

## **A Process Approach to Internationalization – Utilizing De Wit’s Internationalization Circle (Modified Version) for Internationalization Planning**

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### **Abstract**

This article examines how De Wit’s process approach (De Wit, 2002) describes internationalization and impacts its effectiveness, through a case study research at a comprehensive public university in the U.S. It aims to explore how a higher education institution may plan for internationalization, implement its plan, review how the implementation conforms to the plan, and act on what has been learned. This study examines the relationship between internationalization planning and assessing internationalization outcomes. It responds to the call for accountability, the call for quality assurance, and the urgent need for higher education internationalization. Most importantly, this study addresses the research gap in the area of internationalization assessment—exploring how De Wit’s process approach can be utilized to help higher education institutions strategically plan internationalization to effectively impact teaching, learning, research, and service.

**Keywords:** internationalization, process, accountability, effectiveness, assessment

In the past 20 years, the drive to improve the quality of education has been climbing in the increasingly competitive and internationalized context. Higher education institutions are urged by governments, policymakers, and accrediting agencies to evaluate their systems of academic quality assurance to maintain standards and to improve student learning, or in other words, to meet the call for accountability. The ranking of higher education institutions and the call for accountability have urged higher education institutions to judge the effectiveness of their internationalization strategies and related components for the purpose of improvement. International educators seek to understand how institutions are internationalizing their curricula and student learning experiences, what strategies are common among institutions that have successfully pursued internationalization, and most importantly, how to measure the outcomes of internationalization, but they are not alone in this interest. The contemporary emphasis on accountability means that accrediting agencies in higher education also need to know the effectiveness of campus internationalization.

When evaluating program effectiveness, inputs, outputs, activities, and outcomes are often identified as key components to consider. But within the current body of research on the effectiveness of campus internationalization, while many scholars emphasize the study of internationalization inputs and outputs, few research studies focus on outcomes (De Wit, 2009, 2010; Hudzik & Stohl, 2009, 2012). There are a few questions that drew the researcher’s

interests. For example, why do researchers focus on inputs and outputs of internationalization? What impact could those inputs and outputs make on teaching and learning? Those questions probably cannot be answered by only researching on inputs and outputs. There are also few studies on how the various inputs and outputs of these programs work together to achieve outcomes or on the institutional planning processes of campus internationalization. These are areas overlooked but do need to be addressed in depth, as identified by Hans de Wit for further research (2009, 2010). In De Wit's (2002) early work, he identified four different institutional approaches to internationalization: (a) activity, (b) rationale, (c) competency, and (d) process. The approaches of activity, rationale, and competency centralize on aspects of internationalization, while the process approach frames internationalization as a process that integrates international dimensions into teaching, learning, service, and research. De Wit (2002) claims that the process approach is the most comprehensive approach to studying internationalization, that includes strategies, national policies, and quality assurance.

The purpose of this study is to assess the institutional planning process of the comprehensive internationalization at Capital City University (CCU), to identify CCU internationalization planning's strengths and weakness in the context of an urban research university, with De Wit's internationalization circle as a conceptual model. This article studies how De Wit's process approach (De Wit, 2002) is utilized to describe a U.S. higher education institution's internationalization process and how the impact on its effectiveness. Herein, I explore how a higher education institution plans for internationalization, implements its plan, reviews how implementation conforms to the plan, and act on what has been learned. This study responds to the call for accountability, the call for quality assurance, and the urgent need for higher education internationalization. Most importantly, this study addresses the research gap in the area of internationalization assessment—exploring how De Wit's process approach can be utilized to help higher education institutions strategically plan internationalization to effectively impact teaching, learning, research, and service.

### **Measuring and Assessing Internationalization**

As the word “internationalization” is becoming more prevalent in higher education institutions, stakeholders may want to know the actual impact of internationalization on higher education institutions and how internationalization has made a difference in teaching, learning, service, and research.

According to Beerkens et al. (2010), there were 33 existing tools and indicator sets for assessing internationalization in the field of international education by 2010. Beerkens et al. (2010) compared eight earlier assessment tools in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century that identified different categories of international activities to be measured to analyze the context of the European project Indicators for Mapping & Profiling Internationalization (IMPI). Each of these eight projects had a set of indicators that were developed to help institutions or programs evaluate internationalization efforts and obtain insights in different categories and subcategories. As Beerkens et al. (2010) pointed out, many of these tools were developed based on existing tools for evaluating other educational endeavors, and there are no universal standards for evaluating

internationalization and its quality; additionally, very few of these tools measure outcomes, only inputs and outputs. Currently, there are few published indicator sets for studying the internationalization planning process.

