

## **Potholes and Strategies on the Road to Campus Internationalization**

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Pothole is listed in *Roget's Thesaurus* with eleven synonyms as, for example, chuckhole, pit, depression, cavity, and crater. In folklore it likely comes from the early road builders who were hampered in road construction by potters who dug up chunks of clay from which to make clay pots. In a geologist's dictionary, it refers to a deep underground cavity created by water action, often a place where bats hibernate. On the West Coast a "chuckhole" probably descends from covered wagon days and the rough travel of chuck wagons across the prairies. A "pothole governor" is one who gets them fixed!

A pothole is a global concept, creating havoc on the rural byways of Haiti and Jamaica, mountain roads in Bolivia, and famous avenues of Washington, D.C. This pesky entity has various names around the world: in Danish "hul i vejen," in Bosnian "rupa," in Vietnamese "o ga," in Latvian "gramba," in Afrikaans "slaggat," and in Finnish "kuoppa." In Norwegian, potholes bring utterances of "uffda," and in English they are simply a "darned pothole."

We can swerve around a pothole, catch the edge of a pothole, or plunge headlong into the hole; not knowing its depth, we risk losing a wheel or the undercarriage of the car. We may also relocate our vertebrae. American drivers spend \$3 billion each year on damage caused by potholes. (<http://detroit.cbslocal.com/2016/02/17/aaa-pothole-damage-costs-drivers-3-billion-every-year/>)

This article will highlight the major potholes or chuckholes in the process of moving forward with campus internationalization. Each pothole will have a strategy or strategies associated with filling or avoiding the pothole. These potholes fall into the broad categories of leadership, resources and fundraising, consensus building, curriculum review and reform, campus activities, community outreach, partnering with institutions outside the US, and expanding student services to accommodate international guests. Much of this material comes from a real-world case study conducted at Shepherd University, a public liberal arts institution on the Potomac in the Panhandle of West Virginia. Like any institution undergoing internationalization, Shepherd has a few potholes.

Why internationalize a campus? At Shepherd we answered simply in terms of our primary learning outcomes, which are based on the guidelines of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U): To foster global understanding and respect, support multiculturalism and diversity, provide opportunities for international/intercultural experiential learning, and to promote and engage students in life-long learning. At Shepherd we are working to more deeply infuse international and intercultural themes and activities into the fabric of our institution. The potholes have not been overwhelming, but they are there, even on the best of roads and for the best of drivers. The key to overcoming these potholes has been a holistic approach and broad participation by the campus.

When I arrived at Shepherd University in the summer of 2008 to serve as Dean of the School of Business and Social Sciences, I was taken aback by the lack of an international student population. I then realized there was no international office, no faculty exchange programs, and few students going abroad. In fact, there were only a few short-term faculty-led study tours. This stood in stark contrast to my previous institution, University of Central Missouri, and Dr. Joy Stevenson's highly developed, dynamic, and expertly managed Office of International Programs. My many experiences at Central Missouri have also informed this article.

In 2010 Shepherd's Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Mark Stern, charged me with putting together a team to develop an interdisciplinary International Studies Major, and the program was nearly through the approval process when our efforts were put on hold by the university's President, Dr. Suzanne Shipley. Our President rerouted several of us, an Internationalization Leadership Team, to the American Council on Education (ACE) Internationalization Collaborative Lab (the delay was partly due to our General Studies reform which was not yet complete). The ACE collaborative lab was a great experience that inspired and guided us in the development of our "Internationalization Strategic Plan, 2012-2022." The plan evolved from a campus-wide conversation through which we identified five broad goals: develop an international center with an international director; recruit international students; develop student and faculty exchange partnerships; increase on-campus programming with international and intercultural themes; and engage in ongoing assessment of progress on the goals.

