Global Cultural Experience Requirement for Undergraduate and Graduate Students

Global culture experiences offer students a perspective of both a country’s diverse people and the critical issues of its society, commerce, political spheres, religion(s) and culture(s). These experiences extend an opportunity for students to explore their responsibility to the global community. Global experiences are transformative in nature with the transformative potential of the experience limited only by the readiness and maturation levels of participating students. The College commitment to preparing students to work effectively in multicultural/multilingual settings is to engage all students in approved and appropriate global cultural experiences as part of their professional preparation programs.

A broad spectrum of experiences currently exist at San Diego State University, through the CSU offerings and from authorized third party providers associated with the International Student Center. In addition, many other culturally rich experiences are available to add to the options for students in the future.

Experiences can range from one week in duration to those that last for an entire year. The array of global experiences that exist on the SDSU campus include but are not limited to:

- general travel itineraries (variety of lengths);
- leadership retreats (one to two week length);
- orientation programs conducted internationally for freshman and/or sophomore year experience programs (one to two week length);
- alternative spring break programs with a service component (short term);
- Summer program (one week to three months);
- Semester/year-long exchange programs (long term);
- Internships (short, mid and long term duration);
- faculty-led courses connected to an institution or third party provider (various durations)
- courses held abroad in support of dual degrees, especially those linked to affiliated and/or sister institutions (various durations);
- research opportunities (various durations)
- organizational leadership engagements (e.g., international fraternities - during summer for various durations)

These program offerings can take place in nearly every country but also are found in the United States. In the U.S., impactful programs exist that are affiliated with various Native American reservations and Heritage Neighborhood Programs that steep participants in the language, history and connections to strong ethnic and cultural communities.

The focus of the various categories of global experiences may include research, knowledge specific to the major, competency(ies) connected to future employment, experiential activities
connected to intercultural or transnational awareness programs and enhancing leadership skills, personal development or any combination of focuses from this list.

General core outcomes and/or criteria for meeting the required global experience are core to this initiative. All global experiences that satisfy the requirement to have a global cultural experience should include one or more of the following core outcomes in addition to those that have been assigned to the individual course, program, and experience:

- Transformational in nature
- Enhanced cultural awareness and sensitivity to customs, linguistic and cultural differences
- Increased confidence, initiative, and independence
- Problem solving and crisis management
- Improved communication skills
- Foreign language proficiency and acquisition
- Adaptability and the ability to embrace introspection

Recommendations for implementation:

1. The array of categories of global culture experience programs should continue to be developed to meet our goal to internationalize our students and our campus community.

2. Unique programs in the United States such as those that are affiliated with Native American Reservations or Heritage Neighborhood Programs should be considered on a case-by-case basis for satisfying the global experience requirement.

3. Each department should determine the various kinds of global experiences that satisfy the global culture experience requirement.

4. Beyond the outcomes identified by a specific global experience, we recommend that the outcomes also include one or more from the core standards for the students’ programs.

5. Consideration should be given to the use of a portfolio approach to aid in the evaluation of a student’s global experience. This approach should help to create more meaning-making value for the student and his/her global experience.