Outcomes and impacts are the end products and overall achievements of internationalization; these products also justify inputs and outputs and measure goal achievements. According to Hudzik and Stohl (2009), ranking bodies and funding agencies often focus on inputs and outputs as measurements of institutional internationalization efforts. However, inputs and outputs, which help track progress toward outcomes, are only part of assessment. De Wit's (2009) approach goes beyond the discussion of inputs and outputs. De Wit (2009) clearly differentiates the term *process* from that of activity. De Wit's process approach therefore adds a critical step between assessing inputs, outputs, and outcomes—analysis of the process. How are the inputs and outputs planned strategically to achieve the desirable outcomes?

The pioneer work on internationalization assessment was the Internationalization Quality Review Process (IQRP) in 1999 by De Wit and Knight (De Wit, 2010; Knight, 2008). The IQRP, a creation of the Institutional Management in Higher Education Program (IMHE) of the Organization for Economic and Community Development (OECD) in 1997, was the first initiative created for institutions not only to develop internationalization strategies, but also, specifically, to monitor and review their internationalization plans. At that time, some higher education institutions were still in the early stage of developing their internationalization strategies (Knight, 2008). This project developed procedures, guidelines, and tools to help institutions undertake a quality review process relative to their internationalization measures.

The ACE project "Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses" survey (n.d.) is an innovative movement in the field of internationalization assessment. The ACE project is currently the primary assessment tool utilized by U.S. higher education institutions. This ACE project was developed with the purpose of assessing the state of internationalization at U.S. institutions and examining its progress. This project is designed based on ACE's model of comprehensive internationalization (CI), "a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate international policies, programs, and initiatives" (ACE, 2012, p. 3). What contrasts ACE project with IQRP is that the ACE project was developed on a new concept of internationalization that is more inclusive and specific with internationalization dimensions. The survey questions created in the ACE project are contemporary and comprehensive with high quality, reflecting the current internationalization components.

According to Deardorff and Van Gallen (2012), there is no one single best way or best tool to assess internationalization activities. Different assessment tools are more applicable to certain institutions and particular contexts. Because internationalization assessment is a new, rising phenomenon, there are many issues and concerns by international educators. For example, De Wit (2010) argues that all previous and existing assessment tools only measure inputs and/or outputs, but not outcomes. Institutions tend to emphasize the number of institutional offerings and levels of participation but not to define the student global learning outcomes and effectiveness of internationalization strategies. The tools and projects discussed above either use

questionnaire or self-evaluation questions to collect data, heavily focusing on numbers and preliminary program effects. For internationalization assessment to be truly effective and informative, however, it must evaluate the process of internationalization, then the outcomes or impact, and finally focus on how the different elements work together in an integrated and strategic manner (De Wit, 2010; Knight, 2008).

### **De Wit's Model**

The modified version of De Wit's (2002) internationalization circle is introduced in this research as the more comprehensive conceptual model for internationalization planning, supplemented with the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle (Tague, 1995). Many overlapping terms are used to describe the meaning, elements, content, and activities of internationalization, as previously discussed, which could appear to be confusing. De Wit's (2002, 2010) identification of four approaches to internationalization helps differentiate these various terms: (a) activity, (b) rationale, (c) competency, and (d) process. The activity approach focuses on the categories or types of activities. The activity approach in internationalization is broad and widely employed to describe the internationalization of higher education. Rationale and competency approaches are more specific than the activity approach and focus on narrow areas. The rationale approach describes internationalization in terms of purposes or intended outcomes, such as peace education (De Wit, 2002, 2010). The approach that focuses on the human dimension is the competency approach, which is used to describe internationalization in terms of developing new skills, attitudes, and knowledge in all stakeholders on campus (De Wit, 2002, 2010). This approach is widely applied to the assessment of student global learning outcomes. De Wit (2010) argues that the process approach would evolve into a primary approach with the development of internationalization efforts. Although the four approaches have their own unique foci, they are not exclusive but rather integrated across various aspects of internationalization.

