Talking Points for President Mark Yudof and Provost Lawrence Pitts
July 19, 2011

Talking Points to Support Study Abroad and International Education

Comprehensive internationalization is an “institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility,” according to NAFSA, the Association of International Educators.1 The messaging points presented below offer substantive arguments about the transformative consequences of maintaining and expanding comprehensive internationalization of teaching, research, and service at the University of California with a special focus on study abroad.

As the Abraham Lincoln Commission wrote, “The point is so fundamental that it bears repeating. In global affairs – whether the region is Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, or the Middle East, whether the issue involves diplomacy, foreign affairs, national security, or commerce and finance – what nations do not know exacts a heavy toll. The stakes involved in study abroad are that simple, that straightforward, and that important. For their own future and that of the nation, it is essential that college graduates today become globally competent.”2

Our request is that President Yudof and Provost Pitts will incorporate these messaging points in remarks and written statements about the current achievements and future vision for the University of California. It would be extremely helpful if they would sign a statement supportive of internationalization, and specifically study abroad. Such a statement could update and expand to the following statement signed by President Dynes in support of the Education Abroad Program.

“In this increasingly globalized world, our ability to meet society’s collective challenges to create the world’s next economies and foster the discoveries that will change how we live our lives is dependent on our ability to think and act globally. Continuing to foster new and more effective international partnerships is vital not only for the state’s and the nation’s economic growth, but for the intellectual development of students. Universities around the world are recognizing the growing need for more imaginative internationalization of their programs. The Education Abroad Program, with its long history of innovative, diverse and distinguished student and faculty exchanges with other leading universities around the world, is one of the keys to the internationalization of UC. Through the free flow of ideas in a global context, the university will continue to help prepare and train students to drive the discoveries that change how we live and create the new economies. California’s strength today continues to be in our ability to be at the forefront of emerging fields and new ways of thinking. And our continued ability to maintain and expand that strength relies on how well we can facilitate the free flow of ideas across borders in business, academia, or society worldwide.”

–Robert C. Dynes
President, University of California

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SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Economic Impact [National, State, and Local]
International education and exchange offers a major economic advantage to the nation and to individual states and regions. International students at the University of California and other institutions have a major impact on California’s economy through the $2.8 billion they and their dependents pay in tuition, educational and living expenses.

Most international students come from fast-growing and dynamic economies in which California, and UC alumni, have a strong economic interest. Most notably this includes China, India, South Korea, and Japan.

The top fields of study for international students are business/management, and engineering, fields fundamental to the expansion of the California’s economy. This creates an opportunity to educate a labor force for high technology industries in California, and to retain at least the R&D functions in the state if not the production.

Political Impact: Educating Global Citizens and Serving National Security
Transnational and global public policy issues are among the most pressing contemporary problems we confront; addressing them will require effective and culturally appropriate transnational cooperation.

“Essential to our national security will be individuals who have foreign language expertise, an understanding of diverse cultures, and the ability to think critically within a global context.”

Narrowing the communication and knowledge gap internationally does not guarantee solutions to national security problems but it does improve the odds.

International experiences help prepare alumni of the University of California to be creative problem-solvers capable of thinking outside the box and developing dynamic team-based working groups. They can also help hone critical thinking skills.

Study abroad promotes continued active engagement with international affairs.

Academic and Personal Impact on Students and Faculty [Educational and Personal Development]
Study abroad, especially when it involves learning another language, develops students’ skills in cultural competence.

Study abroad is associated with shorter time to degree and higher rates of graduation and retention.

Alumni Satisfaction
Current students and alumni who study abroad consistently report that the experience was a highlight of their undergraduate careers.

Maintaining the University of California’s Excellence and Competitive Edge
The University of California’s reputation for excellence attracts international scholars and students and is also enhanced by their presence. Four UC campuses (Berkeley, Davis, Los Angeles and San

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Diego) are among the top seven institutions in the nation hosting the largest number of international scholars; one (Los Angeles) is among the top ten hosting international students.

The University of California is also a leading institution for study abroad programs. University of California campuses rank among the top 20 institutions in the nation in several categories of study abroad programs.

