28 March 2009

TO: Robert S. Nelsen, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Texas A &M Corpus Christi

FROM: Arlene Jackson, Director  
International Education, AASCU

RE: Recommendations for the Internationalization of Texas A &M Corpus Christi

In preparing my summary remarks to you, I incorporated verbiage from the American Council on Education (ACE) publication "Internationalizing the Campus: A User's Guide" (pg. 79). According to the guide, successful internationalization efforts depend upon several important process questions. During my 1½ day campus assessment visit, the university campus community addressed the critical issues and determined all three questions (who, what, how) as well as responses can be pivotal to a university's efforts to successful internationalization.

As you know, "leadership, resources, organizational structure, and partnerships are four key elements of a successful institutional strategy. Additionally, internationalization, similar to other significant changes, requires a thoughtful process, leadership and strategic investments. To have an impact that is both broad and deep requires vigorous leadership at the top as well as throughout the institution, broad engagement of the campus community, and well-crafted goals and strategies."

During all meetings with the faculty, staff and administrators we discussed these three key elements of a successful institutional strategy. Through our extensive dialogue, each discussant became more aware that to have an impact, as well as to develop sustainable viable programs, the internationalization process at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi couldn't take place at one time. Rather, the reality is that the university's success will occur when over a period of time the pieces fit together, with priorities and assessments, as a part of the larger strategic plan, such as Momentum 2015, (Texas A&M-Corpus Christi's strategic plan) which has an internationalization component.

As a follow up to the important process questions we discussed, I have attached three recommendations and strategies. If implemented, these three priorities will require consistent planning and assessment/evaluations.

At the conclusion of the sessions, it became clear, that the immediate centralization of all international functions will provide the full provision of "one-stop services and support" for all international activities. This is necessary because, following a systematic and well-structured internationalization process will assist both the International Education Office and the greater university community in its challenge to design an effective international strategy that meets the university's mission and goals.

If I can be of further assistance or if you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (email:jacksona@aascu.org or tale: 202-478-7834).
REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Report to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

This report presents conclusions from a campus assessment visit to observe international education initiatives at Texas A&M University/Corpus Christi.

This campus site visit took place 8-10 March 2009.

Observations

1.) Texas A&M-Corpus Christi has extremely dedicated and passionate administrators/faculty/staff looking for direction to develop and implement a successful campus wide international initiative.

2.) The decentralization of the international units has left a void in the university's internationalization efforts, direction and overall successful operation.

3.) Silos exist and international education initiatives are operating in vacuums around campus; each area is working to the best of its ability based on available resources.

4.) Discussion with staff (Office of International Education) and members of the faculty/administration with interest in the internationalization of Texas A&M-Corpus Christi confirmed the university does have a strategy for pursuing its international vision (Momentum 2015); under the associate vice president for academic affairs' direct leadership the task force has begun a campus wide discussion around achieving international goals as well as a plan for action that provides recommendations in 5 general areas.

5.) The Office of International Education’s structure and functions needs to be reorganized into one central operation in order to broaden infrastructure and strengthen services/programs. (If full reorganization occurs, a Director should be hired to oversee and coordinate this initiative. However, if budget and lack of position line prevent the hiring of a director, consider a half time consultant for one year to move the international initiative forward)
6.) Senior Administration should work with the international Task Force to implement the Task Force's recommendations over a 5 year period

7.) International Education leadership with the cooperation of the Senior Administration should prepare a viable plan to show how these changes will be made in short term and what resources will be used to move forward a long range strategy based on the recommendations of the International Task Force.

International Recommendations/Priorities

Priority #1 Leadership and Organizational Structure
Establish leadership and funding in international area that will re-design and enhance the Office of International Education’s strategies for internationalization (5 year plan).

Strategies
* The university should create a senior management position to coordinate all units of a university wide international initiative. This position should clearly meet defined competencies as they relate to administration experiences in the field of international education and exchange management. (63% of all comprehensive universities have a full-time Chief International Officer to oversee internationalization efforts).

* The university should create an Advisory Council to work with the senior international manager, task force and the university community to present a 2009-2015 strategic plan for internationalization. (This council should include the ESLI Director.)

* The newly restructured Office of International Education should produce an annual statistical report to assess progress; the report must include benchmarks items (international recruitment and retention, international student services, study abroad and exchanges, faculty development and grants).