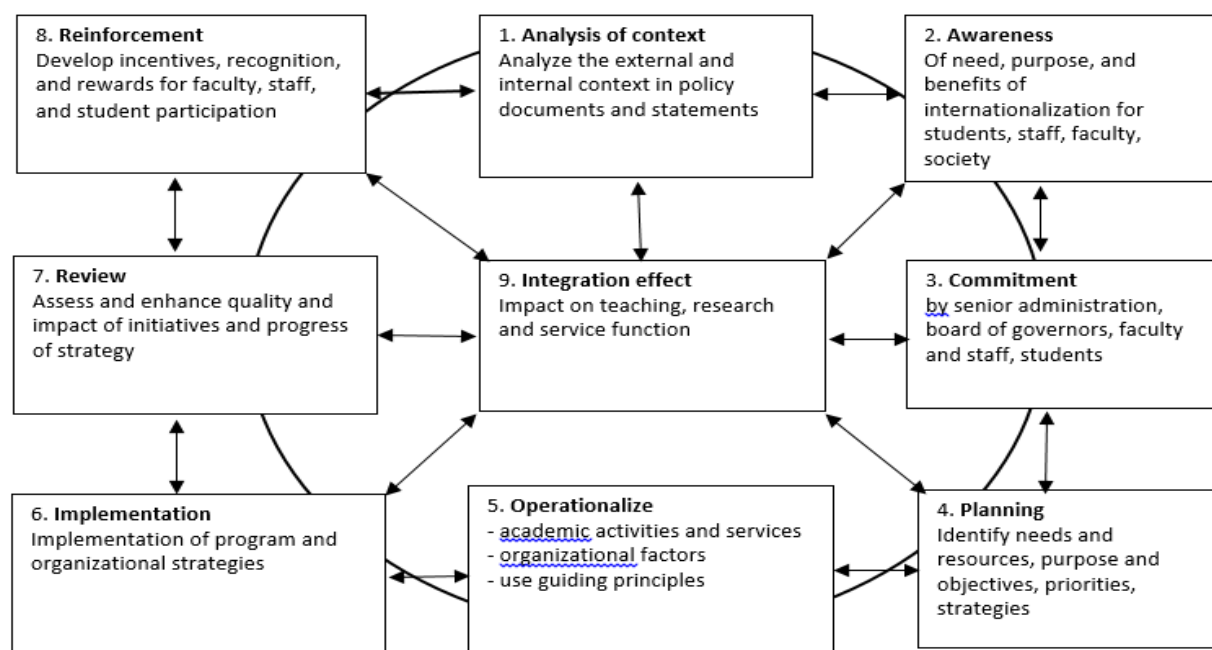
De Wit and Knight (1995) initiated the term *internationalization strategies* to describe initiatives at institutions that aim to incorporate international dimensions into regular functions and governing systems (as cited in De Wit, 2002). De Wit and Knight characterized two types of strategies following the process approach: program strategies and organizational strategies. Program strategies focus on an institution's specific curricular and co-curricular activities into which an international dimension is integrated. In regard to the organizational strategies, they refer to governance, operations, support services, and human resource development that help institutionalize international activities (De Wit, 2002). With the development of internationalization and the many other changes discussed previously, six organizational models of internationalization have been developed based on De Wit and Knight's identified strategies (De Wit, 2002). Two of the six organizational models of internationalization are Knight's (1993) internationalization circle; and (g) De Wit's (2002) modified version of the internationalization circle. These internationalization strategies and organizational models provide a theoretical foundation for internationalization measurement and assessment.

The modified version of the internationalization circle includes all the critical elements of the six organizational models De Wit (2002) lists, to study the internationalization process using the most inclusive and comprehensive conceptual model. De Wit's model considers the internationalization process as a continuous cycle, not a linear process. It identifies each step in the process of integrating all internationalization dimensions into the institutional systems, and it leads the process from innovation to institutionalization. This model has a sequence of nine phases that work in two unique ways among the different steps. De Wit's model also incorporates both institutional and specific departmental aspects. According to De Wit (2002), it is important to address the specific internationalization needs of each academic discipline, rather than "forcing [each discipline] into a general structure" (p. 137). De Wit (2002) states that internationalization in most cases is judged on its own merits, but not on its effect.

De Wit's (2002) modified version of the internationalization circle includes nine phases is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

*Internationalization circle (modified version)*



Adapted from "Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States of America and Europe: A Historical, Comparative, and Conceptual Analysis," by H. De Wit, 2002. Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College, Center for International Higher Education and the Program in Higher Education.