Competition for research talent and economic investment is increasing among countries and institutions of higher education. New technologies and government subsidies are expanding the nodes of knowledge production around the globe. To maintain its reputation for excellence, the University of California must expand international teaching and research partnerships, especially in the most rapidly expanding economies.
Economic Impact [national, state, and local]

International education and exchange offers a major economic advantage to the nation and to individual states and regions. International students at the University of California and other institutions have a major impact on California’s economy through the $2.8 billion they and their dependents pay in tuition, educational and living expenses. Their contributions to the nine UC campuses total $702.5 million.

Based on estimated tuition, educational, and living expenses paid by international students, the Association of International Educators (NAFSA), estimates that international students and their accompanying dependents contributed approximately $18.78 billion to the U.S. economy during the 2009-10 academic year. The great majority of international students (80% according to the Institute of International Education, IIE) rely on personal and family funds to finance their educational and living expenses in the United States.

With 94,279 students attending California institutions of higher education, the state enrolls more international students than any other. NAFSA estimates that the contribution of international students and their accompanying dependents to the economy of the state of California was $2.8 billion. The contributions of students on the nine UC campuses total $702.5 million or approximately 25% of the state’s total income from international students.

California also hosts the most international scholars. In 2008/09 it hosted 18% of the U.S. total with 20,678 scholars. Second place Massachusetts hosted a distant 8,847.

Most international students come from fast-growing and dynamic economies in which California, and UC alumni, will have a strong economic interest. Most notably, this includes China, India, South Korea, and Japan.

In 2008-09, fifty-one percent of the international scholars came from the top five sending countries (China, India, South Korea, Japan, and Germany). Based on geography and population ties, Californians are in an excellent position to capitalize on the opportunity to cultivate economic and cultural ties with these major sending countries.

The top fields of study for international students are business/management and engineering, fields fundamental to the expansion of the California’s economy.

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9 Ibid, p. 25
More international undergraduates study business/management than any other single field of study. In 2008-09, 20.6% of international students (graduate and undergraduate) were studying business a figure that rose to 21.1% in 2009-10. 10 Educating international students whose futures will be in business enterprises in their home countries affords the university an opportunity to shape economic development strategies, to forge economic ties, and to educate a new generation of economic leaders. Moreover, U.S. students who study with them – both at home and abroad – have the opportunity to learn about business in other countries and to develop friendships and professional networks with long term professional benefits. 11

Among graduate students, the most popular field of study is engineering, commanding 24% of international students in 2008-09. 12 In 2009-10, 18.4% of all international students (graduate and undergraduate) were enrolled in engineering programs. 13 This creates an opportunity to educate a labor force for high technology industries in California, and to retain at least the R&D functions in the state if not the production.

With regard to engineers, international graduates are expected to make up a large share of the labor force for U.S. companies in fields which have a deficit of trained U.S. graduates. This is especially true in STEM fields which U.S. students are not studying in numbers adequate to meet industry demands. Forty-one percent of the international students in 2008-09 were enrolled in STEM fields. 14 International students make up a particularly important share of the graduate programs in these fields. Among international scholars, 71% were in STEM fields.

Because of the international composition of the staff in these industries, UC graduates must be able to demonstrate cultural competence working on interdisciplinary and multicultural teams.

Because of the global, transnational nature of labor and capital flows, UC graduates must be able to negotiate, craft “deals”, manage multicultural staff, and themselves move with confidence across cultural barriers. They must know how to learn and manage effectively and appropriately in different environments.

Political Impact: Educating Global Citizens and Serving National Security

Transnational and global public policy issues are among the most pressing contemporary problems we confront; addressing them will require effective and culturally appropriate transnational cooperation.

Addressing sustainability, environmental degradation, and climate change; controlling terrorism; stabilizing the world’s economies and currencies; managing population migration; controlling epidemic diseases; and containing violent religious and ethnic conflicts are just a few examples of policy challenges best served by transnational and global cooperation. As a leading research university, the University of California must educate students to be prepared to address these


11 Among U.S. students studying abroad, 20.2% were majoring in business and management. Bhandari and Chow, op cit., p. 21.