* The university must provide adequate resources (financial and personnel) to meet the goals of the international office.

* The Office of International Education should work with university community to identify both internal and external funds to offset support of programs and activities.

* The International Task Force should prioritize it recommendations; create a timeline for implementation; indicate costs for each recommendation.
**Priority #2  International Admissions, Recruitment, Retention**

Charge the Office of International Education to work with Enrollment Management and the Retention Task Force to increase and retain the international student enrollment by no less than 10% per year.

**Strategies**

*Develop and fund a 5 year recruitment plan; expand the involvement of all members of the university community with the goal to provide a satisfactory infrastructure and environment to meet the international student increase and ensure the retention of the international student population.*

* Re-locate the current international admissions coordinator from undergraduate admissions in Enrollment Management into the newly reorganized, centralized Office of International Education and re-title the position: International Student Services Coordinator. OIE is the appropriate location for this position, and the presence of this position will strengthen the services of a centralized office.*

*Create another full-time international student advisor (ISA) to serve the international student/scholar services (in order to divide the caseload of 550 international students between the 2 officers) The ISA staff should be cross-trained in INS regulations (F visas) and should apply for J visa sponsorship for the university. Additionally, in the future a J visa officer should be added to the ISA staff and should be cross-trained with F visa regulation procedures and should provide support for SEVIS documentation/record keeping.*

*Create a full-time credential evaluator (this person should work closely with the Graduate Dean’s Office but should report to the Office of International Education).*

*Train the staff in OIE and members of the Senior Administration including Deans so that they can be actively involved in the recruitment and admission of international undergraduate and graduate students. They should be encouraged to attend study abroad fairs in other countries and to visit embassies in Washington, DC.*

*Update and revise the university website to be more competitive and inviting to prospective international students. (Refer to AASCU’s International Friendly Campus portal).*

*Continue to utilize ESLI to assist in the enrollment of qualified international students who may require ESL prior to full-time academic study, but require ESLI to provide a
transparent policy for admission with standardized TOEFL or IELTS scores rather than SAT for undergraduate admission. ESLI should offer bridge courses to students in level three so that their transition into full-time academic programs will be more competitive and provide more proficient levels of English.

**Priority #3  Academic Programs Abroad and Exchanges**
Increase the study abroad participation of Texas A &M Corpus Christi students and faculty.

**Strategies**

*Expand the study abroad coordinator's position to coordinate all university-wide study abroad, internships, and faculty exchanges, and advising for both students and faculty interested in international academic program activities. The faculty-led programs may still be housed in the colleges, but they must be coordinated through Office of International Education. And so must faculty exchanges, including those at research institutes.*

* Provide the opportunity for faculty who have not traveled abroad but want to lead a study abroad to participate in programs (see below) prior to organizing a faculty-led study abroad program for students. This experience will broaden knowledge and provide training for the faculty.*

* Expand the number of the university’s faculty led study abroad options (short-term, inter-session). Each faculty-led program must be designed to fully support itself and generate revenue for the Office of International Education (in other words, a portion of the revenue generated by these programs should be returned to OIE).*

*Study abroad enrollment should be no less than double the preceding year’s number of students participating in study abroad and internships each year after 2009.*

* Increase number of faculty participating in programs such as Fulbright, CCIEE, Woodrow Wilson, NSEP, AASCU’s Japan Studies Institute and other programs and seminars as a part of faculty professional development and training.*

* Promote the supplemental travel awards to faculty actively involved in campus internationalization efforts but who have had limited international experiences.*

* Continue to strengthen international partnerships with international academic institutions into viable, sustainable, mutually beneficial affiliations.*

In summary, meeting these three (3) recommendations will require the following:
• Re-structuring of the current International Education Office to ensure:
  * clearer division of labor that allows activities and assessment consistent with the 3 priorities and
  * leadership that has strong direction and university-wide support to meet the Texas A&M-Corpus Christi’s mission and internationalization goals.

• Funding from Central Administration to provide wide spread campus support and start-up costs for re-structure of the International Education Office; recruiting, study abroad, faculty exchange and other designated international initiatives.

Notes

1. Texas A & M Corpus Christi Website
2. Office of International Education packet of documents sent by Ana Billeaux
3. American Council On Education