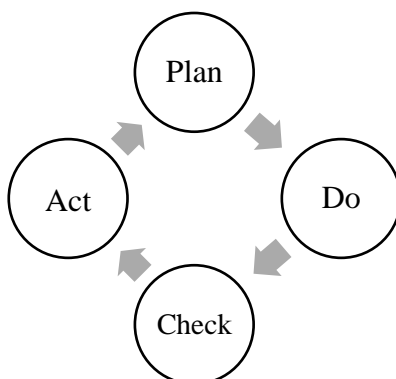
Prior to the actual planning of internationalization, Phase 1 involves higher education institutions analyzing the external and internal contexts and reviewing relevant documents, which includes policies at international, national, local, and institutional levels. The results of analysis from Phase 1 provide solid ground for the internationalization process. Phase 2 involves

conducting a needs analysis, and it draws awareness to how internationalization benefits faculty, staff, students, the institution, and the community. Internationalization is not an institutional task for a campus unit or a group of people. It needs commitment from all stakeholders, senior administrators, faculty, staff, and students, which is Phase 3. Without commitment, internationalization is not sustainable and will not be considered a part of the institutional culture and system. Once commitment is obtained, institutions can start on Phase 4, which includes examining current resources and identifying strategies and objectives.

Phase 5 and Phase 6 in the internationalization circle focus on actions (i.e., operations and implementation). Phase 7 is a critical element that is often ignored in many program initiatives, as it assesses the impact of internationalization activities and strategies and integrates the findings into Phase 8, the phase that includes program improvement. Phase 8 develops incentives and recognition for participants, and it is quite unique for its prominent place in the cycle. The last phase, Phase 9, integrates the effects of internationalization into a higher education institution's mission—teaching, research, and service—and is the key factor to institutionalizing internationalization in the system rather than maintaining a stand-alone strategy. Phase 9 is thus linked to all eight prior phases.

Another model recommended to be utilized to plan internationalization, along with De Wit's (2002) modified version of the internationalization circle, is the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle (Tague, 1995), see Figure 2. The PDCA cycle provides a broader scope for the planning process. It provides a model and strategy for organizations to plan an action, implement the action, check how it aligns with the original plan, and act on what has been learned (Tague, 1995). The PDCA cycle was not developed specifically to guide the process of internationalization, but the PDCA cycle's rationale of strategic quality improvement and the cyclical planning and assessment model clearly provide guidance to internationalization processes.

Figure 2  
*Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle*



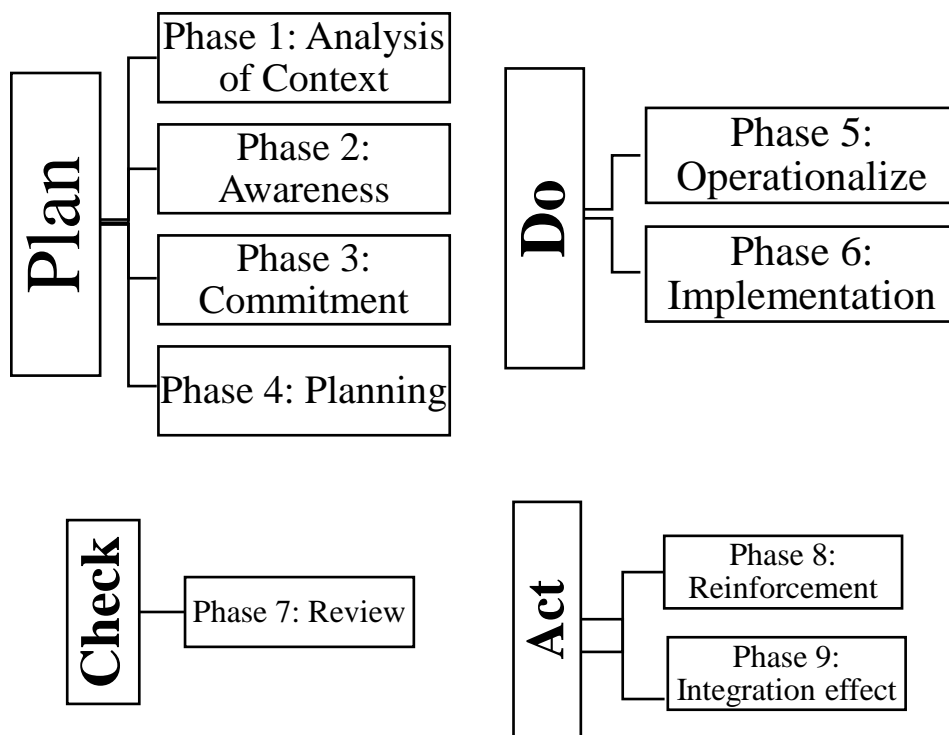
Adapted from "The Quality Toolbox," by N. Tague, 1995. Milwaukee, WI: ASQ Quality Press.

