These items include encouragement to offer courses with international content \( r = -.35, p < .01 \), teaching courses with examples from all regions of the world \( r = -.40, p < .01 \), and encouragement to participate in study abroad \( r = -.40, p < .01 \). Study abroad faculty are also significantly more likely to agree that the institution does not take advantage of community resources \( r = .19, p < .05 \).

A few differences emerged in terms of perceptions of support and whether an individual faculty member was born outside of the United States. International faculty are more inclined to believe that the institution promotes student engagement \( r = -.16, p < .05 \). At the same time, they are less likely to feel that the institution fails to take advantage of community resources \( r = .19, p < .05 \). The latter sentiment may be due to higher awareness and utilization of such resources on their own parts due to more personal contacts (for example, local friends from the “home country” or membership in civic associations with home country connections).

**Faculty Attitudes Regarding the Benefits of Internationalization**

The importance of international learning, which has been widely recognized in recent years among U.S. colleges and universities, has been supported by the results presented in Table 3. The data shows that, overall, faculty believed in the benefits of international learning (mean scores between 1.56 and 1.97).

Faculty agreed the most that students who were knowledgeable about international relations would become more globally responsible (92.4%), followed by the beliefs that international learning would help one understand the impact that other cultures have on the U.S. (90.8%) and appreciate other cultures more (90.4%). The great majority of faculty (79% to 89%) also believed learning about different countries and cultures would help one better understand his or her own, become more tolerant when communicating with a foreign person, and more aware of the causes of global problems. These results are reassuring since U.S. colleges and universities have pushed for students’ interests in international learning (Hayward and Siaya, 2001; Green, 2002) and in study abroad programs (Marklein, 2003) in recent years.

Table 6 reveals that the only two variables that consistently and positively relate to all six items are past participation in study abroad and future interest in study abroad. That is, faculty who participated in study abroad and those who planned to be involved in study abroad were more likely to see the benefits of international learning than those faculty who never participated in study abroad and who did not express their interest in future participation in the program. These findings are expected given that almost all study abroad programs at KSU have been created and led by faculty. However, age, gender, and tenure status did not show any correlation with any of the items.
Table 6. Correlations of attitudes on the effects of internationalization with various demographic variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Tenure Status</th>
<th>Inter. Faculty</th>
<th>Have Participated in Study Abroad</th>
<th>Like to Participate in Study Abroad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. International learning helps prepare students to become responsible global citizens.</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. International learning makes me appreciate other cultures more.</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>-.18**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The more we know about other countries, the better we will understand our own.</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. International education helps me recognize and understand the impact other cultures have on American life and vice versa.</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.18*</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Learning other cultures helps me better tolerate ambiguity when communicating with a foreign person.</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. International education can explain root causes of basic global problems such as population control, poverty, and disease.</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.18*</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01 Gender (male = 1, female = 0); Race (White = 1; Non-White = 0); Tenure status (tenured = 1, non-tenured = 0); International Faculty (yes = 1, no = 0); Have participated in study abroad (yes = 1, no = 0); Like to participate in study abroad (yes = 1, no = 0)
Summary and Implications

From this study of faculty attitudes, several conclusions can be drawn, each of which has policy implications for Kennesaw State University and for other colleges and universities striving toward campus internationalization. The key findings and what they suggest are discussed below.

Positive Attitudes about Internationalization

The faculty was found to be upbeat about internationalization and its importance in the educational process. In light of the negative views found elsewhere in the limited number of empirical studies of faculty, these positive views are encouraging. Given the key role played by faculty in the internationalization process, it appears that efforts with a strong faculty focus can have a substantial payoff.

Hiring practices aimed at recruitment of international faculty, provision of opportunities for participating in faculty development programs abroad, and encouraging faculty to form institutional linkages with partner institutions abroad are but a few of the approaches used by Kennesaw State to cultivate a more global faculty outlook based on direct international experience.

Perceived Support for Internationalization

Although faculty respondents had positive views about internationalization, they felt that at an institutional level, KSU does not offer sufficient support of faculty internationalization. Despite Kennesaw State’s emphasis on international learning, fewer than half of the faculty felt they had received encouragement to teach courses that incorporate international content, while roughly only one in three believed they had been encouraged to participate in a study abroad program.

