Internationalization and Title VI: New Challenges

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Abstract: The challenges to Title VI, and to "internationalization" more generally, were the main topics discussed at the 2010 AIEA conference by panelists representing current and former program officers (Sam Eisen and Ann Schneider, respectively) and current grantees (Nancy Ruther), based primarily on experience with the Title VI National Resource Centers and fellowship programs. Giving additional background for the panel, this brief offers a quick overview of the major challenges that have been met by the Title VI legislation as it has evolved over the past fifty years. It then enumerates current and anticipated challenges that were suggested during the panel session and by others in subsequent discussions – both for Title VI and more generally for efforts to inject more international content into the curricula of education in the United States.

Meeting new challenges and expanding its constituencies have been constants in the history of Title VI (of the Higher Education Act) and are the promising indicators of its future. Our AIEA 2010 conference panel on this topic focused largely on the National Resource Centers (NRC) program, but the challenges cited in both the papers and the subsequent discussion surely have relevance beyond the NRCs for all international education planners. The three panel presentations (on the current NRCs, their area studies coverage, and their outreach) are available on the AIEA website.[1] Although many readers may be familiar with some of the Title VI background, this paper provides a quick overview, and draws from ensuing discussions.

Title VI History

Title VI came into being with the National Defense Education Act in 1958, to meet the 1957 challenge of Sputnik, when Americans were caught with insufficient language capability to keep up with strategic developments abroad, particularly in the Soviet Union. The initial objective of NDEA's Title VI was the training of future faculty in the disciplines – and particularly languages – needed to understand the parts of the world where less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) are used. The original Title VI initiated federal funding for three programs designed to strengthen American resources for teaching about other parts of the world: the Language and Area Studies Centers (now known as the National Resource Centers), the fellowship program (now referred to as the FLAS, or Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowship program), and a research program to encourage preparation of the texts, dictionaries, and other materials needed to teach the LCTLs. Only fairly recently has the term "internationalization" come into use in reference to these and many other activities; in the course of fifty years of Title VI many more international education challenges, of various sorts, were to arise.

In the 1960s, as legislators and administrators in the Office of Education[2] became sensitive to broader needs for international education, the 1966 International Education Act (IEA) authorized programs to serve wider constituencies, but funding for it never became available. As an alternative, Title VI programs, though also experiencing budgetary cliffhangers, have developed in many ways that essentially meet the challenges and promises of the IEA – and more.[3] Even before the IEA, the NRCs had added funding for Latin American studies (1961) and developed multi- and interdisciplinary approaches. Western Europe, Canada, and an overarching "international" category joined the mix in 1973. At the same time growing emphasis was given to undergraduates and professional schools, and community "outreach" became a required program component. Several new programs were added to the Title VI mix – the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language (UISFL) program and the Graduate International Studies program in 1972 (the latter was dropped after ten years); the Business and International Education (BIE) program and the Centers for International Business Education (and Research) (CIBERs) in the 1980s; and in the 1990s the Language Resource Centers, American Overseas Research Centers, the Institute for International Public Policy, and the Technological Innovation and Cooperation for Foreign Information Access programs.

Early on, in the 1960s, complementary overseas components (for research, language training, and professional development) were added through Section 102(b)(6) of the Fulbright program legislation that was assigned to the Office of Education. In the late 1970s a "Citizen Education" program was initiated, but was soon moved under the Elementary and Secondary Education heading to be included in block grants to states and localities.

Title VI Programs and Internationalization

As of this writing, the Department of Education is funding some 125 NRCs and FLAS programs, offering more than 100 languages and hundreds of related courses in other disciplines – quite a contrast to the one area course and two years of one (less commonly taught) language required of applicant programs in the mid-1960s. A conservative estimate of the number of FLAS fellowship recipients for study of less commonly taught languages since 1958 could be well more than 50,000, even approaching 100,000. The NRCs, FLAS programs, and many other institutions, have benefited from the dictionaries, grammars, and other texts for the LCTLs funded by the Title VI research program, as well as periodic language enrollment surveys, and other reviews and evaluations that continue to be supported at the rate of roughly 25/year. The Language Resource Centers add other important dimensions for foreign language instruction, not only developing language teaching materials and methods but also providing training for teachers (at all levels) wanting to improve their pedagogy.