The PDCA cycle includes a much broader scope than the internationalization circle. For instance, the Plan stage in the PDCA cycle, during which opportunities are recognized and

changes are planned, covers Phase 1 to Phase 4 of the internationalization circle (i.e., analysis, awareness, commitment, and planning). The Do stage in the PDCA cycle (i.e., making the change and carrying out the study) aligns with Phase 5 and Phase 6 of the internationalization circle (i.e., operations, implementation). The Check stage of the PDCA cycle includes reviewing the change, analyzing the results, and identifying learning to be integrated into the process, which corresponds with Phase 7 of the internationalization circle. The Act stage of the PDCA cycle involves taking action based on what is learned in the Check stage, and this aligns with Phase 8 (i.e., reinforcement) and Phase 9 (i.e., the integration effect).

Figure 3

*Internationalization circle embedded in the PDCA cycle*



Adapted from "Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States of America and Europe: A Historical, Comparative, and Conceptual Analysis" by H. De Wit, 2002. Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College, Center for International Higher Education and the Program in Higher Education.

The four phases in the PDCA cycle are the primary categories into which data analysis of an internationalization process can be organized. Under each category, there are subcategories that align with the phases in the internationalization circle. For example, the Plan category has subcategories of analysis of context, awareness, commitment, and planning; the Do category has subcategories of operations and implementation; the Check category has the subcategory of review; and the Act category has the subcategories of reinforcement and integration effect. Compared with other existing organization models, De Wit's model was utilized in this research

as the conceptual model because of its comprehensive process approach and inclusiveness of internationalization dimensions.

### **Research Method**

A descriptive single case study was conducted to examine the internationalization planning process by analyzing CCU's institutional records, reviewing archival documents, and interviewing key campus stakeholders. The key question guiding the research is: How does CCU plan for campus internationalization? Sub-questions include:

1. What are CCU's internationalization commitments?
2. How does CCU plan for various international dimensions: (a) Administration, (b) Curriculum Internationalization, (c) International Admissions, (d) International Partnerships, (e) International Scholar Services, (f) International Student Services, and (g) Study Abroad?
3. How does CCU integrate various international dimensions into its teaching, learning, research, and service?

In this case study research, I interviewed stakeholders/research participants with semi-structured questions to understand their views of the research problem being studied and examine their complexity. I assessed the internationalization process and used findings from the collected data to inform how I offered suggestions for new practices of internationalization.

Because of the nature of the case study, I used a purposeful sampling strategy to select CCU. CCU's leaders did not pay sufficient attention to campus internationalization until the mid-1990s as many other higher education institutions in the U.S. did, when CCU leaders realized how local and global issues were strongly interconnected, part of a growing trend of globalization. Over the past 15 years, CCU has made tremendous efforts in campus internationalization and has become an internationally recognized institution in the field of higher education internationalization.

The primary mode of data collection in this research was one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Document review was utilized as a supplemental tool when further information was desired. The research questions were used to guide the development of interview protocol. The stakeholders in CCU's strategic internationalization planning process were arranged into seven areas for interview: (a) Administration, (b) Curriculum Internationalization; (c) International Admissions; (d) International Partnerships; (e) International Scholar Services; (f) International Student Services; and (g) Study Abroad. The head of each area was interviewed for approximately 90 minutes.

In my research, I used NVivo, the qualitative analysis software, to analyze interview transcripts and archival documents. I coded the documents and transcripts with the four stages in the Shewhart cycle (i.e., Plan, Do, Check, Act) as a set of pre-formed themes into which to divide responses. Then, under each stage of the Shewhart cycle, I added sub-phases based on the internationalization circle, the conceptual framework articulated previously (see Figure 4). The archival documents were analyzed and coded in the seven international areas (i.e.,



Administration, Curriculum Internationalization, International Admissions, International Partnerships, International Scholar Services, International Student Services, and Study Abroad). In order to comprehend how each international area performed in the internationalization cycle, I created a rubric that measured the engagement level of each international area, as reflected in the interviews and archived documents, at each stage and each phase, see Table 1.

Table 1

*Rubric Template*

Name of Stage (Number of Phase)	Dimensions	Level of Engagement H: High M: Middle L: Low	Evidence	
			In Interviews	In Documents

To ensure internal validity, I started the chain of evidence two years ago when the research topic was initiated, and I utilized interview transcripts and archival documents as sources of evidence. I also employed pattern matching, a clear research framework, theory triangulation, and logic models during the data analysis stage. The external validity was achieved by providing a clear rationale for the case study selection and details on the case study context. I used a case study protocol and developed a case study database/audit trail for transparency and replication to achieve reliability.

