Creating a Global University for the 21st Century

Ten-Year Plan for San Diego State University

Prepared by the Global Strategic Planning Committee

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Al Sweedler, Co-Chair
Assistant Vice President
International Programs

Martha Ruel, Co-Chair
Associate Vice President
Student Affairs

Committee Members:

Edith Benkov
Associate Vice President, Faculty Affairs

Geoff Chase
Dean, Division of Undergraduate Studies

Michael Cunningham
Dean, College of Business Administration

Negar Davis
Director, International Student Center

Gale Etschmaier
Dean, Library and Information Access

Joyce Gattas
Dean, College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts

Paul Ganster
Associate Director, International Programs

David Hayhurst
Dean, College of Engineering

Ric Hovda
Dean, College of Education

Stanley Maloy
Dean, College of Sciences

Marilyn Newhoff
Dean, College of Health and Human Services

David Pearson
Dean, Imperial Valley Campus

Joe Shapiro
Dean, College of Extended Studies

Steve Welter
Vice President, Graduate Division and Research Affairs

Paul Wong
Dean, College of Arts and Letters
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Executive Summary and Recommendations

The 21st century is truly a global world. Its citizens interact almost on a daily basis with an increasing number of cultures, languages, social heritages, governments, business practices, exports, and education approaches. In order to thrive and survive in the global world of the 21st century, people need to have the skills and education to become global citizens.¹

It is no longer an option to educate students to become global citizens, but an essential component of the future mission of responsible universities. Success in this endeavor requires a strategic transition from a focus on an education for our world of today to an education for the global world of tomorrow. A global education is vital for our students, our faculty, our community, our region, our country, and our world.

A globally engaged San Diego State University is essential to meet today’s challenges and to create tomorrow’s futures. If the greater San Diego region and beyond is to grow and thrive in the 21st century global economy, then SDSU must provide its students with a broad range of education opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to be successful in the global environment. In essence, the university must become a truly global university.

It is in this context that we lay out here a 10-year strategic plan to transform San Diego State University into a truly global university.

The timing for such an initiative could not be better. After a decade of intense, largely successful, efforts to institutionalize international education at SDSU, we are now faced with a set of circumstances that requires renewed discussions about creating a global university at SDSU. A new president, Dr. Elliot Hirshman, has taken over the leadership of the university at a time when public higher education in California is facing significantly reduced state resources. At the same time, a vigorous and growing spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship has emerged in the region, which, when coupled with the global nature of the San Diego economy and culture, provides an

¹ Throughout this document, we have used both terms “global” and “international” somewhat interchangeably. Though “global” is a much broader term and more accurately describes the context for this initiative, the term “international” is more appropriate term to describe particular activities, e.g., international research, international study abroad.
unprecedented opportunity to garner the resources and talent needed to further connect SDSU to the global environment.

For these reasons, Provost Nancy Marlin and Vice President for Student Affairs James Kitchen formed a committee to develop recommendations to, guide SDSU into the 21st century as a genuinely global university. The committee, co-chaired by Al Sweedler, Assistant Vice President for International Programs and Martha Ruel, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, met during the 2011-2012 academic year. The committee also included members of the Academic Deans Council and several others whose work is related to global and international affairs at SDSU. Input was also obtained from faculty and students.

The results of the committee’s deliberations are presented in this report, which is divided into nine chapters. The committee used a 10-year time frame when considering its recommendations, which are summarized below.

Eight broad characteristics required of a global university were developed. These are described in Chapter 3. Briefly stated, a global university should make it clear that global education is a central part of its mission. It should provide its students with the tools needed to understand and function in the complex global environment they will encounter when they graduate. It should provide opportunities for students to study in other countries and have direct access to other cultures. It should actively recruit foreign students whose presence on campus contributes to the rich diversity of SDSU. It should be welcoming to international scholars and provide them with the tools they need to conduct their research while at SDSU. To become truly global, SDSU will need a greater presence overseas, both physical and via distance learning programs.

