

Global Studies Certificates As An Instrument for Building Capacity for Community College Internationalization

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Abstract

Community college campus internationalization is only represented in a small portion of the institutions in the U.S. Global Studies Certificates (GSC) are in an even smaller proportion of community colleges, but offers a credentialed program for curricular and co-curricular activities to be used to work with campus internationalization. This pilot study looks at 23 community colleges with established GSC programs. Building capacity for campus internationalization cannot be just a tiny effort, it must be a comprehensive effort involving administration, faculty, staff and students. Utilizing Raby's (2012) International Education model and Schultz's (1960) Human Capital Theory in education, GSC's will be examined to determine the effectiveness to establish pathways for integration of campus internationalization into the mission, outcomes, and culture of the campuses examined.

Keywords: internationalization, Global Studies Certificates, workforce international, international education, community colleges internationalization

Introduction

The literature on U.S. community college internationalization is slim in the areas of Global Studies Certificates. Rodriguez (2016) defines Global Studies Certificates (GSC) as a "distinction program that combines an internationalized curriculum with experiential learning, career development, and student-centered projects" (p. 283). The Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Fellowship Program

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(2005) established that “business leaders recognize that they must be able to draw on people with global skills if their corporations are to succeed” (Commission, p. vi). Nafsa Worldview (2018) reiterated that “without a globally competent workforce those businesses risk being unable to adapt to new markets and new demands” (p. 1). To assist 21st-century U.S. community college students in gaining much needed global competencies, GSCs offer an adequate structure to build skills and augment campus internationalization efforts.

Significance of Study

The purpose of this pilot study is to engage faculty, staff, and administrators who work with U.S. community college Global Studies Certificates to determine the level of effectiveness in building capacity for campus internationalization. Knight (2003) defined internationalization as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (p. 2). GSCs can be an educational instrument to help with capacity building of community college internationalization through the curriculum integration. There is need to find effective tools for providing these opportunities to elevate the access for study abroad, cross-cultural training, and global engagement. Copeland, McCrink, and Starratt (2017) state that “internationalization processes were initially characterized as a component of student success ... internationalization instead serves as a mechanism to student success. ...internationalization is a set of methods by which to advance student success” (p. 366). A GSC provides a credential that can be earned to demonstrate training and exposure to global competencies, which potentially advances the goal of employability. Altbach and Knight (2007) concluded a series of relevant factors as “IT; the knowledge economy; increased mobility for students, faculty, programs, and providers; and an integrated world economy propel internationalization” (p. 303).

This study will gauge Global Studies Certificates effectiveness as an instrument for internationalization. The following questions will be addressed: How are the Global Studies Certificates

perceived by the administration and faculty? Are they effectively immersed in the college curricular and co-curricular structure to impact campus internationalization? Do these certificate programs increase faculty interest in globalizing their courses? Do the faculty and staff educate their students on the opportunities for co-curricular activities which support the program? Do the faculty and staff encourage students to participate in study abroad?

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Utilizing Human Capital Theory as defined by Schultz (1960) and the lens of Raby's (2012) international education modeling to examine the future of internationalization, this pilot seeks to discover the effectiveness of Global Studies Certificates as an instrument for community college internationalization. Raby (2012) looked at redefining change in international education through themes of Rationale (Political, Academic, and Economic), Integration (Curricular, Requirements, Outcomes), and Institutional Culture (Leadership, Mission, Learning). This will be tied to Schultz's *Capital Formation by Education* (1960) to Human Capital Theory focusing on the investment of education in building culture and economic capital in individuals (p. 572).

Global Studies Certificate can be used as an educational instrument for integrating soft-skills, global competencies, and leadership development. With the needs of a growing workforce for a global market and the increasing development of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the United States, it is critical that students receive accessible training to prepare for the needs of employers (Thompson, 2019, p. 4). This increases their marketability, which advances the U.S. community college missions of mobility and accessibility. The establishment of global competencies allows students to engage in diverse workforce environments and provides a complimentary credential through their educational programs, while simultaneously incentivizing institutionalization. Semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire will be given to participating administrators and faculty at selected community colleges that already use a GSC. Using a comparative case study design including several community colleges that have

successfully established GSC certificates, this study will offer an examination of the impact of these programs on faculty, staff, and student engagement for campus internationalization.

Data Collection and Analysis

Twenty-three community colleges that have Global Studies Certificates have been identified, of which key faculty and staff will be recruited for qualitative interviews. Using comparative case studies, semi-structured interviews will be held to evaluate their perceptions of the impact of Global Studies Certificates at their institutions. Raby's (2012) international education model will be used to identify themes within the coding, and this will be examined with Schultz's (1960) HCT to determine the capacity building potential for students. Currently, IRB approval for this pilot study is still under review; therefore, full data collection and analysis are pending. Using triangulation and member checking with the participants to validate the data is planned.

Conclusion

It is difficult to find new and effective ways to internationalize college campuses. Global Studies Certificates offer an instrument which could, if effectively integrated into a campus structure, offer an excellent tool for campus internationalization. Components of Global Studies Certificates can include Study Abroad, service-learning, internationalized curriculum, and co-curricular activities. In examination of the twenty-three colleges examined, two overall models emerged of *credit only* (to earn the certificate the students completed between 12-28 credit hours of coursework) or *mixed curriculum* (requires a combination of credits, co-curricular participation, and a capstone project).

This investigation of the GSCs can open new avenues of research and programming not yet considered by community colleges for campus internationalization. Global competency is a necessary educational skill for participation in a global workforce in the 21st century. The GSC is a potentially enhancing curricular and co-curricular tool for 2-year colleges worldwide to deliver this skill to their students.

Author Note

Stacye Fraser Thompson – 25-year veteran as an international educator in immigration, advising, community outreach, and study abroad. Since 2014, she has been working in the community college setting and towards campus internationalization. She is currently working on her Ph.D. in Educational Studies for Diverse Populations.

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