While the NRCs have increased their attention to undergraduate instruction since the early years, initiation of the Undergraduate International Studies program in 1972 fostered much wider development of internationally oriented curriculum at the undergraduate level, with limited amounts of seed money distributed (always competitively) to a wide range of institutions,

including community colleges, liberal arts colleges, and regional universities as well as research universities. The new initiative did include language program development, but several years passed before it permitted area studies funding, which had been considered a domain limited to the NRCs. The UISFL program has made well more than 500 grants, each for different programs; a 1999 evaluation of its long term impact showed elements of success for more than 90% of its grantees;[4] it continues to offer "internationalizing" incentives, with about thirty new grants every year, encouraging innovation in international, area, and foreign language study at the undergraduate level.

Political and social changes during its early years brought other challenges for the NRCs, among them that they might be "elitist" and out of touch with communities in need of their expertise. So, as noted above, 1973 brought a formalized expectation that all NRCs would offer outreach to the wider community. Many had been conducting workshops for K-12 teachers, giving public lectures, and so on, but others, even in public universities, needed prodding to undertake activities that they initially considered too distracting from their academic pursuits. Nancy Ruther's presentation for the 2010 panel shows the impressive extent to which NRCs have tried, with limited resources, to meet the challenging demands of service to local, regional, and national communities – including the K-12 education community, adult learners, business, the media, and the general public.

As also noted above, in 1973 the NRCs added an "international" category, which overlapped only marginally with the newly established Undergraduate and Graduate Programs. Indeed, throughout the 1970s there were (challenging) elements of uncertainty and tension in defining what distinguished this category from area studies programs[5] – and in realistically applying Department of Education programming and criteria to their special characteristics; descriptors used for the international category of NRCs included "not simply area studies," "general," and "problem- or topic-oriented;" by the late 1980s the international category of NRCs included many comparative (area studies) components as well as theory courses in politics, economics, and other fields – a trend that continues.

By the late 1980s, on the heels of a presidentially mandated review[6] and several follow-on reports from individuals and groups,[7] even more needs and challenges were identified. Title VI (now incorporated in the Higher Education Act) was further broadened with the addition of programs for internationalizing business education (BIE and CIBER), with the addition of priorities for the NRCs that would strengthen their language programs and spread their impact within the university and in the wider community, and with the authorization of the Language Resource Centers (LRCs). The multidisciplinary character of the NRCs continued to expand, interdisciplinary approaches continued to grow, and by the mid-1990s even the area studies NRCs were being encouraged to develop topic-oriented courses that might compare more than one area, but still with significant content on each NRC's area. Thus the erstwhile foci of area studies and the international came to overlap increasingly. Whether this continues to be a challenge remains to be seen, as I discussed in my paper for the 2010 conference panel.

Furthermore, as discussions continue, it is clear that the "internationalization" that has become a rallying cry on many campuses can refer to many different, though related, activities. NAFSA: The Association of International Educators has long put heavy emphasis on study abroad, international students, faculty travel, exchange programs, and international development projects. However, perhaps goaded, and surely guided, by the American Council on Education's (ACE) persuasive research and publications on internationalization in the past 25 years,[8] many institutions – and indeed, the higher education community, and press – are now giving more attention to internationally-oriented education in the home-campus curriculum. "Internationalization" in this context adds area studies, foreign language programs, and more general topics with world-wide dimensions to the mix. A recent issue of the AIEA newsletter suggests further parameters for defining international education: "territorial, transitional, transformative, transcendental."[9]

Among the groups now weighing in with recommendations for internationalizing higher education are the APLU (Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, formerly NASULGC) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).[10] The K-12 community has not been ignored either: just as I completed my (Title VI-funded) research on internationalization in teacher education,[11] both the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) published recommendations for increased foreign language and area and international studies in K-12 (and teacher education) curricula.[12] Clearly the challenges met and experience gained through the several Title VI programs over the years have helped us identify promising approaches that can be applied with and without Title VI funding.