After completing the internationalization strategic plan, we hired a Director of International Initiatives (now International Affairs) who created an International Office; updated our campus survey of faculty and staff international experience and expertise; created an Internationalization Advisory Council; established an interdisciplinary Global Studies B.A. program involving nearly every department on campus; was designated a *J-1 visa sponsor* by the U.S. Department of State; increased our international student population; written and approved a set of guidelines for faculty-led study tours; established Community Connectors in support of our international students; held receptions for international students; expanded the International Student Association and created a Pan-African Student Association; hosted two ambassadors from Africa; organized a Model UN inaugurated Teach-ins with international themes; sponsored an African fashion show; hosted National Geographic's Giant Traveling Maps of Europe and Africa; established the Welch Distinguished Awards Committee (Fulbright); held a Fulbright informational workshop; sent a Fulbright scholar to Nicaragua; gave out numerous Create the Future Awards for students and faculty for international study; celebrated Geography Awareness Week, GIS Day, and International Education Week with special activities; continued the Study Abroad Fair and photo contests; negotiated with international student recruiting companies; strengthened connections with the Shepherdstown Rotary in co-sponsoring events and projects; engaged in negotiations with institutions in Turkey, Cyprus, Mexico, and Japan for possible partnerships; and, most significantly, established a chapter of Phi Beta Delta, with 16 inductees at its founding this past spring. The budget for this litany of events, developments, and

achievements has been slim, in many cases funding collected from assorted pots of departments and organizations working together.

It should be noted that the campus culture at Shepherd requires that conversations be held with the entire campus; inclusivity is a campus value and expectation. When we engaged in General Studies reform in 2010-2011, it truly was a campus-wide conversation, i.e., engaging people from each academic department to Student Affairs and the workers in Facilities Management. Our internationalization team was informed by that experience. This experience and the campus culture helped us face the potholes, the challenges on the road to campus internationalization.

### **Potholes and Strategies**

#### **Pothole #1: People understand internationalization**

Do not assume that everyone understands the concepts of internationalization, globalism, and globalization. You need to define and distinguish them. You will need to “sell” people on the value and significance of internationalizing your campus. Recognize that there’s a body of knowledge about global studies, globalization, and best practices in this realm. Trust your colleagues to know, or learn, that body of knowledge. Utilize the extraordinary resources of the American Council on Education (Internationalization Collaborative Lab), NAFSA, Phi Beta Delta, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Cultivate the strengths of your employees, and that may mean a lot of face time rather than e-mail and bulletin board postings.

It is important to begin with a question: Why do people want to get involved in internationalizing a campus? The reasons are varied: some individuals have had international expertise through academic study, or professional experience with a multinational corporation or government agency; some may have great memories of a special study abroad experience. They may want to pay it back because that international experience had deep personal meaning to them/or meaning to someone important to them; they may want to pay it forward to the next generation, to help others experience the “life-altering high” of studying abroad. Many are altruistic and want to help solve the problems of the world through education and advocacy, to promote global understanding and champion social justice through action. And very importantly, many believe that diversity and multiculturalism add vibrancy and excitement to a campus community. International students and faculty teach us about their cultures and help us to see our own more clearly. Naturally, you will encounter some “strategic tension,” that gap between what people say they want, internationalization, and what they are willing to do to change and/or add to their work routines to make it happen. The devil is always in the details, but do not let that be a deterrent, let it be a challenge.

#### **Pothole #2: The cookie cutter approach**

There are no recipes or well-worn paths to internationalization, no quick fixes or perfect models. First and foremost, utilize the institution-wide values and perspectives and consider how these fit into existing models. Your campus does not have to reinvent the wheel; use its existing infrastructure, physical and human. Some areas may only need tweaking. In other words, interpret and promote internationalization within the institution's mission, vision, and strategic goals. At Shepherd we actively gathered data for a SWOT analysis, and worked to garner campus buy-in in the earliest stages of this process, involving students, staff, faculty, and members of the local community. The Shepherd community had already embraced its five core values: Learning, engagement, integrity, accessibility, and community. The university's mission statement became the anchor for the campus-wide conversations: "*Shepherd University, a West Virginia public liberal arts university, is a diverse community of learners and a gateway to the world of opportunities and ideas.*" By virtue of its geography, Shepherd University is a gateway to the world, it is also a gateway into West Virginia, and more broadly, into the greater Appalachian region.