**Recommendations**

**Mission Statement:** We recommend that SDSU’s mission statement be slightly modified to read: “The mission of San Diego State University is to provide research-oriented, high quality education for undergraduate and graduate students, and to contribute regionally, nationally, and globally through excellence and distinction in teaching, research and service.”
**International Experiences for Students:** All students should have the opportunity to benefit from some type of academically appropriate international experience. However, as we recognize that this would be difficult to achieve, we recommend as a target over the next 10 years that 40 percent of our graduates have an approved international experience. To reach this target, we would need to double our current participation rate, or achieve an average growth rate of 7 percent per year for the next decade. We also recommend that the number of programs that require an international experience continue to increase. By programs we mean colleges, schools, departments, and interdisciplinary programs.

**Faculty Development for a Global University:** Expand the Faculty International Program Development Grants, to be funded from non-state sources.

**International Students at SDSU:** Increase international student enrollment by 7 percent per year for the next 10 years; 80 percent of these students should be seeking degrees.

**Global Strategic Partners and SDSU Sites Abroad:** Identify at least 10 strategic international partners over the next 10 years. Establish some form of physical presence in a limited number of strategic regions and investigate the development of a branch campus overseas.

**Distance Learning in a Global University:** Fully examine the role of distance learning in a global university over the next few years. This process should include all stakeholders, such as students, faculty, staff, administration, and the College of Extended Studies.

**International Research:** Leave internationally oriented research to individual faculty, students, and staff members. Institutional support for international graduate student scholarships and stipends should be pursued from non-state sources.

**Engagement with the Business Sector:** Establish a special task force to develop specific measures that will strengthen the ties between SDSU and the business community in the arena of global education, training, and research.
1. Introduction and Brief Background of SDSU’s Global Activities

As San Diego State University enters its third century, this is the appropriate time to assess the global role that it can and should play in the years ahead. From a small normal school at the turn of the 19th century, SDSU has grown to be the largest university in the San Diego region. During the same time, the region has been transformed from a small backwater town in the southwestern corner of the United States to a major metropolitan area tied to the global economy.

Universities are one of the critical components of a region’s prosperity and competitiveness. A globally engaged SDSU is vital if the San Diego region is to grow and thrive. In order for SDSU to provide the skills its students need to be successful in the international environment, the university must become truly global. This report lays out a 10-year strategic plan to accomplish this.

In 2011, SDSU’s Provost, Dr. Nancy Marlin, and Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. James Kitchen, asked a committee consisting mostly of the Academic Deans Council to recommend how SDSU can build on its considerable accomplishments in the global arena to take the university to an even higher level of global engagement. A committee was formed, Co-Chaired by Dr. Al Sweedler, Assistant Vice President of International Programs, and Dr. Martha Ruel, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs. In addition to the Academic Deans Council, Dr. Edith Benkov, Associate Vice President of Faculty Affairs; Dr. Negar Davis, Director of the International Student Center; and Dr. Paul Ganster, Associate Director of the Office of International Programs, were also members of the Global Strategic Planning Committee.

Regular meetings were held during the 2011–2012 academic year. Discussions took place on all aspects of creating and sustaining SDSU as a global university. Some of the topics discussed were:

- What constitutes a global university
- Value of students gaining a direct international experience in a country outside the U.S.
- Recruitment and retention of international students
- Importance of distance education for international education
- Relationship between research and global activities
- Assessment and evaluation of international experiences
• Faculty and staff development in a global context
• Identify strategic partners and establishing a physical presence abroad
• Role of research
• Interaction with the business sector, locally and globally

**Brief Background of SDSU’s Global Activities**

During the past 12 years, San Diego State University has made an intensive effort to transform itself “…into a genuinely global university,” one of the five strategic goals articulated in SDSU’s 1996 Shared Vision document. In 1999, fewer than 250 students studied abroad, there were only 840 international students on campus, and only one program required an international experience. Now, the situation is completely transformed. In 2010, a total of 1,850 students studied abroad; in Fall 2011, there were 1,858 international students on campus; and 38 programs with approximately 7,000 students required an international experience for graduation. Our faculty and staff are more international than ever and the amount of research with global connections is growing steadily.

The university is now at a critical point on the path to further advance its efforts to become a global university in the 21st century. With international activities embedded in the SDSU colleges, schools, departments, programs, and auxiliary units, an overall strategy needs to be developed and articulated to ensure that the myriad of activities related to international and global affairs are well coordinated and serve common, university-wide goals. The purpose of this report is to recommend a series of steps to truly make SDSU a global university for this century.