New (and Continuing) Challenges

Our 2010 AIEA panel, and others, have identified several new challenges for Title VI and spotlighted continuing issues. Here are some, primarily for the academic community (in no particular order):

- Persuading university departments and administrators to maintain – and strengthen – their instructional resources in all foreign languages related to their area studies programs, as well as both area and international studies, notwithstanding impending retirements and the current and anticipated budget stringencies from reduced public funding and endowment income.
- Strategically using professional development funds to engage faculty interest in underrepresented disciplines and to support advanced foreign language training for disciplinary experts.
- Organizing NRC (and other programs') outreach in ways that use very limited resources for maximum impact on the many constituencies that could/should be served.

- Fostering a longer pipeline for language learners, beginning wherever possible in early elementary school grades and continuing through college years and professional training with advanced learning options, such as Languages-across- the-Curriculum.

- Making better connections between study abroad experiences and the home-campus curriculum.

- Further exploring possibilities for distance learning and possibilities for cross-institutional academic year language teaching resources, as well as coordinated summer intensive language instruction – again, to make optimal use of scarce and expensive instructional resources.

- Harnessing the interest and resources of heritage language speakers/learners with appropriate pedagogy.

- Strengthening foreign language and other international (and area) studies instruction at community colleges.

- Facilitating and encouraging four-year institution transfer options for community college students with international interests.

- Strengthening understanding of international programs' importance among the full range of advising staff working with students in community colleges, four-year institutions, and professional schools (such as education, law, business, and environmental sciences).

Indeed, solutions to many of these issues can be developed with Title VI funds, through the variety of programs now available. As government and education budget demands become tighter, all parts of the Title VI community – grantees (potential, current, and former), funders, and interested professional associations – face additional challenges. The panelists, and others, also noted needs, and current resolution efforts, for cooperative attention to broader issues by all international education practitioners.

- Improved information is needed, from all levels of education, to strengthen arguments for continued and increased budgetary support. Because so many programs are firmly embedded in traditional organizational academic units, information-gathering across disciplines and institutions can be a daunting exercise, but one that is essential to demonstrate productivity, accomplishments – and needs.

- The information must be collected, analyzed, and shared widely!

- Effectiveness measurements for outreach need to be developed. Can program effectiveness be assumed based simply on participation? How can a longer-term impact be measured, when the programs themselves are mostly short-term?

- Similarly, the recent Title VI reauthorization calls for information-gathering about the long term effectiveness of the FLAS fellowship program, yet because of the length of time needed for training specialists, combined with the comparatively short life of each Title VI grant, this conundrum will be difficult to resolve satisfactorily; efforts to do so are in progress through the current FLAS competition.

- Measurement of NRC, as well as UISFL, BIE, CIBER, LRC, and other programs' effectiveness offers similar conundrums, again because of the short life of each grant as well as questions about defining impact: numbers of students in (which?) courses leading to how many degrees awarded, student gains in foreign language proficiency (measured by?), employment goals (expected or actual?), and/or other criteria. Here too evaluation efforts are in progress through non-government organizations.

Looking at an even larger picture, developments in the larger education arena will likely offer even more challenges to Title VI, and to efforts to inject more international content, exposure, and understanding into the student experience. Some are mentioned above, and some involve continuing challenges to the role of the liberal arts in undergraduate education; other variants may be:

- If for-profit higher education is a continuing and increasingly popular option, what will it offer for effective preparation of students for participation in a global economy? In other words, will the for-profits too attempt internationalization? If not, what inducements can be offered to develop international competence among students in these institutions?
- If the concept of the three-year undergraduate degree takes hold in the United States, how can students fit in the time needed to achieve foreign language proficiency? Or might foreign language requirements be reduced even further? Again, how can this trend of reductions in foreign language requirements be countered?
- How can the challenges of "civil discourse" in planning for academic "internationalization" be most productively channeled?
- Given relatively low enrollments for LCTLs, might increasing reliance on adjuncts for postsecondary teaching render institutional commitments to foreign language and international and area studies even more precarious?

