



–a Ferris State international education newsletter

Innovation + Collaboration → Opportunity + Excellence

Greetings from the Office of International Education (OIE). The Ferris State Vision is to prepare students “for our rapidly changing global economy and society.” The reality of demographics, decreasing state support, and competition at times clouds that vision. Since the Fall of 2008, Ferris State has lost 2.1% in student head count. But, the real impact is the decrease of 8.1% in Student Credit Hours. But, to sustain our operations, our students have had to shoulder the burden of tuition revenue increase of 20.1% during this period. The above numbers are small measures of the challenges ahead and mask the underlying structural challenges of the higher education business model.

We need to overcome the challenge of resources to continue our founders vision of Ferris State as an opportunity University. How do we provide high-quality, impactful educational experiences that support the professional and personal goals of our students? How do we achieve that with minimal investment?

In the OIE, we see funding challenges as an opportunity to innovate and collaborate. Problems and challenges are opportunities to innovate and to seek solutions that are sustainable. In this newsletter, we are sharing how we created a unique, one-of-a-kind degree program at Ferris through international collaboration that helps prepare students “for our rapidly changing global economy and society” by innovating to achieve excellence.

Working with our German partner university and our College of Business, we have developed a low-cost high impact program that addresses many of the challenges we have with minimal investment. How did we achieve it?

Thinking outside the Boxes and Borders!

Dr. Piram Prakasam
Executive Director, Office of International Education



Thinking outside the Boxes & Borders: Double Degree Program

To prepare our students to thrive in a rapidly changing global economy and society, we need to seek opportunities that provide our students with high impact, low-cost, and excellent international experiences.

Our short-term summer study abroad programs cost an average of \$3500 on top of tuition costs for a 2-4 week program. This makes it difficult for most students to avail this opportunity. How do we provide meaningful global experiences when resources are scarce and students are under the pressure of the cost of education?

The twin problem of scarce resources and student debt can be overcome by collaboration. Finding synergy through collaboration and developing symbiotic partnerships are the keys to innovating out of our current challenges.

The OIE has collaborated with the College of Business and the school of Society and Economics in our partner university, Hochschule Rhein-Waal (HSRW) in Germany to develop our first Double Degree Program as a solution.



FSU Provost Dr. Paul Blake and HSRW Dean of Society and Economics Prof Dr. Jakob Lempp signing the double degree agreement in Big Rapids, MI. February 13th, 2016.

In 2012, a former international student intern in the OIE introduced us to his new university in Kleve, Germany, HSRW. This was a newly established university designed to be international in focus. They were seeking partnerships in the US to enhance their curriculum and provide experiential learning opportunities for their students. As the relationship developed it became clear that multiple opportunities for collaboration existed at the program, college, and institutional level. So, we explored options outside the box of the traditional exchange program to see what was possible.

The HSRW partnership has been nurtured by the OIE since 2012. Faculty exchanges, program benchmarking, the most active semester exchange program, and online co-curricular collaborations have been successfully developed. But the most exciting collaboration has been the intentional expansion of our student exchange program over the course of four years to develop the first Double Degree program at Ferris in 2016.

All students at HSRW are required to complete one-semester of study abroad to obtain their degree and the students are eager to Study in the United States. The curriculum between our Bachelor’s in Business Administration and the German International Business degree complement each other. This allowed us to expand our partnership beyond exchanging students for a semester. We were able to create a double degree program where students spend a year at each other’s campus on exchange and receive a degree from both institutions with no additional cost other than a flight ticket to travel and no additional time to graduate. The College of Business has also been able to provide scholarships to students to that cover the cost of the plane ticket. Students can complete a Double Degree in two continents without additional time and cost.

FSU Student Progression		HSRW Student Progression	
Year of Education	Location of Study	Year of Education	Location of Study
Year One	Big Rapids, USA	Year One	Kleve, Germany
Year Two	Big Rapids, USA	Year Two	Kleve, Germany
Year Three	Kleve, Germany	Year Three	Big Rapids, USA
Year Four	Big Rapids, USA	Year Four	Kleve, Germany

Double degree students must complete a bachelors thesis, for the HSRW degree requirement, which can be completed at any location.

Through this innovative experience, students are able to enhance their global knowledge base through curricular opportunities, develop 21st century skills through impactful experiential learning opportunities, and practice these skills over an extended period of time so that upon graduation, they are prepared to seize global opportunities.

A Double Degree Program in both Europe and the US is an excellent opportunity to market our Business Administration Program to potential high school students, especially in the context of decreasing enrollment. More importantly, programs like this allow us to grow ourselves out of problems of decreasing enrollment by creating high quality experiences with minimal investment. This Double Degree is an example of how we can innovate through collaboration. If you are interested in innovating through collaboration outside boxes and borders, connect with us!

Lisa vonReichbauer
Asst. Director, OIE



In Context

1. **Read:** Innovation in Higher Education: Implications for the Future
https://cyber.harvard.edu/communia2010/sites/communia2010/images/White_Glickman_2007_Innovation_in_Higher_Education-Implications_for_the_Future.pdf
2. **Read:** Challenges and Opportunities for the Global Engagement of Higher Education
<https://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/CIGE-Insights-2014-Challenges-Opps-Global-Engagement.pdf>
3. **Watch or Listen:** The Revolutionary Power of Diverse Thought
https://www.ted.com/talks/elif_shafak_the_revolutionary_power_of_diverse_thought



A Moment In Time:



Images from the Study Abroad Fair held on October 16th and 17th in the University Center. The OIE collaborates with faculty and staff across the University to create high quality, affordable, enriching global experiences for our students. For more images, visit our OIE Facebook page.



Upcoming Events:

1. November 9 - Diwali Celebration 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm in the IRC Connector
2. November 16 – International Faculty and Staff Potluck from 12:00-1:30 pm in IRC 104
3. Fridays at 1:00 pm in IRC 104 – Weekly Study Abroad Workshops (open to all students)
4. Fridays at 2:00 pm in IRC 107- Cultural Conversations (open to all students)

Imagine more...