### **Pothole #3: Sweeping comprehensive internationalization**

"Think comprehensively, but act incrementally," that is the advice from the AAC&U. Use institution-wide perspectives, but small working groups, well-run focused meetings, and logical incremental steps. Pilot some initiatives and don't be afraid to weed out those that do not make the grade. Do not expect to meet with the faculty as a whole as one person or a small dissenting group can quickly sabotage a worthy project. Assure that you have voter support before a vote is taken. Do not ignore the students as they may give you the greatest momentum of all for your initiative. Student voices, as you know, are potent with administrators and donors.

### **Pothole #4: "I can do this on my own"**

No, it takes a *village*, a village working collaboratively. Involve students, staff, and faculty every step of the way. Reach out to them in meetings, e-mail, Sakai or Blackboard, Facebook, and Twitter. Identify your key players, those most interested and committed, and try to harness the passion and energy and route that passion and energy into internationalization initiatives. Look for potential synergies as, for example, political science and global studies, the arts and business, nursing and nutrition, psychology and social work. There's a place for everybody in this village. Invite people into leadership roles, and give them opportunities for a "personal touch" in a project. They don't need a title to be a leader! (From the title of the book by Mark Sanborn, *You don't need a title to be a leader*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2006.).

### **Pothole #5: Everyone will think this is a great idea!**

Let's be realistic, this is higher education, not Kumbaya around the campfire. We must deal with issues of territoriality and conflicting views. Logic does not always prevail, but do not

assume that an opposing view is irrational as it may be pioneering and stir innovation. You will argue as a campus, but share openly your ideas, brainstorm with respect, be innovative with ideas, and seek to be creative problem solvers. Don't let people come to the table whining, invite them to the table and ask for strategies and solutions. Those who insist on stirring the pot, handing out poison, and undercutting their colleagues eventually may get sucked into a pothole. Don't let the interpersonal wrangling shut down your projects; if people wish to throw sand in the sandbox, work around the sandbox to positive ends.

**Pothole #6: Resistance to change**

Every institution has a sloth; a sloth is slow to move and slow to act, a drag on your momentum, usually quite content with the status quo. He or she may be the faculty member with yellowed lecture notes and outdated data. The sloth at times might be an obstruction, even an irritant, but the sloth may also have good ideas. Entertain those ideas, and if he or she is slow to move, look for other routes, groups, and individuals to move you forward. Move strategically and fast to launch a new project or to get a new program in place.

**Pothole #7: Internationalization is for the social sciences**

Internationalization is for everybody and it needs to engage the campus as a whole; it needs to be woven into the institutional fabric. The "silos" of higher education and the resultant tensions and jealousies can slow and detract from progress. Avoid a vacuum of ownership in the social sciences or any discipline or set of disciplines. Involve the campus as a big family, each with something to offer, and you can likely avoid the worst of the siloing. Avoid capitulating to special interests or specific silos, and never use siloing as an excuse for shutting down.

**Pothole #8: It can't be done...we don't have the resources**

State funding for our university is about 16%, with more cuts on the horizon, and that has become a common condition across the country. Look for new wells. We have a new President who is finding new wells and capitalizing on the motto: "Excellence, Innovation, Opportunity." One of her first initiatives was to interest our flagship institution, WVU, into planning a health care clinic for our campus, in part, to support a growing international student population. Another initiative is to expand the market for our university clothing, with revenue plugged into important initiatives like internationalization. The institution is also seeking donors to support such worthy projects as Model UN.

