

# Global Engagement At Mason

## Quality Enhancement Plan

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QEP Planning Committee

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### **Section 1: Vision**

Share your vision of how your proposed topic has the potential to transform an issue related to student learning at the institutional level. Consider your audience of the Mason community members – why should we embrace this topic and how will it enhance student learning at Mason?

**Vision Statement:** “Global Engagement at Mason” is a university-wide commitment to incorporate a global perspective throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum. Through the implementation of this QEP, Mason will capitalize on its location and its multinational student body to become recognized as a global university, in outreach, research and education, promoting increasing global awareness, understanding and competence among our students and faculty.

**Mason in Global Perspective:** As a university, Mason has been strongly shaped by an emerging global dynamic characterized by immigration, growth of transnational institutions, and an increasing pace of cultural, scientific, technical, and financial exchange. The distinctive features of the university – its youth, growth, geographic location, and heterogeneous student population – are in significant ways the product of these new and/or heightened forms of global connection.

**Capitalizing On Our Location:** Mason is situated within the national capital region in close proximity to one of the most international cities in the world. Fairfax and Loudoun counties are two of the fastest growing counties in Virginia with large immigrant populations from Latin America, Asia and the Middle East.

**Global Identity:** Mason’s student body is multinational, drawing foreign students to our campus from over 100 different countries. Components of our curriculum focus on global issues and processes, and the university has international exchange programs (e.g., China) and campuses (RAK in the United Arab Emirates).

**Global Understanding:** One of our general education requirements is “global understanding,” which will be more thoroughly integrated into other areas of the curriculum and the co-curricular options. Through this QEP initiative we have an opportunity to bring together our various global initiatives to strengthen our global identity as an institution.

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**What Our Students Need:** To succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, students need to leave the university with a solid understanding of global processes and a humanitarian perspective toward others both local and global. This involves viewing one's education--in any subject--toward connection with others and projects that do good, not harm. It encourages students to take responsibility for effecting positive changes in their communities and in the world as the ultimate goal of their education. Much more attention could be given to the global dimensions of issues that will become critical such as global economy, environment and climate change and geopolitical conflicts. We will provide more intentional ways in which our students can gain a fuller appreciation for the world beyond the United States.

**Our Role as Professional Educators:** As scholars, administrators, and student affairs professionals, our fields of study and action are increasingly shaped in an international arena. "Global Engagement at Mason" provides an opportunity to consider the complexity and direction of this global dimension, and build those considerations into the curricular and co-curricular lives of our students. What in our teaching can we do to shape or foster humanitarians attuned to global processes but thinking about them through their location in a university community? We imagine programming, cross cultural initiatives, co-curricular activities, increased service learning, including internationally. Our pedagogy will call for reflection on how what we are doing in class connects to the broader world and raises the profile of our already-vigorous engagement with global issues. Significant revision to the University General Education Program, particularly the Global Understanding requirement, would be one avenue.

### **Section 2: Congruence with Mission and Goals**

Demonstrate how your proposed topic is consistent with Mason's mission and 2014 Strategic Plan.

#### **Global Initiative in Strategic Plan:**

- Mason has had an institutional goal of cultivating a global perspective in the last two strategic plans and it is stated again in the 2014 plan. The plan states: "George Mason will continue to emphasize global roles and the importance of promoting global understanding in the educational process. Articulating and meeting the relevant challenges of globalization including environmental challenges will define a significant portion of the University's agenda during the coming period"..... "Develop more fully as a global university, in outreach, research and education, to promote increasing global competence among our students, while extending global and local awareness in the environmental area." ..... "Improve the definition of the global issues category in general education and begin to develop assessment mechanisms in global competence." ...

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“Expand the number of international students by at least 20% while improving the integration of international and domestic students in extracurricular as well as academic activities.”

- Mason’s most recent mission statement states that we will “Educate the new generation of leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century – men and women capable of shaping a new economy in a global community with vision, justice, and clarity.”

### **Section 3: Student Learning Outcomes**

Identify at least four measurable student learning outcomes that your proposed topic expects to address. Specifically, if your plan were to be adopted, what would students know and be able to do as a result?

#### **Global Problems and Solutions:**

1. Students will be able to identify and understand contemporary and historic global processes and their ramifications (e.g. globalization, colonialism, transnationalism, and neoliberalism).
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the major processes of globalization, the theories about its development, and the critique of those theories. They will understand the historical sources of contemporary global conflicts and the kind of perspective that is needed to engage in a complex, globally connected society.

#### **Global Trends in Discipline:**

1. Students will be able to identify global trends affecting and affected by their major field of study and be able to analyze how their major field of study reflects and contributes to processes of globalization.

#### **Global Engagement:**

1. Students will expand their network of enduring relationships across national, linguistic, cultural and religious differences.
2. Students will acquire the skills of dialogue on contentious issues and will be able to substantively engage one another on topics related to global processes.
3. Students will be able to compare and contrast alternative perspectives with critical rigor.

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### **Section 4: Possible Avenues for Implementation**

Describe how your proposed QEP topic relates to an issue where there is momentum building on campus or an issue that would be significantly strengthened through added attention and resources. Include your ideas about possible strategies for implementing this topic so that we could obtain meaningful results. Where possible, highlight opportunities to build on current institutional initiatives and resources.

#### **Academic Curriculum:**

- Strengthen the academic curriculum in the area of global understanding and responsibility.
- Support faculty to create new ways of infusing the skills, knowledge and aptitudes that constitute a sound liberal education with links to the concept of what it means to be globally engaged in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **Study Abroad:**

- Expand study abroad opportunities.
- Build these opportunities into curricular plans.
- Expand student funding for study, internships, and service learning and encourage students to apply for existing funding.

#### **Global Integration:**

- Build on existing curricular and co-curricular programs that foster global integration and engagement. For example, Global Studies Center, Global Affairs Program, Global Ethics, Global citizenship, Global Proficiency Certificate, International Affairs, various international and global concentrations in majors, Global Education programs, General Education global understanding, Dialogue and Difference Project, Mason Project on Immigration, International Week and Global Nomads.

#### **Living Learning Communities:**

- Support and create campus living-learning communities that foster global engagement.

#### **Mason's Global Partnerships:**

- Foster integration of domestic and international campuses and partnerships.