Global Engagement: A Successful First Year

In AY 2014-15, the Global Engagement Office, under the advisement of the Provost and as a part of UNCG’s reaccreditation process, began a five-year plan to implement a series of high-impact practices with the goal of increasing global learning on campus and equipping UNCG students with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to engage effectively in the world community.

Under the inaugural leadership of Dr. David Nelson of the UNCG School of Music, Theatre and Dance, Global Engagement focused on enhancing five high-impact student opportunities: the Keker First Year Common Read; Study Abroad; community engagement; leadership programs; and undergraduate research.

Supported by Global Engagement, 2,500 copies of the Keker First Year Common Read (KFYCR), *Little Princes: One Man’s Promise to Bring Home the Lost Children of Nepal*, were given to first-year students at orientation by New Spartan Student and Family Programs. All first-year students were required to read the book, and 46 first-year experience courses integrated the book into the curriculum. 1,461 students attended co-curricular programming centered around the themes of the book throughout the year, including a visit from the author. As a capstone to the KYFCR initiative, the Global Engagement Office organized a student conference building upon the themes of *Little Princes*. Held January 30 and 31, 2015, this conference offered a co-curricular perspective on translating academic knowledge into experiential learning by educating students about global engagement opportunities available at UNCG.

Early in the 2014-15 academic year, the Global Engagement Office created a series of Intercultural Competency Workshops (ICCs) which engaged first-year students in awareness of intercultural themes. Three versions of the workshop were offered: Option A contained a brief overview of intercultural sensitivity, Option B included an introduction to the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and Option C incorporated the Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI®), a cross-culturally valid intercultural competence assessment. These workshops were offered in a total of 33 first-year experience courses. Twelve courses offered Option A, nine courses offered Option B and nine courses offered Option C incorporating the IDI®.

Global Engagement was instrumental in expanding staffing and programming for the existing Global Leadership Program (GLP). Participation in the program nearly doubled, expanding from 22 to 42 participants, and the program saw its largest graduating cohort since its conception. Nine colloquia were held for student participants, including presentations from visiting faculty from Shanghai Normal University and Liberty in North Korea (LiNK).
The Leadership Challenge, managed by the Office of Leadership and Service-Learning (OLSL), was able to significantly expand programming this year with support from Global Engagement. Twenty-seven Mental Models workshops were offered to the 919 students participating in the Bronze, Silver and Gold levels of the program. Global Engagement provided funding for 12 peer educators and for additional facilitator training sessions. OLSL also received funding to hire a part-time Coordinator for Global Leadership to facilitate globally engaged leadership and service-learning initiatives.

Global Engagement is also committed to supporting ongoing faculty development. In the 2014-15 academic year, the Global Engagement Office awarded faculty a total of 18 Global Engagement Course Development awards, one Global Service-Learning Course Development Award, and two International Service-Learning Course Development Awards, totaling $22,000 in faculty grant funding. These awards are intended to help faculty develop courses incorporating the Global Engagement Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

At the beginning of the 2014-15 academic year, the University Teaching and Learning Commons (UTLC) appointed two Global Engagement Faculty Fellows, Dr. Chiaki Takagi, Senior Lecturer of Japanese and Asian Studies, and Ms. Yekaterina Colon, Lecturer of Russian. The Global Engagement Fellows held 5 workshops over the course of the year to increase faculty support for and discussion of themes around global engagement pedagogy.

In keeping with its focus on faculty development, the Global Engagement Office organized its second annual three-day Global Engagement Summer Institute in May 2015. Twenty-four faculty and administrators gathered to learn how to incorporate intercultural competence into their courses. Attendees participated in small group work to either design/redesign a proposed course incorporating the four Global Engagement SLOs or to design an app to use in an SLO-modified course. Faculty were also given information on funding, service-learning and intercultural engagement opportunities.

In the coming year, Global Engagement will double the amount of support available for Global Engagement Course Development Awards. The KFYCR will expand to involve more first-year students in engaging with the content of this year’s book selection, Where Am I Wearing, which addresses issues surrounding the global textile industry. In November, the Global Engagement Office will hold the KFYCR Capstone Conference in cooperation with Lloyd International Honors College, which will bring 150 anticipated first-year students face to face with Greensboro’s past, present and future in the global apparel industry.

Now under the direction of Associate Provost for International Programs Dr. Nell Pynes, Global Engagement anticipates building on its past successes to reach even more students and faculty to engage them in global opportunities.