**Pothole #9: We are not fundraisers**

Maybe fundraising is not your cup of tea, but you can give people reasons to give! Excite them, involve them. Our International Office has established a new program, "Community Connectors," who connect with our international students by providing welcome baskets, invitations to their homes, transportation, and various forms of mentoring. Have your Foundation

people share information on annual giving, major giving, and planned giving to people interested in international initiatives. Work with your Alumni Office in building a database of international alums, and to track those alums for possible future donations. Invite a Foundation officer to your meetings and ask them to serve on your internationalization advisory council. Our new President recently added the Director of Giving and the Director of University Communications to her Executive Staff.

At Shepherd we are trying to do a better job of messaging to our alums and greater community. Our students do an extraordinary amount of community service in service learning projects throughout the year. We need to grow our students into life-long community servants and philanthropists, those who will want to give back to our programs in the future. Most importantly, show energy and ambition in whatever you do; people want to get involved and to support your successes!

### **Pothole #10: Failure to give credit and recognition**

Acknowledge! Acknowledge! An institution needs to support creative and effective people, e.g., with operating funds, course releases, feature articles and awards, thank you notes, stipends, and professional development funds for retooling and attending conferences. Invest in the faculty and staff and utilize your institution's reward structure; it may need to be tweaked, and that may involve reviewing and revising tenure and promotion expectations. Shepherd's Create the Future Fund, established by our former President, rewards students and faculty for outstanding proposals to study and conduct research outside of our borders. Our new chapter of Phi Beta Delta recognizes excellence in international education, exchange, and internationalization. Our Distinguished Awards Committee guides applications and recognizes people who receive special awards such as Fulbright. The Office of University Communications is energetic and aggressive with news releases, feature articles, and spotlights on students and faculty through both traditional and social media outlets. Largely due to their work, our Giant Map of Africa had more than 700 student visitors who engaged in varying levels of map activities this past April.

### **Pothole #11: Failure to invest in leadership**

The institution needs someone in a central office to carry the baton, to coordinate internationalization, and to pull the diverse strands of the campus together. Have that person report directly to the Provost, or if possible, include that person in the executive management team. Provide that person regular access to the Board of Governors and, of course, involve the Board members in aspects of campus internationalization. The McMillan Fund, named for a local business family, supports and lends prestige to our new Office of International Affairs. The International Office recently received a Capacity-building Grant of nearly \$50,000 in support of study abroad, i.e., to provide professional development toward certification for the study abroad director and to support the director in developing best practices for the office.

The International Office is working to cultivate and develop leaders among the students, staff, and faculty. Graduate students in the College Student Development and Administration (CSDA) program have done their graduate practica in the International Office. Students in the International Student Association and Pan-African Student Association, with some guidance from that office, coordinated the visit of two ambassadors to our campus last year. There are many opportunities for “leaders in training,” and remember that leaders do not always have to lead from the front; allow people to lead from the sides or behind...know your people and their strengths and invest in them.

**Pothole #12: Consider only cognitive learning (knowledge)**

Shepherd’s *Internationalization Committee* identified three broad learner-centered objectives for international and intercultural learning. These are linked to the LEAP standards and high-impact practices endorsed by the AAC&U and adopted by the Shepherd University community. The campus community also utilizes the six levels of *Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*: knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The broad learner-centered objectives for international and intercultural learning are:

**Knowledge:** Graduates will have knowledge and comprehension of international and intercultural issues, events, and conditions.

**Skills:** Graduates will apply international and intercultural knowledge and understanding to the analysis of issues, questions and problems in both domestic and international settings. Graduates will thus be able to synthesize and evaluate from those analyses.

**Disposition/Attitudes:** Graduates will use their international and intercultural competency to evaluate and value differing perspectives, rethink and reformulate their views, and adapt to new and culturally diverse environments.

