CHARGE OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY TASK FORCE

Northwestern University
BACKGROUND

The world has globalized. Modern universities must embrace this reality and adapt to it. For Northwestern, this means creating a learning environment that educates and equips faculty and students to cross intellectual, ideological, and cultural boundaries. This mission requires fostering a deeper understanding of how communities and social structures form and interact across boundaries. We will also need to extend classrooms and research sites to geographically dispersed locations. Rather than view these as a collection of individual sites, we should view them as an interconnected network of operations that extends the Northwestern mission and reach across the globe.

Northwestern has made strong progress on this journey over the past decade. We have made large strides in attracting faculty and students from diverse geographic and cultural backgrounds. Our global activities have included new fields of study, partnerships with leading universities, research collaborations, and the establishment of a campus in Doha, Qatar. (The many sites where Northwestern operates around the globe can be seen on our global opportunities map.) We have become a university that is creating global impact through the work of our faculty and students. Our impact is further expanded through alumni in leadership positions throughout the world.

With the new opportunities afforded us with the receipt of Roberta Buffett’s transformative gift, it is an important moment to assess our progress to-date and determine and affirm our strategic intentions. Across the University, innovation at the school, department, research center, and individual faculty level has led to several models of global engagement. As we move forward, we need to decide how much coordination and centralization we should implement, in what locations to focus our energies, and what forms of global activity to emphasize.

The goals in creating a global mission and strategy for Northwestern are many. We must recruit the most talented faculty and students from around the world to assure Northwestern's vibrance as a leading university. We must prepare our students to work in a global economy, aware of its unique environmental, political, and socio-economic challenges and to value diversity and multiple cultural perspectives. And, we must equip and inspire our faculty to study the most pressing problems of our world. As a leading research university, we have both the responsibility and opportunity to have an impact on policies and legal systems, delivery of health care, growth of market-based economies, understanding of religious differences, and much more.

The purpose of the Global Strategy Task Force is to enhance the integration and coordination of the various initiatives currently underway and planned for the future by developing an overarching institutional global strategy.
TASK FORCE CHARGE

The Global Strategy Task Force will work with our faculty, deans, administrators, students, alumni, and trustees over a nine-month period to develop an integrated strategic plan for the University that:

• Articulates a global mission statement and identifies 5-7 high-level goals that will guide the University in planning and making decisions around global operations over the next (up to) 10 years. The mission and goals should address Northwestern's strategy for global impact and reach across its research, education, and community building agendas.

• Outlines the parameters for an initial 3-5 year plan that would guide the University in enacting this vision by integrating existing global operations and providing rich platforms for future expansion. This plan should consider specific types of potential strategic investment, including for example:

  1. Options for integrating global engagement with the undergraduate and graduate student experience so that a global experience becomes part of every Northwestern student’s experience.

  2. Recommendations for the design and launch of several signature research and educational initiatives and/or partnerships that would distinguish Northwestern's approach, potentially including a small number of institutional and interdisciplinary collaborations with world-class partners, separate from and in addition to unit-specific programs.

  3. The identification of key locations and/or facilities that would catalyze global engagement through faculty collaborations, student programming, admissions efforts, and/or alumni relations and development activities.

• Outlines an organizational structure for integrating existing global activities in the schools, institutes, centers, and departments with activities that are already centralized, as well as the planned expansion of the Buffett Institute. Key areas to address would include:

  1. Administrative and financial operations, ensuring that appropriate administrative and financial support are readily available in areas of human resources, information technology, facilities, tax, banking, legal, and safety.

  2. Alumni relations and development, enabling regional alumni relations and development activities that capitalize on the strength of our faculty and students and emphasize our presence and commitment.

  3. International office and related functions, facilitating the exchange of faculty and students through visa and related services, and potentially academic and counseling support.

  4. A leadership structure that would strengthen institutional vision, cohesion, and performance accountability for global engagement.