2010 Andrew Heiskell Awards for Innovation in International Education

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Heiskell Award Category:
**Category 1: Internationalizing the Campus - *2010 Special Focus on Internationalizing Engineering Programs:**

Name of Institution: Georgia Institute of Technology

Name of Program: The International Plan

Nomination Submitted by:

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Program Website (if applicable): [http://www.internationalplan.gatech.edu](http://www.internationalplan.gatech.edu)

Summary of Program (50-100 words):

The Georgia Institute of Technology's innovative curriculum integration initiative, the International Plan, offers undergraduates in 25 majors a degree-long, coherent program integrated into the student's major and designed to develop the student's global competence. The International Plan, now in its fifth year, is having a significant impact on the 600+ students enrolled in it, and is also contributing in important ways to the internationalization of the whole institution.
In 2005, the Georgia Institute of Technology (GIT) launched a large curriculum integration initiative, the International Plan (IP), that is having a significant impact on IP students and also on the general internationalization of the campus. The IP was the first GIT effort that combined both centralized support and funding with decentralized academic control, and was also the first that targeted all majors. GIT already had extensive study abroad participation across all majors and many international agreements and partnerships, but they were all the result of the entrepreneurial efforts of motivated faculty and staff and did not represent a comprehensive and coherent approach to internationalizing undergraduate education.

The IP was developed over a two-year period through an administrative and academic collaborative effort. Because the College of Engineering and College of Computing account for 76% of undergraduate students, GIT is very much a technological institution and the IP was developed with the full participation of faculty from across the campus. While there were many in the administration who worked towards the creation of the IP, the key to the success of the development of this program was the tireless involvement of dedicated faculty in each academic department. In 2004-05, the initiative was approved by each of the participating academic departments, the colleges, the appropriate university-wide faculty committees, and then by the Provost and President. GIT made a substantial financial commitment to this initiative including support for new faculty to teach languages and international courses, new staff to facilitate study and work abroad, and a generous assessment budget.

The IP includes the three components deemed essential for global competence: coursework in international studies, language proficiency, and extensive international experience. A hallmark of this program, and one that sets it apart from other programs, is that it is integrated into the student’s disciplinary studies. Participants gain an appreciation for how cultural context affects the practice of the discipline. Successful completion of the IP leads to a designation on students’ diploma and transcript signifying their global competence in the discipline (i.e., “Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering: International Plan”).

IP students, unlike other GIT students (and students at most universities in the U.S.), use the framework of IP requirements and guidance from academic and study abroad advisors to incorporate a meaningful bundle of international opportunities into a coherent whole that develops global competence relevant to their major. The requirements for the IP in all participating majors are as follows:

A. Course requirements: These are the academic foundation that complements the international experience. Students must take one course in each of the following categories:

1. International Relations: This course must focus on international relations historically and theoretically, including topics such as the role of state sovereignty and nationalism and non-state actors in the international system, international conflict, peace, security, intervention, and nation-building, international organizations, law, and ethics, transnational problems of the environment, terrorism, health, and migration.

2. Global Economy: This course provides a historical and theoretical understanding of the global economy, including topics such as international trade, finance, investment, and production, regional economic integration, economic development and modernization, and questions of natural resource sustainability.
3. Country or Region: This course provides familiarity with another country or world region that allows systematic comparisons of society and culture. This course should be directly relevant to country or region of student’s IP international experience.

4. Capstone: This course provides the culminating academic experience that integrates the knowledge, skills, and international experience into the context of the practice of the student’s discipline. For students in engineering, architecture, and other areas that have a “senior design” component to the curriculum, the IP capstone serves to fulfill both the IP requirements and the general degree requirements at the same time.

B. Second Language Requirement: Students must demonstrate competency in a language other than English at an appropriate level. All students must demonstrate at least a level of proficiency corresponding to that expected following two years of college coursework in the language. Students whose international experience is in a country where English is not the language of discourse must demonstrate a level of proficiency corresponding to the ACTFL’s Intermediate High by the time of graduation (Intermediate Middle for Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Russian).

C. International Experience Requirement: Students must successfully complete at least 26 weeks of active, full-time study, work, and/or research abroad.

Participating academic departments then tailor a specific version of the plan within this framework of requirements by determining which are the best courses and the most effective international experience, and by designing the optimal capstone experience for their own majors. Now in the fifth year of the IP, 25 out of 35 undergraduate majors participate in the IP. Of particular note is that 8 out of 11 engineering majors participate in the IP.

The first students joined the IP in 2005, and at present there are 661 IP participants. The majors with the largest number of participants are Industrial and Systems Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, and International Affairs/Modern Languages. Approximately 50% of IP participants are students in the College of Engineering or the College of Computing. 45 students have graduated thus far with the IP designator, although many of those were ‘grandfathered in’ as they had already completed a fair portion of their degrees when they joined the IP. Some of those first students who joined the IP in 2005 have graduated, and most of their peers who continued with the program are slated to graduate this year.