Some of the greatest learning will be affective qualities, attitudes, and values. Seek both breadth and depth of knowledge with quality programs, of course, but recognize that some of the greatest learning will be outside of the classroom in co-curricular events and projects, a study tour, an international talent show, or an international internship.

**Pothole #13: “I don’t have time,” whined Susie**

Don’t dismiss Susie, or any individual, because you may miss out on a great proponent of global studies and internationalization. Susie may be unusually stressed at this point in time. Issue her a special invitation to an event, and she may rethink her schedule. You might ask people to prioritize their activities and commitments to see where internationalization falls.

**Pothole #14: Develop programs for others to implement**

The “others” of the world will not have your passion and commitment. Simply put, you and your team must implement them.

**Pothole #15: Let the assessment office take care of assessment**

Engage in continuous quality improvements through regular and rigorous assessment of courses, programs, services, and campus-wide internationalization. That means face-to-face discussions on how to close the assessment loop. Assessment is not someone else’s job, it is everyone’s job. (A sample assessment piece is included below.)

While the road has been mostly smooth at Shepherd University, we have had to avoid some potholes and fill others, recognizing that these are first steps with many challenges ahead. A pothole is a cave of negativity, like getting stuck on a railroad track, and that can be deadly to any initiative. Focus your attention on the “can do” folks who think holistically, some of those will be students, and then move incrementally and strategically into the future. Be a “pothole person,” or a “pothole team,” those who fill the holes and fashion a smooth pathway ahead.

*Assessment Guide for Campus Internationalization*

<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Assessment Tools</b>	<b>Assessment Results</b>	<b>Changes Based on Results</b>
<b>Assess student learning: courses</b>			
Knowledge	Core Curriculum		
Skills	Student Outcomes		
Dispositional	and Rubrics		
<b>Assess the efficacy of the International Office</b>			
Effective response to service requests on campus	Feedback from campus units		
Effective coordination of study tours/exchanges	Feedback from faculty and students; evaluation forms		
Effective programming of events & activities	Audience evaluation forms		
Effective advising on international study	Student surveys		
Effective services for international students	Student surveys; student needs assessment		
Effective evaluation of transcripts & other international documents	National standards of NAFSA, etc.		
Effective processing of international students/study abroad students	National standards of NAFSA, etc; feedback from students		
Effective marketing	Numbers of students; participation in events & activities		



Effective programming for international faculty	Feedback from faculty		
Effective grant writing/budget requests	Number & size of grants/funding sources		
<b>Assess efficacy of Admissions Office</b>			
Effective marketing	Feedback from students		
Effective recruitment	Number of students		
Effective processing of international students	National standards of NAFSA, etc.		
<b>Assess progress on campus internationalization</b>			
Effective organizational structure	Evaluation of services & activities		
Enhanced international educational opportunities	Number of study tours, exchanges, internships, research projects, etc.		
Increase in numbers of international students at Shepherd	Number of students		
Enhanced international research/engagement, including international partnerships	Number of research projects & partnerships; impact on students & faculty		
Effective assessment strategies	Rubrics, evaluation forms, surveys, feedback		
Effective service to university mission	Feedback from campus community		

### About the Author

Dr. Ann Marie Legreid is currently Dean of Business and Social Sciences at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, WV, a public liberal arts institution (COPLAC). She participated in the American Council on Education (ACE) Internationalization Collaborative Lab. In addition to serving as the chair of the Shepherd University Internationalization Advisory Council, working with its advisory subcommittees for study abroad, global partnerships, and the new Global Studies B.A. program, she is also Campus Coordinator for the Shepherd chapter of Phi Beta Delta. She was a Fulbright Scholar to Norway and the recipient of the Crown Princess Martha Award from the American Scandinavian Foundation (NYC). Her research interests lie primarily in migration and population studies, with a focus on the Nordic countries. Dr. Legreid received her Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in geography from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and her B.S. in geography from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Her specialties are European, Canadian, cultural, urban, and historical geography.