**2. Elements of a Global University**

A great deal has been written about what constitutes a global university. We list here some of the characteristics that, when taken together, form the essence of what a global university for this century should look like.

A global university should:

• Make clear and explicit in its mission statement that being international and global is central to its mission and purpose
• Provide its students with the tools needed to understand the complex, multifaceted, multicultural, and increasingly interconnected world we live in

• Support its faculty and staff in the development of programs, research activities, and international collaborations needed to create the learning environment for students to understand the global environment

• Actively facilitate the presence on campus of students and scholars from around the world

• Provide opportunities for students to directly experience living and learning in other countries

• Use appropriate technology to provide to students in other countries the opportunity to participate in U.S. higher education

• Establish, where appropriate, a physical presence in selected regions around the globe and develop sustainable, long-term partners in other countries

• Integrate global and international content into the curriculum wherever possible and appropriate

In the following sections, we discuss these elements of a global university and make recommendations to serve as a guide for planning and action.

3. Mission Statement

The university’s mission statement signals to all members of the community, both within and outside the university, its values and priorities. Traditionally, most universities focus on teaching, research, and service, with little or no mention of the connection between these activities and the wider, global community. More and more, however, international and global elements are being included in mission statements of many universities.

SDSU’s current mission statement states: “The mission of San Diego State University is to provide research-oriented, high quality education for undergraduate and graduate students, and to contribute to the region and world through excellence and distinction in teaching, research and service.” The mission statement is followed by a list of eight academic goals, none of which has the word international or global. Following the academic goals is a section stating that “San Diego State University pursues its mission and goals through Shared Vision...” Five goals are identified under the Shared Vision, the last one being to “Create a truly global university.”
Although the word "world" is mentioned in the mission statement and "...creating a genuinely global university" is one of the five goals developed during the Shared Vision process over 13 years ago, we believe more emphasis now needs to be placed on SDSU as a global university. We therefore recommend the following modification of the current mission statement:

**Current statement:** The mission of San Diego State University is to provide research-oriented, high quality education for undergraduate and graduate students, and to contribute to the region and world through excellence and distinction in teaching, research and service.

**Modified statement:** The mission of San Diego State University is to provide research-oriented, high-quality education for undergraduate and graduate students, and to contribute regionally, nationally, and globally excellence and distinction in teaching, research, and service.

**Current statement of academic goals:** To encourage the intellectual and creative development of a diverse group of students by helping them learn about themselves and others, their own and other cultural and social heritages and their environment.

**Modified statement of academic goals:** To encourage the intellectual and creative development of a globally diverse group of students by helping them learn about themselves and their environment, as well as those in other nations, cultures, and social heritages.

### 4. Global Experiences for SDSU Students

For students to better understand the complex global environment into which they will enter, it is necessary for them to be exposed to a diverse set of materials and experiences reflecting the wide array of thinking about global issues. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. We focus here specifically on two such approaches: (1) by providing students the opportunity to directly experience living, studying, and conducting research in another country; and (2) by incorporating into the curriculum, as much as possible, topics and themes with a global and international orientation.

**Direct International Experiences Outside the U.S.**

Over the past decade, SDSU has been very successful in sending students abroad for study and research. As noted in the introduction, almost 20 percent of graduates have gained an international
experience in the past few years, and 38 programs, including whole colleges, require study abroad to graduate. The international experience requirement has been the most effective approach for increasing the number of students studying abroad.

To date, SDSU has not set a specific number of students to go abroad each year. We believe that all students will benefit from an international experience of some type, but also recognize that this will be difficult to achieve. As some quantitative guidelines were thought to be useful, we recommend, as a target over the next 10 years, that 40 percent of our graduates have an approved international experience. To reach this target, we need to double the participation rate or achieve an average growth rate of 7 percent per year for the next decade. We also recommend that the number of programs that require an international experience continue to increase. By programs, we mean colleges, schools, departments, and interdisciplinary programs.

We also discussed what constitutes a valid global educational experience. Currently, a broad spectrum of opportunities exists for undergraduate and graduate students. These include SDSU-sponsored semester abroad programs, dual-degree programs, year-long and semester exchanges with partner universities around the world, short-term (2–6 weeks) faculty-led courses, international internships and research projects, and alternative spring break programs. All programs are vetted by the originating unit at the university (program, department, school, or college) to ensure appropriateness and quality of course content. In addition, all programs receive academic credit. The committee concluded that the number and type of programs currently offered are adequate to meet the needs of our students into the future.

