

University Council on International Exchange and Research

**PROPOSAL FOR A FOREIGN POLICY FOR BOSTON COLLEGE:**

**A Great University is an International University**

The great universities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are international—in spirit, curriculum, students, and faculty. Rooted in their own traditions, these universities recognize that the realities of the new millennium—intellectual as well as economic—require a global perspective. Boston College, already one of America’s most distinguished academic institutions, must enhance both its global image and its campus commitment to internationalization to maintain and expand its leadership in American higher education and carve out a global niche. Boston College is highly regarded in the United States as a distinguished academic institution. It is, at this point, less well-known abroad. BC’s internationalization will improve its global reputation. The global higher education rankings give precedence to academic institutions worldwide that have both a strong international focus and an international image.

Boston College’s commitment to internationalization lies at the core of its educational mission. As a Jesuit and Catholic university it has a special responsibility to serve the broader aims of the international network of Jesuit and Catholic universities, especially in the developing world. In its effort to prepare students for citizenship, service, and leadership in a global society, Boston College can rely on this worldwide network. The Jesuit academic tradition, with its commitment to the liberal arts and general studies since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, is at its core international. Liberal arts studies past and present respond to the large questions and challenges that we all face, and those are inherently international in scope. Boston College is characterized by a constant quest for excellence. Over the last decades it has embarked on a remarkable journey from a regional institution to a preeminent national university. The next step for Boston College is to become a university that is thoroughly invested in international networks of knowledge and responsible global citizenship as an institution of higher learning in the Jesuit and Catholic tradition. Thus, internationalization serves as a key element in our continuing pursuit of excellence— in the quality of our teaching and curriculum, in our innovative and cross-disciplinary research, and as a community that is open to the world and committed to social justice.

Boston College has the advantage of its long and successful tradition of providing opportunities for our undergraduate students to study abroad as well as welcoming prominent Jesuit and lay scholars from countries throughout the world. To move forward, BC needs to build on these significant advantages and to expand the scope of the university’s international commitment to greater curricular globalization, more extensive international programming for graduate

and professional students, deeper international partnerships with sister universities abroad, and greater opportunities for faculty to engage in global research and collaboration.

Thus, to move Boston College towards a deeper and broader internationalization, and to pursue the sixth direction of the Boston College strategic plan,

**Become a significant intellectual and cultural crossroads by leveraging Boston College's international resources and partnerships and its Jesuit and Catholic networks,**

the University Council on International Exchange and Research recommends:

**For educational efforts with students:**

- Encourage all departments and programs to explore ways that the growing global interconnectedness of the human family can and should affect the graduate and undergraduate curricular offerings of their departments, including core courses that focus on key areas of the liberal arts and sciences.

*Some strategies related to curriculum development:*

- A series of events for faculty sponsored by the provost on education in a globally interdependent world, parallel to the series organized previously on the Catholic intellectual tradition, perhaps overlapping with the CIT initiative.
- A request by the provost for a report from each department, institute, center, and program on the initiatives it will take in this area, with a date specified for completion of the report.
- Continue and expand BC's current undergraduate study abroad programs, particularly focusing on developing countries and offering more opportunities for international internships, research abroad and service learning opportunities. In addition, students' international learning experiences should be further integrated into their coursework when they return.

*Some strategies related to undergraduate study abroad:*

- In cooperation with the Career Center, OIP, and the professional schools, a summer International Internship Program.

- As an expansion of the Advanced Study Grant Program, opportunities for students to do independent research abroad supervised by faculty.
  - A restructured Global Proficiency Program focusing on international service and service learning.
  - Capstone courses to help seniors integrate their study-abroad experience with their academic programs and personal goals.
  - In cooperation with the Career Center, information on international career opportunities and links with alums in international careers
- Robustly enhance the emphasis on internationalization in BC's graduate and professional programs, including careful recruiting of top international students, the judicious development of exchange programs in relevant fields, and interdisciplinary emphases that bring together BC departments and faculty and link them with relevant international partners, such as the newly established human rights initiative.

*Some strategies related to graduate and professional students:*

- Dissertation fellowships, ideally supported by endowment, to support PhD students doing research with international dimensions.
- Summer support for doctoral students engaged in international research and master's students gaining international experience.
- A Graduate Student International Forum, an opportunity for graduate students to present work with an international dimension in progress.
- Discussion among the graduate and professional school deans and admissions offices of best practices in the recruitment and admission of international students.

**For our faculty:**

- Strengthen existing collaborations and strategically initiate new research partnerships that ideally build on Boston College's network of preeminent international partners. Further develop the links between BC and other Jesuit and Catholic universities throughout the world. Successful international

projects should be aligned with BC's strategic goals and parameters. An international project or partnership should support and enhance a particular aspect of teaching or curriculum, a broader research trajectory, or specific aspects of student life and learning.

*Some strategies related to international collaboration:*

- A database of BC's international connections, partnerships, research projects, and programs for the BC Global web site.
  - A grant program for faculty to pursue internationally significant research.
  - The selection of a small number of Jesuit and Catholic universities by each school for special emphasis for the development of cooperative links.
  - A small scale and prestigious program for faculty to teach and do research at a selected number of international partner universities.
- Develop Boston College as a welcoming host for a multi-faceted range of teaching, research, and community building activities; enabling our campus to serve as a location for meetings and seminars especially during the summer months.

*Some strategies related to international visiting scholars:*

- University housing facilities and office space for academic year, semester, and shorter-term stays by visiting scholars.
- Endowed chairs for visiting international scholars.
- Visiting international doctoral students for short-term study with BC faculty.
- The Society of International Fellows program, to increase Boston College's attractiveness as an exciting academic and intellectual partner for scholars and teachers from around the world and to bring together internationally-minded faculty on campus for research and teaching.

**For the University:**

- Effectively highlight the various international activities Boston College has already embarked upon in the areas of teaching, research, and community service around the world. This should include prominent showcasing of such activities across the university on BC's homepage.

*Some strategies to publicize BC as an "international crossroad":*

- A policy that if a suitable candidate can be found, one honorary degree per year should go to someone who is internationally connected to BC, either as an alum, a scholar or someone whose work internationally or in an international context BC would like to honor.
  - A slight increase in the number of degree-seeking international undergraduates.
  - A presentation to the Board of Trustees highlighting key international connections, partnerships, research projects, and programs at Boston College.
- Implement an effective decision-making process and a dynamic administrative structure that advises, guides, funds, and evaluates international initiatives.

*Some strategies related to administrative structure:*

- The University Council on International Exchange and Research as a first step.
- As the strategies outlined above develop, the appointment of a vice-provost for global education and research.