The reader can doubtless suggest more challenges, as others have in many publications in recent years. Two more reports that should be cited are the volumes from the conference celebrating the 40th anniversary of Title VI[13] and the National Academies' 2007 report of the Committee to Review the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays International Education Programs.[14] Those interested in research on the internationalization process surely have a large agenda to choose from.

Meeting new challenges has always been central to the development of Title VI. Having met so many over the years, a promising track record has been established. I hope and believe it will continue.

[1] Sam Eisen, *Title VI and Internationalization Challenges*; Ann Imlah Schneider, *Internationalization vs. Area Studies?* ; and Nancy L. Ruther, *Title VI Outreach* are available at *http://www.aieaworld.org/events/2010-conf-presentations.htm.*

[2] In 1979 the Office of Education, which had been part of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, became a separate, Cabinet-level, Department.

[3] More detail about the transition can be found in Nancy L. Ruther's *Barely There, Powerfully Present: Thirty Years of U.S. Policy on International Higher Education* (New York: Routledge Press, 2002).

[4] Schneider, Ann Imlah, and Barbara B. Burn, *Federal Funding for International Studies: Does it Help? Does it Matter?* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1999).

[5] Schneider, Ann I., and Llewellyn D. Howell, "The Discipline of International Studies" *(International Studies Notes*, Vol. 16, No. 3, Fall 1991, and Vol. 17, No. 1, Winter 1992).

[6] President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, *Strength Through Wisdom: A Critique of U.S. Capability* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, November 1979).

[7] Examples are Richard Lambert, *International Studies and the Undergraduate* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1989), Lorraine M. McDonnell, Sue E. Berryman, and Douglas Scott, *Federal Support for International Studies: The Role of NDEA Title VI* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1981), and Richard Lambert, with Elinor Barber, Eleanor Jorden, Margaret Merrill, and Leon Twarog, *Beyond Growth: The Next Stage in Language and Area Studies* (Washington, DC: Association of American Universities, 1984).

[8] One example is Madeleine F. Greene and Christa Olson, *Internationalizing the Campus: A User's Guide* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 2003).

[9] "Dialogue of the Americas Report" (*AIEA Newsletter*, February 2010).

[10] NASULGC Commission on International Programs, *A National Action Agenda for Internationalizing Higher Education* (Washington, DC: NASULGC, 2007) and Kevin Hovland, "Shared Futures: Global Learning and Social Responsibility" and others (*Diversity Digest*, Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities), vol. 8, no. 3, 2005.

[11] Ann Imlah Schneider, *To Leave No Teacher Behind: Building International Competence into the Undergraduate Training of K-12 Teachers* (Washington, DC, 2007) available at www.internationaledadvice.org.

[12] NASBE Study Group, *Citizens for the 21st Century: Revitalizing the Civic Mission of Schools: The Report of the NASBE Study Group on Civic Engagement and Ethical Behavior in a Global Society* (Alexandria, VA, National Association of State Boards of Education, 2006) and CCSSO, *Global Education Policy Statement* (Washington, DC: The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2006).

[13] Patrick O'Meara, Howard D. Mehlinger, and Roxana Ma Newman, editors., *Changing Perspectives on International Education* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001) and Patrick O'Meara, Howard D. Mehlinger, and Matthew Krain, editors., *Globalization and the Challenges of a New Century: A Reader* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000).

[14] Mary Ellen O'Connell and Janet L. Norwood, editors, *International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America's Future* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2007).