On a national level, observers have noted that faculty reward systems inadvertently discourage participation in internationalization. Close examination of tenure and promotion policies is in order for any institution concerned with increasing faculty involvement in international activities and scholarship. KSU’s own Faculty Handbook and departmental tenure and promotion guidelines are silent on faculty international engagements and how to evaluate them for tenure and promotion decisions. Faculty perceptions of insufficient support for internationalization are perhaps attributable to the existing reward system and its failure to recognize activities that enhance internationalization. Sincere institutional interest and intent must be reflected in performance standards that reward rather than discourage international activities. Development of a new study abroad program is intensely time-consuming, as is the building of exchange partnerships with foreign institutions. To encourage faculty involvement in these areas, colleges must be willing to offer incentives such as course release time, continuation of full salary and benefits while abroad, or the provision of summer stipends, and they must give ample weight to these contributions when it comes to tenure and promotion decisions.
In this study, we learned that faculty who had participated in study abroad were significantly more likely to feel they had been encouraged by their own department and school, whereas those who had not participated felt otherwise. There was also significant variation in views on whether departments and colleges took advantage of community resources to enhance international learning with half of the faculty agreeing and the other half not. This leads one to conclude that in assessing campus success with faculty internationalization, institutions should also examine the extent to which internationalization is embraced at different levels of the campus hierarchy. While a university may encourage internationalization on the part of its faculty, individual departments, colleges, and schools and their respective administrators may be less enthusiastic. The departmental and college levels have more direct influence on faculty engagement, so disagreement within the campus community can have a negative impact on success.

**Perceived Benefits of International Learning**

Our findings suggest that faculty share a perception that international learning and education are highly beneficial to students, making them better global citizens, more appreciative and tolerant of other cultures, and more understanding of their own respective cultures. These were encouraging results, since faculty awareness of benefits to students makes it more likely that they will incorporate international issues and themes into their own courses and into the university curriculum. It also increases the probability that as instructors, faculty will communicate these benefits to today’s students who are often more motivated to study and retain course material when convinced of its concrete benefits.

**The Impact of Study Abroad and Demographic Factors on Faculty Views**

Surprisingly, neither faculty age, gender, nor tenure status had any impact on faculty attitudes and perceptions. Race was of some significance with Non-White faculty members found to have a greater appreciation of learning about people from different cultures, higher levels of participation in international activities (e.g., lectures, festivals, etc.), and more enjoyment of students in the classroom whose first language is not English.

As previously noted, Kennesaw State has made a concerted effort to hire international faculty based on the assumption that they bring more international outlooks and experiences to the campus. Student exposure to faculty from other cultures contributes to international learning even in the absence of study abroad and other student travel opportunities. In our research, we found that international faculty were indeed somewhat more positive towards internationalization and international students than their U.S. colleagues and more likely to participate in international events. This implies that hiring policies that purposefully attempt to increase international faculty representation may be of some benefit.

Study findings showed that participation in study abroad was the most influential factor affecting faculty’s attitudes toward internationalization, as well
as perceptions of institutional support for international engagement. The more participation in study abroad, the more the faculty sees the benefit of and KSU’s support for internationalized learning. Although this study’s outcome does not yield a direct cause-effect relationship, it does suggest a campus policy on internationalization. That is, one important mechanism KSU may use to develop a more internationalized faculty, and subsequently, a campus ethos of internationalization, is through encouraging faculty participation in study abroad.

The importance of faculty involvement in teaching and research abroad cannot be overstated. Getting faculty abroad, especially faculty who have never studied or taught abroad before, is a valuable strategy for internationalizing the campus. It is not enough to simply have logistical support for study abroad programs if academic departments do not include study abroad courses within the curriculum or value faculty participation in study abroad within the tenure and promotion process.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study concerns its generalizability. Due to non-response from many faculty members, this sample represents only about half of the faculty population at Kennesaw State. Although the demographic traits of the sample appear to be reflective of the population, there is some likelihood of self-selection bias (that is, responses may be higher from faculty more interested and engaged in internationalization than from those who are less so).

One should also be cautious in making generalizations to faculty nationwide. Each institution of higher education has some unique characteristics in terms of resources, student population, faculty composition, disciplinary focus, and, of course, institutional efforts in the area of international education, to name but a few. Nonetheless, we believe that other colleges and universities can learn something from a single campus experience.

In addition, we cannot be sure that every respondent interpreted the questions on study abroad in the same manner. “Study abroad” is a rather open-ended term that one might erroneously take to mean a faculty educational seminar abroad. Although they are probably part of a very small minority (given low historic rates of student participation), some faculty respondents who said they had participated in a study abroad program may have referred to past involvement in a student, rather than faculty, role. In retrospect, the term “study abroad” should have been defined and better clarified in the research instrument.

On a final note, the questionnaire did not include any items asking faculty whether they had participated in educational seminars or faculty exchange programs abroad, only whether they were aware of and how they felt about such travel opportunities. While it plays a vital role in exposing faculty to other countries and cultures, study abroad is but one vehicle for internationalizing the faculty. Participating in educational seminars may well be the first step that some faculty
members take in the internationalization process before moving on to subsequently develop a new international course or lead a study abroad program. Future research should examine the specific influence of faculty educational seminars and international exchange programs on development of an international ethos on the part of college faculty.

References


