



AIEA PROVOST PERSPECTIVES

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Preparing Students for the Global Century

Perry J. Brown • *The University of Montana*

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs





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Name: Perry J. Brown

Title: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, The University of Montana

Time served as Provost: 3 years and 9 months (as of July, 2014)

Located in Missoula, Montana, UM is Montana's flagship liberal arts university. A research university, UM's academic offerings range from one-year certificates to Ph.D.s. Our 9 academic schools and colleges include an embedded two-year college. We serve 15,000 students including approximately 2,000 graduate students, 600 international students, and 700 Native American students. Notable programs are creative writing, biological sciences, wildlife biology and conservation, journalism, accounting, education, and health related programs. UM leads the Mountain West in producing Rhodes Scholars and the nation in producing Udall Scholars.

Before becoming Provost, Perry Brown was Dean of UM's College of Forestry and Conservation. Prior to that he served at Oregon State University, Colorado State University, and Utah State University. He has produced over 100 books, book chapters and scientific papers in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and has mentored over 60 graduate students to graduation.



Given all of the demands and constraints facing higher education today, why did your institution decide to internationalize?

UM has been internationalizing for a long time. Our faculty members have a history of interaction with colleagues in other countries; internationalization is an outgrowth of this faculty activity. UM has a particular relationship to East Asia as Mike Mansfield began a distinguished career at UM teaching the history of Asia, and went on to be the longest serving President of the US Senate, followed by an appointment as Ambassador to Japan for 11 years. Currently another Montana Senator, Max Baucus, serves as Ambassador to China. Building on this foundation, as we prepare graduates to live, work, and play in the Global Century, it is important that they learn to understand different cultures, different geographies, and different ways of living and doing business. Internationalization will prepare them for a Global Century, a century that has significant international dimensions. This is particularly important in a state such as Montana where many students come to UM as first-generation college students and from rural areas where exposure to international issues and opportunities are limited. For us to provide the best opportunities possible for our students it is necessary to expand horizons beyond historically limited experiences and world views.

Has the role or importance of internationalization at your institution changed over the past five years? If so, how?

It has changed over the last five years as we developed a new strategic plan that specifically focuses on Education for the Global Century. This has accelerated our interest in internationalization and focused our attention on UM's role in international education. Over the next five years we expect to enroll more international students, to send more of our domestic students abroad, to see development of additional internationally-focused curricula, and to infuse more international content into our academic and student affairs programming.

What were some of the main challenges you and your campus faced in pursuing internationalization? What are some of assets you and your institution drew on for this work?

Major challenges for UM in internationalization have been financial. Broadening student perceptions and changing traditional university culture are other challenges we face. We have drawn on the international experience of faculty members; hired new faculty members and administrators who have an international orientation; developed new programs such as the Global Leadership Initiative that exposes students to new horizons and provides a passport for all participants who do not have one; sought support from donors,



and changed specific areas of the University such as admissions. We are far from done, but progress is being made.

What is an example of an internationalization effort on your campus that was not completely successful? Why was that the case, and what did your institution learn from it?

We have yet to be successful in adopting an interdisciplinary international major. The two big stumbling blocks have been convincing some departments that such a program is needed and will not diminish their programming and financing the new major. As this curriculum proposal has unfolded we have learned to be more patient and deliberate in dealing with each related program. Once we solve the financing issues it is likely that this new degree will be adopted, but we are at least a year away from moving it fully through the University and System-wide governance systems. Eventually we expect more programs to become part of the degree. At this point enough have signed on to make it successful once financing is secured.

Conversely, please discuss an example of an initiative that did work, and why.

One program that is successful is the Global Leadership Initiative (GLI). While it is not an international program per se, it has some international components that are working well. In the first year of the program students participate in big issue seminars that most often are issues of domestic and international importance. In the third year students are required to engage in out of the classroom experiences such as study abroad, internships, civic engagement, and undergraduate research. What we are seeing is that students are gaining a global perspective on issues and they are opting to do multiple out of classroom experiences such as combining internships with study abroad. We have learned that innovative programs will be supported by donors: this program, which serves a new 200 student cohort each year, is fully donor-supported. We have seen majors changed and lives transformed through this program.

Who are the most important stakeholders you work with regarding internationalization at your institution?

The most important stakeholders in internationalization are the faculty and students of the University. Working with administrators and administrative offices, they are the ones leading the way. Students have requested new curricula such as Arabic language and culture (we now have a minor) and faculty members have been leaders in formulating the GLI and the integrated international bachelor's degree proposal. Through various offices and institutes we also have worked with organizations and individuals outside UM. Support



has come from the Federal government (e.g. Dept. of Education, Dept. of State, and the USDA Forest Service), contracts with foreign organizations for education and training, and individuals. Individuals also serve on numerous internationally related advisory bodies for UM. Overall, the people of Missoula are internationally engaged and have supported the University in many ways.

What are some of the key ways in which senior international officers can help individuals in your role advance internationalization at their institutions?

Senior international officers can help in many ways. First, they can identify opportunities for us to consider. Second, they can help us understand best practices in internationalization. Third, to the extent they are part of specific programming, they can help to fund pilot projects to test new ideas and structures, and to launch innovative programming. Fourth, they can sponsor events that bring together key leaders from universities that are working on how best to internationalize their universities. Fifth, they can prepare background papers and statements that provide rationale for and statistics about the need for internationalization in higher education.

Is there anything else you would like to share with senior international officers or fellow chief academic officers?

It is fundamental that internationalization remain a consideration in everything that we do. Increased internationalization will serve our students well and allow our institutions to adapt our offerings to this Global Century, maintaining relevance and dynamism in a century that is vastly different than the last.



The **Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA)**, a membership organization formed in November 1982, is composed of institutional leaders engaged in advancing the international dimensions of higher education. The purposes of the Association are to:

- Provide an effective voice on significant issues within international education at all levels,
- Improve and promote international education programming and administration within institutions of higher education,
- Establish and maintain a professional network among international education institutional leaders,
- Cooperate in appropriate ways with other national and international groups having similar interests.

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