One item that was discussed—but no conclusion or recommendation reached—was whether or not activities taking place on Native American reservations should constitute a valid international experience. We note this discussion because it has come up in organizations dealing with international education. It is likely that this issue will be discussed further both at SDSU and in the broader academic community.
Faculty Development for a Global University

Faculty participation and development is central to SDSU’s efforts to become a genuinely global university. Faculty members need to have first-hand experience in other countries and need to be able to impart their experiences and knowledge to their students. One way to assist the faculty in becoming more aware of global issues is to provide them the opportunities to study, teach, and conduct research abroad. At the current time, the Office of International Programs provides modest grants to faculty for the purpose of setting up international experiences for students. This program has played a major role in substantially increasing the number of SDSU students who participate in a study abroad experience over the past decade. The committee recommends that this program be significantly expanded through multiple sources of non-state funding.

An enhanced, global emphasis across the SDSU curriculum is another essential component of a global education for students. We strongly encourage faculty members to incorporate global issues into their courses wherever applicable and to increase the number of degree majors, minors, and emphases with a global focus, such as the minor in International Studies in PFSA, the major in International Studies in CAL, and the International Business and ISCOR degree programs.

Visiting scholars from around the world also play an important role in bringing an international perspective to the campus and in providing opportunities for our faculty to widen their teaching and research perspectives. All units of the university should encourage short- and long-term visits by scholars from abroad. As an institution, we should provide a welcoming, supportive, and productive atmosphere to visiting scholars. Non-state funds should be sought to support these efforts, including named international lectures and lecturers.

5. International Students at SDSU

International students contribute immensely to the academic, cultural, and social life of the university. They bring a wealth of diverse life experiences to share with other SDSU students and to contribute to the ethnic, cultural, and intellectual diversity on campus. They are also a rich source of native speakers in a wide variety of languages. In addition to these benefits, international students allow for vibrant exchange programs throughout the world that directly benefit SDSU students.
International student enrollments are increasing at many U.S. universities. In 2011, there were over 720,000 international students enrolled in U.S. institutions, an increase of 5.7 percent over the previous year. International students contribute over $21 billion to the U.S. economy through their tuition and living expenses. More than 63 percent of all international students receive the majority of their funds from personal and family sources. The top five places of origin for international students are China, India, South Korea, Canada, and Taiwan. Compared to 2010, there were strong increases in the number of students from a few countries, most notably China, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Iran, and Venezuela. Top fields of study remain Business and Management, Engineering, Mathematics, Computer Science, Physical and Life Sciences, and Social Sciences.

At SDSU, the number of international students enrolled as of Fall 2011 was 1,858, of which 860 (585 undergraduates and 275 graduates) pay fees as degree-seeking students. Incoming exchange students numbered 257 in 2011 and, while they do not pay fees to SDSU, they do provide an opportunity for our students to study abroad for a semester or two while earning resident credit at a cost equivalent to SDSU registration fees. It is clearly in the interests of SDSU to increase the total number of international students, the diversity of countries from which they come, and the portion that are degree-seeking students. To that end, the committee recommends that international student enrollment increase by 7 percent per year for the next 10 years, and that 80 percent of these students should be degree seeking. This would be a doubling of international students over a 10-year period.

6. Global Strategic Partners and SDSU Sites Abroad

In addition to having many exchange partners and individual faculty, students, and staff members studying and conducting research around the globe, it is important for SDSU to establish long-term relationships with universities in key parts of the world. Sustainable relationships with a select group of strategic partners will allow SDSU to develop ongoing activities that are based on the institutionalization of relationships rather than on overdependence on one-to-one personal relationships. Examples of sustainable programs include establishing a yearly summer school at a partner site attended by a cohort of SDSU students, or a strong exchange program focusing on specific areas of interest to SDSU such as International Business, Hospitality and Tourism Management, or Environmental Science. Course articulation would be required only once and
reviewed on a regular basis. Other examples could be in-depth research collaborations involving joint funding that include international movement of faculty and students and the use of distance learning technology to offer joint courses.

