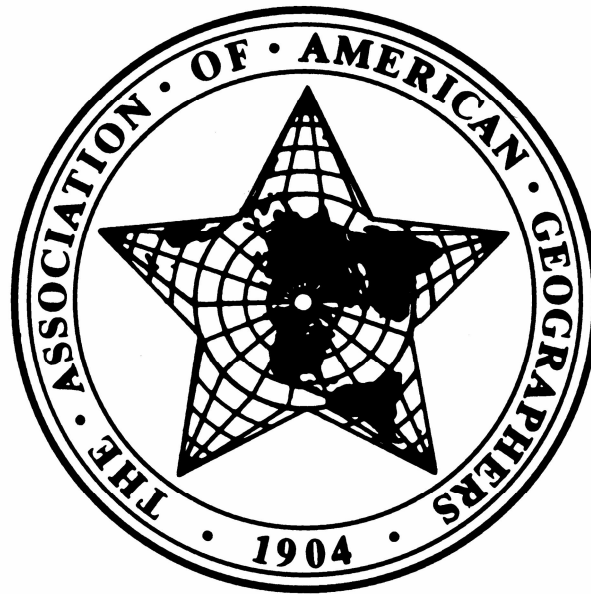


Internationalizing Geography in Higher Education: Initiatives of the Association of American Geographers



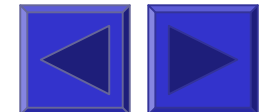
Dr. Michael Solem, Director of Educational Affairs
Association of American Geographers
Washington, D.C. USA

Presentation to HERODOT
TORUŃ, POLAND
Friday, 2 September, 2005



**American Council on Education (ACE) project
“Where Faculty Live: Internationalizing the Disciplines”**

- Funded by a Carnegie Foundation grant to ACE
- AAG and three other disciplinary organizations asked to develop and disseminate two resources:
 1. A set of **global learning outcomes** that can inform both the major and general education
 2. An **action plan** to promote internationalization within the discipline





What is internationalization?

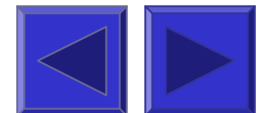
By “internationalization”, we mean institutional efforts to incorporate an international and intercultural dimension in the teaching, research, and service functions of academic staff and departments

What are the benefits of internationalization for geographers? It is true that:

1. Geography has a long record of participation in the field of international education, and
2. Geography is conceptually rooted in international perspectives, area studies, and the study of human and physical processes, patterns, and relationships at multiple scales

However, much less is known about how and why geographers engage the internationalization process in terms of:

1. pursuing *international collaboration* in teaching, research, and/or service
2. supporting *global learning outcomes* in the undergraduate curriculum

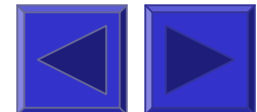




AAG Survey of Geographers

Research questions:

1. To what extent are geography professors involved with international collaboration in their professional work?
2. What types of global learning outcomes are supported in physical, human, and methods courses taught by geographers?
3. What factors explain these patterns?





AAG Survey of Geographers

Methodology:

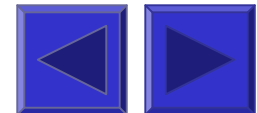
Survey questionnaire administered to a random sample of geography professors teaching in the US

426 usable returns (26% response rate, >35% participation rate)

Sample representative of AAG postsecondary faculty membership (full-time, all ranks and institutional types)

Five-part questionnaire:

1. Demographic and professional characteristics
2. Ratings of global learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and affective-traits)
3. Perceptions of international collaboration
4. Administrative policies for internationalization
5. Previous experience with international collaboration and international education





Faculty engagement with internationalization:

- Classify faculty in two groups: those *with* and *without* international collaboration experience
- Compare group scores on two scales, validated by factor analysis of survey responses:
 1. *Professional development* (eight items measuring faculty competencies)
 2. *Academic climate* (four items measuring “supportiveness” of department and university)

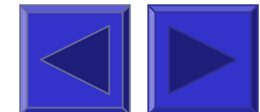
Results

Patterns of international collaboration:

- 24% (N=104) in teaching
- 57% (N=244) in research

International collaboration experience linked to the following factors:

- 1) Training, professional development, and funding support
- 2) Access to professional networks
- 3) Special awards, honors, and incentives, including promotion and tenure criteria
- 4) Programs for faculty and student exchange





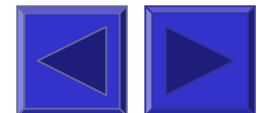
Results


Faculty support for global learning outcomes:

- Classify faculty in groups by subfield, gender, language, and institutional type
- Compare group scores on scales measuring importance of teaching goals based on global learning themes:
 1. *Knowledge* (e.g., “improve students’ awareness of the complexity and interdependency of world issues”)
 2. *Skills* (e.g., “develop students’ communication skills, including the ability to interact with people from another culture”)
 3. *Affective-trait* (e.g., “promote students’ sensitivity and respect for personal and cultural differences”)

Overall scores indicate broad and frequent support for global learning outcomes, yet significant differences exist:

- Human geographers and those who study nature-society relations more likely to support *affective-trait* outcomes
- Women more likely to support *affective-trait* outcomes
- Geographers whose primary language is not English more likely to support teaching foreign languages and intercultural social skills
- Professors at teaching-oriented institutions place more emphasis on *knowledge* outcomes
- Scores on academic climate and professional development scales positively correlated with scores on global learning scales





Recommendations for AAG internationalization plan

Results of study reviewed by an international committee of geographers

1. Incorporate a professional development component in campus and AAG programs for internationalization
2. Develop teaching materials that support global learning outcomes in different subfields of geography
3. Expand international networks to underrepresented regions and between disciplinary organizations (e.g., AAG & HERODOT)

Full text of study available at www.aag.org or request a copy from Michael Solem (msolem@aag.org)