Assessment of the IP was planned and funded at the outset of this initiative and it is ongoing; however, we do not yet have enough graduates to permit much deep analysis. What we do know so far, based on our Alumni Survey and based on a freshmen survey administered at many institutions in the U.S. is that the IP is helping GIT attract students who may otherwise have gone to private institutions classified as ‘very high selectivity’ (GIT is classified as ‘high selectivity’). And, we know that alumni who report having international experience while at GIT have higher income levels and greater satisfaction with their career progress. Also, we know that female students in the College of Engineering (COE) participate in the IP at a higher rate than they are represented in the COE population overall, so the IP will now be part of GIT’s recruitment of female students into STEM fields.

A large part of our assessment work has been dedicated to administering the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). The IDI was administered as a pre-test measure to incoming GT first-year students through a first-year seminar course (in 2005), and through freshmen orientation sessions (2006-07). IP participants who did not complete the IDI at orientation took the survey at an IP orientation session beginning in 2006. To date, a total of 3,781 students completed the instrument. The Office of Assessment is now concentrating on collecting post-test
data from graduating students. To date, we have administered an online-version of the lDI to 191
students, 12 of whom are students who graduated with the IP designator. This sample is too
small to permit any deep analysis, but we expect a larger cohort of IP students to complete their
programs of study in the next academic year.

The IP’s architects anticipated that this initiative would increase student awareness of the
importance of international study and experience so that students who are not able to participate
in the IP would be more likely to take part in some of the components of international study or
choose some form of international experience. As we enter year five of the IP, it is clear that the
IP’s overall impact on internationalization extends beyond the IP participants in important and
significant ways that are described below:

1. Twenty percent of GT undergraduates are currently enrolled in a foreign language course
compared to the national average of 8.6 percent and compared to a much lower percentage
before the IP’s inception. The incredibly high foreign language enrollment is especially
noteworthy because GIT has no foreign language requirement.

2. Some of the funding for the IP’s implementation created two staff positions for a Work Abroad
Office. In 2005, when the IP was initiated, approximately 10 GIT students worked abroad. In
2008-2009, 132 GT students worked abroad. Some of those students were IP participants
(about 20%), but the majority of work abroad students are not in the IP. GIT undergraduate
students participating in this program worked at a variety of organizations around the world: 76
percent were placed in corporations; 11 percent in research internships; 11 percent in non-
profit organizations; and three percent in government.

3. Participation in semester study abroad programs has grown by more than 200% since the IP’s
inception. Some of that increase is due to the requirement for IP students to spend at least 26
weeks abroad, but approximately 60% of semester study abroad participants are not in the IP.

4. The number of international programs has more than doubled from approximately 50 in 2005 to
more than 110 programs at present.

5. New courses have been created with IP funding that meet the needs of IP students but that are
open to any student thus making more courses with an international focus available to GIT
students. These courses include Global Economics (approximately 60% of the students who
have taken this course are not IP students; it has been offered each semester since Fall 2007);
International Strategic Management, Cross-cultural Psychology.

There are certainly variables other than the IP that have influenced these positive
internationalization changes at GIT, but the funding and staffing provided by the IP as well as the
publicity for and excitement about the IP have undoubtedly contributed to these wider
internationalization indicators.

The International Plan neither replaces nor supplants other GIT international programs. Rather, it
is Georgia Tech’s “signature” international program to enhance international study and
experiences for undergraduates. The discipline-specific, unit-supported curriculum makes the IP
relevant for any major and provides excellent preparation for work after graduation in our global
economy. The IP has also had an impact beyond its own students to enhance and increase the
internationalization of the whole campus. It is a model that could be replicated in whole or in part
at other institutions in the U.S. or elsewhere in the world.
October 12, 2009

Selection Committee
The Andrew Heiskell Awards for Innovation in International Education
Institute for International Education
809 United Nations Plaza, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10017

Dear Members of the Selection Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to endorse the nomination of Georgia Tech’s International Plan for the Andrew Heiskell Awards for Innovation in International Education. The administration, faculty and staff of Georgia Tech are very proud of this innovative initiative that has already significantly enhanced international education opportunities for our undergraduates and that promises to continue to do so.

Georgia Tech has established international education as one of its top priorities, and in the strategic planning process currently underway, ‘Global Engagement’ is one of the primary themes that will continue to be developed. Our current goal is that 50% of our undergraduates will have an international experience before graduation. Students, faculty, alumni, and corporate advisory board members have all recommended that Georgia Tech raise that goal to 100% in our 25-year strategic plan. The International Plan has shown the positive and significant impact on internationalization and curriculum integration that is possible when decentralized work is combined with glue’ at a central level to hold programs together. The International Plan is our flagship effort to create an integrated and coherent program that is tied directly into the student’s major.