### Research Finding

Overall, CCU's internationalization process was congruent with De Wit's (2002) internationalization circle and operated as a continuous cycle. Some international units had an explicit plan and followed the Shewhart cycle (i.e., Plan-Do-Check-Act) systematically as a part of institutional planning, whereas some units did not operate on the cycle for various reasons. Four broad pre-formed thematic categories were organized from the narratives of OIA directors participating in the interviews and the reviewed documents. Internationalization planning was introduced first, providing descriptions of how CCU analyzed the context and identified priorities. The second category examined how CCU implemented its internationalization initiatives and activities, followed by the third category representing CCU's current status of internationalization assessment and outlining the universal challenges and CCU's upcoming plan of assessment. The last category is related to the reinforcement system, describing how CCU developed incentives to motivate faculty and students and how CCU worked with stakeholders to integrate internationalization into teaching, research, and service.

### CCU's Position on the Internationalization Circle

**Detailed analysis of the external and internal context.** Higher education institutions must analyze the external and internal contexts and review relevant documents, which include policies at international, national, local, and institutional levels, as the preparation for its internationalization planning. The analysis of results from the first phase provides solid ground for the internationalization process at CCU. The seven interviewees consulted during the

research all presented mid to high levels of engagement in the analysis of external and internal contexts before international activities were operationally defined.

**Full awareness of the need, purpose, and benefits of internationalization.** CCU conducted a needs analysis of internationalization and developed awareness of how internationalization benefits faculty, staff, students, the institution, and the community, as articulated in the interviews and document analyses. Five international areas showed high awareness of need, purpose, and benefits of internationalization, while two displayed awareness at a mid-level.

**Strong commitment.** Internationalization is not an institutional task for a campus unit or a group of people. It needs commitment from all stakeholders, senior administrators, faculty, staff, and students. CCU shows an exceptionally strong commitment to internationalization as well as challenges, reflected in all interviews and documents. The commitment to internationalization by OIA administration and institutional leadership was evident in CCU's 2014 Strategic Plan and CCU's Present-Day Statement on Internationalization. As stated one of CCU's internationalization documents, "CCU will become a global campus and will partner with the City as it become a global city. We will accomplish these aims through effective international partnerships; international opportunities for students, faculty, and staff; and development of our students as global citizens" (CCU, n.d.). In addition, OIA's Annual Report since 2011 has commitments that are articulated in each international unit.

**Clear identification of priorities and strategies.** Once commitment is obtained, institutions can start to examine current resources and identify strategies and objectives. Interviews from five international units clearly determined the needs and resources, explicit purpose and objectives, identification of priorities, and strategies. All of the documents—two strategic plans, annual reports from 2011 to 2014, and the Study Abroad White Paper—have statements and goals, objectives, and strategic initiatives specified. For example, under each goal in the OIA Annual Report from 2011 to 2016, there are multiple objectives, and under each objective, strategic initiatives follow.

**Active implementation of initiatives and activities.** Once analysis is completed, commitment is obtained, and priorities are made, institutions can start to take actions to put those initiatives into practice. CCU's internationalization principles and the activities they inspired were clearly written in strategic plans and annual reports. In each annual report since 2011, CCU's Office of International Affairs (OIA) has identified academic activities and services that were accomplished during the reporting year listed under each objective, and a list of activities planned for the upcoming year, in a systematic and organized format. This annual report is applied as a compass for the seven directors of international divisions, all of whom mention the OIA plan during the interviews. The annual plan is what divisions use to develop their divisional plans. For example, The Study Abroad White Paper has an exceptional elaboration on CCU's Study Abroad Program strategies and plan of implementation (e.g., developing a task force, starting a peer outreach program, utilizing social media, and centralizing marketing strategies).

**Improved systematic assessment of internationalization initiatives.** The critical element that is often ignored in campus internationalization is assessing the impact of internationalization activities and strategies and applying the findings toward program improvement. During Phase 7, many issues and challenges appear in the CCU documents and interviews. Those documents and interviews indicate that CCU is facing challenges similar to other institutions. There is varied evidence of assessments and quality enhancement written in the annual reports and in interviews with the directors. Regardless, as all directors commented, assessment is the most challenging task, one that requires the development of metrics. The Director of Admissions shared a remark from a conference presenter to show how international educators feel about assessment: “In God we trust, but all others must provide data.” In terms of how assessment planning is reflected in documents, the Study Abroad White Paper is a comprehensive document that includes a section titled, “Using Data for Strategic Decision-Making, Assessing Learning, and Developing a Research Agenda,” with a series of strategies for assessment listed.