The committee recommends that at least 10 strategic partnerships be established during the next 10 years. Ideally, these partners should be located in regions of the world where there is a high likelihood that our students and faculty will develop programs. We suggest that SDSU have three partners in Latin America, four in Asia (with at least one in China) three in Europe, one in Africa, and one in the Middle East region. Current initiatives in this arena include Bahcesehir University in Istanbul, Turkey; Universidad Andrés Bello in Santiago, Chile; and Xiamen University in China.

In addition to developing strategic partnerships, we recommend that SDSU establish some type of physical presence in selected countries. In the immediate future, this is likely to involve a suite of offices and facilities in conjunction with one of our strategic partners rather than building an actual brick-and-mortar campus abroad. Our partner in Istanbul, for example, has offered to provide office space for SDSU as part of our collaboration.

We do, however, suggest that the development of an actual campus abroad also be examined. The purpose of such a campus would be to provide an international location where SDSU students can take courses toward their SDSU degrees, increase the image and visibility of SDSU on the global education market, recruit international students and faculty, and increase opportunities for international collaborations and philanthropy. Such a campus would be a self-supported operation funded by non-state funds.

7. Distance Learning in a Global University

The committee’s research on the future of distance learning in the global community revealed a general trend toward an ever-increasing role in international education. Distance education presents the possibility of offering SDSU degrees and certificates to potentially tens of thousands of students worldwide, thereby increasing communication, collaboration, and learning opportunities for all SDSU students and faculty. Combined online and on-site courses (hybrid courses) will also allow international students to complete their studies by taking some of their requirements abroad through
their home campus, through an SDSU partnership program, through an SDSU international campus, and through residence at SDSU.

When implemented in an academically sound manner, an online distance education program can make an important contribution to meeting the mission of the global university. Students and faculty who meet or surpass the global university's admission requirements and employment standards could engage in a broad range of education enrichment through regular interaction with individuals and groups from diverse locations and cultures across the world. These interactions could involve international/global/multicultural educational experiences such as:

- Virtual classrooms/education laboratories with faculty and students from around the world
- Multicultural/global course, internship, and study abroad content and experiences
- Increased access to a quality higher education experience for a broader range of global students
- Expanded opportunities for required student participation in international research, scholarship, and creative activities involving cultures other than those of their home countries
- Increased understanding of cultural, economic, political, and sociological similarities and differences across the globe
- Enhanced opportunities for development of international/global collaborations
- Synchronous and asynchronous delivery for real-time and off-line student and faculty interactions

There are, however, many issues that need to be resolved before a fully functional distance education system that significantly contributes to the university's global missions can be implemented. The committee recommends that the role of distance education be fully examined over the next few years. This process should include all stakeholders, such as students, faculty, staff, administration, Instructional Technology Services, and the College of Extended Studies; it should consider collaboration with foreign partners.
8. International Research

Research is an essential component of SDSU’s activities and needs to be equally essential in its global dimensions. Currently, research is driven largely by individual faculty members who have professional and/or personal international connections and/or collaborations. It is not clear whether the university as a whole can or should develop specific international research programs. The university, however, can assist in providing resources to graduate students whose research requires traveling abroad. This can be done—to an extent—through the Associated Students Study Abroad Scholarship program, although these funds are quite limited. Faculty who take graduate students abroad are also eligible for funding via OIP’s Faculty International Program Development Grants. In addition, if funding sources could be found to establish a Global Research Study Abroad program, then all three of these programs could increase and enhance international research at SDSU. This could be a fertile area for seeking private and corporate support. The committee recommends that resources be identified to establish a global research study abroad scholarship program.

9. Engagement with the Business Sector

The San Diego region is a major center of international and global business activity. The vibrant biotech, information technology, clean-tech, international trade, and tourism sectors, among others, are all global in nature. Accordingly, these depend on employees who are knowledgeable about global cultures, business, and trade and collaboration opportunities. If SDSU is to continue to have regional significance, then it has to become globally relevant. An important way to achieve global relevance is to remain strongly connected to the business community at all local, regional, national, and international levels. We must be sure that we are educating our students to meet the needs of the global companies that are the heart of the San Diego economy. To accomplish this, the committee recommends that a special task force be established to develop specific measures to maintain and strengthen ties between SDSU and the business community in the arena of global, education, training, and research.