We, at Georgia Tech, are proud of this program and confident that it will continue to contribute significantly to our efforts to internationalize Georgia Tech. We also believe that it represents a significant and innovative new approach to international education nationally and sets a new standard for developing global competence in undergraduates.

I am pleased to endorse the International Plan as Georgia Tech’s nomination for the Heiskell Awards.

Sincerely,

Gary B. Schuster
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Georgia Institute of Technology

The International Plan

Program Requirements

Each participating Georgia Tech degree program in the International Plan has integrated international studies, language acquisition, and overseas experience into the traditional Bachelor of Science degree that works best for that specific discipline.

Admission Requirements

- Applicants must be undergraduate degree-seeking Tech students in one of the participating majors.
- Students must submit an application via the International Plan Web site. Notification of acceptance will be communicated via the student's Georgia Tech e-mail address.
- There is no GPA requirement for first-semester freshmen applying to the International Plan. All other applicants must have at least a 2.5 GPA at the time of application.

Student Classification

The International Plan is intended for students in their first four semesters of undergraduate study. However, a student who has earned 59-plus credit hours in a participating major may still apply. In their application essay, these students should include details about the International Plan requirements that they believe have been fulfilled as well as information about how they expect to complete the remaining requirements prior to graduation.

Costs

The only costs associated with the International Plan are incurred to complete the international experience. Some modest stipends are available to defray travel expenses for eligible students studying or working abroad in fulfillment of the program. In-state study abroad participants pay standard Georgia Tech tuition while out-of-state study abroad students pay a reduced tuition rate that is little more than in-state tuition.

Language Requirements

All International Plan participants must develop proficiency in a language other than English. Unless otherwise approved, the language chosen to fulfill this requirement will have a relationship to the country or region in which the student plans to fulfill the twenty-six week requirement. Any variance will require approval from the IP faculty representative and the IP Committee. For complete details on how to fulfill the language requirement, visit the language requirements page.

Globally Focused Course Requirements

International Plan students must complete a core set of courses that address international issues and transcend the student's major. It is advised that these courses be taken prior to or while abroad
but not after the twenty-six week international experience. AP credit cannot count toward this requirement. Courses include:

- One course focused on international relations historically and theoretically.
- One course that provides a historical and theoretical understanding of the global economy.
- One course that provides familiarity with an area of the world or a country that allows them to make systematic comparisons with their own society and culture. This course should be directly relevant (coherent) to the international context of the overseas experience.

A list of courses approved to fulfill the three areas noted above is available in the Georgia Tech Catalog.

Overseas Experience

Students must complete twenty-six weeks (just over six months) of active engagement abroad, either as a whole or within no more than two terms demonstrating cultural, linguistic, or intellectual coherence. The experience is defined as any combination of study, work, or research conducted abroad, with the intended plan being subject to approval by the IP faculty representative in the student's degree program, the International Plan Coordinator, and, where applicable, the Division of Professional Practice and/or the School of Modern Languages.

Registration requirement while abroad

Students must be registered at Georgia Tech during their terms abroad, including for work and research terms. In addition to registering for the program specific courses, IP students will register for one of the following IP courses in the semester(s) they are abroad in fulfillment of the twenty-six week requirement:

- IPFS 3012 (if going abroad on exchange)
- IPSA 3012 (if going abroad on FLSA)
- IPCO 3011 (if going abroad on co-op)
- IPIN 3011 (if going abroad for internship)

Permits will be provided in time for Phase I registration if you have been approved for your chosen international program. It is important to register for the appropriate course in a timely manner if you want your term abroad to count toward your twenty-six week requirement.

Summer programs

- Only one Georgia Tech faculty-led summer abroad (FLSA) program may count toward the international experience. Note that a summer program plus a semester abroad may not add up to twenty-six weeks.
- Students may choose to enhance the FLSA immersion experience with a second semester or a longer internship. If a time lapse between two consecutive terms occurs, students may request permission to "bridge" the two terms with appropriate structured time in the same host country or linguistic region. Bridges may only be created in conjunction with FLSA programs, are available at the discretion of the FLSA program director, and must be approved by the student's IP faculty representative. Students should plan in advance if expecting to do a bridge.

GPA Requirement
International Plan students must maintain at least a 2.5 GPA. Students who fail to maintain a 2.5 will undergo a review to determine if they may continue in the International Plan program. Students must have a 2.7 GPA and must meet standards of the international program selected (e.g., minimum grades required by foreign university or the company abroad) in the term(s) prior to foreign experiences.

Capstone Course

The purpose of a degree-long International Plan is to provide students the opportunity to study, experience, and reflect on international issues throughout their undergraduate studies. The capstone course integrates knowledge of the discipline and the international experience in a global context.

When you complete the requirements for the undergraduate degree in your major and the IP requirements, your diploma and transcript will state that the degree is a "Bachelor of Science with International Plan." This will make the significance of your international preparation in your chosen field more apparent to future employers.

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