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**The Challenge of Internationalizing Undergraduate Education:  
Global Learning for All**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper summarizes research conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE) on the state of internationalization of U.S. higher education, analyzes barriers to internationalization at the campus level, and suggests strategies to achieve internationalization throughout the undergraduate experience. It summarizes the findings of a two-phase research effort, funded by the Ford Foundation, which included a review of research conducted before 2000; surveys of public opinion before and after September 11, 2001; and a survey of college-bound high school seniors. It also included surveys of institutional policies and practices (n=752), of faculty (n=1,200), and of students (n=1290). Together, these data provide a picture of the climate for internationalization, interest among prospective and current students, and the attitudes and practices of faculty members. While attitudes of students, faculty, and the public are largely positive and favorable toward international education, institutional practices and policies reveal that most institutions are only minimally internationalized.

The major work of internationalization rests on the shoulders of faculty and requires vigorous support from institutional leaders. Barriers to internationalization can be institutional, such as scarce resources, disciplinary paradigms, and structures, or the absence of incentives. They also can be individual in nature, including lack of faculty expertise, lack of interest, negative attitudes, or the unwillingness or inability of faculty to integrate international learning into their disciplinary perspectives. Experience with eight institutions in ACE's Promising Practices project and its Internationalization Collaborative, as well as insights from the literature, provide insights into successful strategies for promoting integration of internationalization into the undergraduate experience.

A coherent, institution-wide (or unit-wide) strategy is essential and difficult, requiring highly committed leaders, wide faculty engagement, and persistence over time. Institutions must lay the groundwork by outlining goals and articulating underlying assumptions about internationalization. Leaders create energy and momentum, focus attention, and keep the agenda moving. They must continually widen the circle of participation and share leadership responsibilities. In addition, they must identify and align resources, remove barriers, and help people think differently. Supporting structures are essential, although no single structure will work for all campuses. An international office should facilitate coherence and coordination among the many threads of internationalization. This paper concludes with five recommendations.