**Developed system of incentive, recognition, and awards.** Providing incentives and recognition to participants is a necessary strategy to enhancing campus internationalization that is advocated by many in higher education institutions. To encourage faculty and students to be engaged in international activities, a system for incentive and recognition is /needed. At CCU, incentives, recognition, and rewards for faculty members’ participation in internationalization efforts were used to encourage buy-in, as indicated during the interviews a and as documented in the Study Abroad White Paper and OIA annual reports .Those incentives appeared to be in the areas of study abroad, curriculum internationalization, and international partnerships, but not in other international areas. CCU has funding for faculty or academic staff to enhance collaborative international research and collaboration activities, grants to faculty or academic staff to support school-approved undergraduate student recruitment, and grants to stimulate additional funding for international activities.

**Integration of internationalization in teaching, research, and service.** Integration is the key factor to institutionalizing internationalization in the system rather than maintaining a stand-alone strategy. This section articulates how CCU integrates international perspectives into the institution’s mission, teaching, research, and service. OIA annual reports since 2012 include objective initiatives on how to integrate international perspectives into major initiatives and planning efforts at CCU. For example, OIA supports the following campus projects: (a) CCU’s Research, International, Service, Experiential (RISE) Program; (b) development and implementation of a Global Learning Track for CCU’s Assessment Institute; (c) leadership of campus-wide committees, such as the Study Abroad Committee, Partnership Committee, and faculty interest groups to promote internationalization; (d) effective collaboration with Enrollment Services and other units to increase international student enrollment and retention; (e) engagement with a robust set of outreach activities that result in large numbers of contacts; (f) support for the internationalization of general education and campus-wide initiatives; (g) support for the internationalization of school and departmental curricula; and (h) continued assistance to

faculty, schools, and other units in developing specific international collaborations of interest to them. To clarify, these integration activities are the outputs of OIA's leadership on campus internationalization rather than outcomes or a direct effect. The outcomes of internationalization initiatives should be reflected in faculty teaching and student learning.

### **Strengths of CCU's Internationalization Process**

Two prominent strengths were reflected through CCU's internationalization process: (a) institutional commitment and (b) a culture of internationalization. CCU's strong commitment to internationalization began around 2000, and over the past 15 years, CCU has made systematic and consistent efforts to internationalize campus through teaching, learning, research, and service. Evidence of this is presented by numerous CCU and OIA archival documents, national internationalization awards, and interviews with OIA area directors. In 2007, OIA established its inaugural strategic internationalization plan, named "Strategic Plan for a New Era of Internationalization." Sequentially, the strategic internationalization plan was integrated into the university-wide strategic plan in 2014, named the CCU 2020 Strategic Plan. What is more, in the past decade, in order to prepare for an up-to-date strategic internationalization plan, OIA collaborated with ACE Internationalization Laboratory twice to conduct comprehensive evaluation on its internationalization initiatives. Data collected from the one-year long evaluation provided solid foundation for OIA to draft its internationalization plan. CCU's institutional commitment was also diffused to all schools and key administrative units, as shown in the recent international vision statement by OIA (2016) in this document. In terms of integrating internationalization into student learning, CCU's RISE Program and CCU's Principles of Undergraduate Learning (PUL) are two evidences of institutional commitment. With the increased number of international students and scholars on campus, with more CCU students studying abroad, with clear internationalization strategies stated in CCU strategic plan, and with CCU's involvement into City's global connections, the culture of internationalization at CCU will undoubtedly flourish.

### **Challenges in CCU's Internationalization Process**

CCU is a higher education institution that is known for its assessment culture. Nevertheless, CCU faces challenges in assessing the impact of internationalization initiatives, the same difficulty facing other higher education institutions in the U.S. Campus internationalization was a new phenomenon two decades ago in higher education, and internationalization assessment subsequently emerged after that, making it still a fledgling process. CCU is currently using a combination of existing assessment tools and new tools still in the development process to assess program outcomes and has significantly improved its international assessments in the past decade as shown in documents and interviews.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Recommendation to Higher Education Institutions**

The research findings indicate the two strengths CCU strived for were institutional commitment and culture of internationalization. CCU made a commitment to internationalization at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, which has been consistent and has led to the program's current achievements. These strong commitments from faculty, staff, students, and administrative leaders, ultimately cultivate the success of its culture of internationalization. With this culture, internationalization is integrated into the University's mission and is immersed in various University functions. For higher education institutions in the U.S., the top lesson drawn from CCU's journey is the value of commitment and a strategic internationalization plan. In CCU's case, the commitment was not made by the top leadership alone but had diffused into all schools and key administrative units. Secondly, Regardless of the widely accepted concept of internationalization, each institution is unique in terms of its atmosphere, context, and demands. Institutions are thus recommended to develop their own definitions that fit their institutional context. Higher education institutions should have their own definitions of internationalization, and definition of related terms, such as global learning and intercultural competence. CCU developed its own definition of internationalization in 2007, addressed in its inaugural internationalization plan, which provided direction and led the campus to actions. Institutions' strategic internationalization plan should not be compartmentalized and conducted only via the Office of International Affairs. It needs to be integrated into the university-wide strategic plan, as CCU did, to truly achieve the mission of internationalization, i.e., to integrate international perspectives into teaching, learning, and service.

Last but not least, I highly recommend that institutions which have never reviewed their internationalization processes comprehensively adopt De Wit's (2002) model to evaluate the process phase by phase. For initiations that do not possess a comprehensive internationalization plan yet, De Wit's model is uniquely suited to guiding the planning process. The previous sections provide ample rationale for De Wit's organization model's appropriateness for assessing internationalization processes. To summarize, De Wit's model reviews the internationalization process holistically to meet the needs of 21st higher education.

### **Recommendation for Further Research**

As stated in the proceeding section, further research needs to be conducted to measure the actual outcomes of internationalization—the impact on teaching, learning, research, and service. Assessment of global learning outcomes is an area of interest drawing great attention, and much research is being conducted (Green, 2012; West, 2013), but few studies have been done to examine the effectiveness of internationalization on other critical components of higher education, including teaching, research, and service. For example, what are the outcomes of faculty international engagement? How may faculty engagement impact teaching and research? This question is critical, because more and more literature encourage faculty involvement, and state faculty are the front runner for global learning. However, some faculty are demotivated due to little incentive and the lack of connection between international work and tenure and promotion. If research proves that faculty's international engagement contributes to teaching and learning significantly, perhaps some institutions will consider including international

engagement as one of their criteria for tenure and promotion. This type of outcome may be acquired by assessing a students' course portfolio, a faculty's teaching portfolio, students' exemplary achievement, and faculty's publications. Another question that needs to be explored is, "How does the increased international student enrollment influence the American classroom culture and reshape teaching and learning?" While international educators consistently advocate for increased international student enrollment for the purpose of globalizing curriculum and campus culture, some opponents argue that international students are a burden to faculty and create barriers for classroom communication. A qualitative or quantitative research study could investigate the bottom line and provide data to international educators.

### **Limitations of Research**

This study addressed the research gap in the field of international assessment by exploring the campus internationalization process and examining how the process approach impacts the effectiveness of internationalization. The research findings suggest that the organization model based on the process approach by De Wit (2002), the internationalization circle, is a comprehensive instrument to guide campus internationalization processes and lead the development of such a process from innovation to institutionalization. Nevertheless, this research only studies the process and is a single case study. De Wit's internationalization circle is useful to assess the workings of CCU, a comprehensive urban research university, but may be a poor fit to assess a small liberal arts college located in a rural area, which may have a different organizational structure and may not have a supportive local community with interest in international activities. Multiple case studies are recommended to verify whether De Wit's model is universally able to assess internationalization processes. Future researchers may use Carnegie classifications on degree-granting colleges and universities as a base to decide which type of institutions they want to conduct a study on. As far as research method, I used only a descriptive single case study. Future researchers may want to apply different research methods other than case study, for example, quasi-qualitative or quantitative research methods, to produce more robust and compelling data.

Third, there might be a limitation in how my interview protocols were semi-structured, and the questions were generated based on the phases of De Wit's (2002) internationalization circle. If the interview questions had not been structured, I might have collected more fluid data, and some new and unexpected information might have occurred during the interviews. In addition, my interviewees were all heads of OIA units, chosen because they were familiar with CCU internationalization strategies, OIA organizational structure, and various policies and procedures. If I had interviewed other staff than unit heads, however, I may have heard different reflections.

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### **About the Author**

Dr. Ling Gao LeBeau is Director of International Programs and Services at Western Carolina University (WCU). She provides strategic vision, leadership, advocacy, and expertise on international education and services. She leads and implements campus-wide internationalization initiatives. LeBeau is active in AIEA and NAFSA and presents and publishes on issues of international higher education. Ling LeBeau holds a PhD in Higher Education from Indiana University Bloomington. LeBeau's research interests include: global learning, curriculum internationalization, international partnerships, assessment, and mobility.