12 Ibid., p. 15.


challenges with discipline-based skills, global awareness, and cultural competence. International education, including study abroad and training international students, is a vital tool in preparing students for the challenges ahead.

“Essential to our national security will be individuals who have foreign language expertise, an understanding of diverse cultures, and the ability to think critically within a global context.”15

Narrowing the communication and knowledge gap internationally does not guarantee solutions to national security problems but it does improve the odds.

This national security benefit comes from having U.S. students study abroad as well as hosting international students who become familiar with the U.S. educational and cultural environment. When they rise to local or national prominence in their home countries – in the public and private sectors -- both groups can become important interlocutors for partnerships and negotiated solutions to conflicts.

As a public university, UC can make an important contribution to students’ intellectual growth and professional advancement by offering courses and experiences which can have an impact on national security. The most transparent examples are instruction in international relations, Asian languages and Arabic. Study abroad experiences in countries where these languages are spoken and in which national security issues are likely to arise is also important. However, modern science and technology, the transfer of labor and capital across national borders, and rapid cultural change all imply that internationalization of education is important throughout the curriculum.

International experiences help prepare alumni of the University of California to be creative problem-solvers capable of thinking outside the box and developing dynamic team-based working groups. They can also help hone critical thinking skills.

Creative problem-solving, effective intercultural team-based working groups, and critical thinking all require a set of skills and experiences often developed through international education. Most prominently, this includes respect for alternative ways of thinking, expressions of knowledge, approaches to issues, culture, and social mores. While students can learn these skills in the classroom, they can also be actively forged through study abroad programs, internship, and research opportunities that engage them in other social and cultural environments.

Study abroad promotes continued active engagement with international affairs.

The Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Scholarship urged the United States to ensure that many more undergraduates experience, study in, and communicate with other cultures so that they can learn to ‘hear’ what others are saying, speak with them in their language, and continue to serve as goodwill ambassadors throughout their lives.”16 Alumni who have studied abroad report that the experience has influenced the way they track international events, their likelihood to engage in international activities, their interest in post-study abroad

16 Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, op cit., p. ix.
travel, and their friendships. Anecdotal evidence indicates that students who do not study abroad but who live with international students on campus are similarly influenced.

Cultural competence gained abroad can complement diversity education at home and sensitivity to justice issues at home and abroad.

The Global Engagement Survey, the largest multi-institutional survey of study abroad alumni, revealed that participants were influenced by the experience to become environmentally conscious and to make purchasing decisions informed by issues of social justice. They were also globally engaged in areas such as social entrepreneurship and international civic engagement.

Some learning about justice and rights abroad will be discipline-related. Students studying social sciences (21.5% of U.S. students studying abroad in 2007-08) and humanities (13.3%) will be most likely to study these issues. Whether through coursework, travel, or direct experience as minorities themselves, study abroad returnees often convert their experience into cultural competence in their home societies. This can be a valuable skill in multicultural workplaces and the global market. Moreover, for immigrant students who have little exposure to their family’s heritage, heritage language learning and study abroad locations with family cultural roots can be associated with a deeper appreciation for family traditions.

Academic and Personal Impact on Students and Faculty [Educational and Personal Development]

Study abroad can contribute to students’ personal growth and development.

“Among the outcomes often cited are improvement in critical thinking skills, cross-cultural skills and perspectives, tolerance for ambiguity, self-confidence, independence, flexibility, self-knowledge, appreciation of difference, reevaluation of personal values, new direction and skills for job/career path, and new perspectives on American society and culture and on the US role in the world.”

Study abroad, especially when it involves learning another language, develops students’ skills in cultural competence.

Research indicates that study abroad can produce “better navigational skills and knowledge of cultural context.” Study abroad can offer a window into forms of expression, social values, and cultural practices. Students who have studied abroad develop stronger functional knowledge of


20 This is reported, among others, by participants in UC San Diego’s Mexican Migration Field Research Project, Center for Comparative Immigration Studies and the Departments of Political Science and Sociology. See “The Student Experience,” at http://ccis.ucsd.edu/programs/mmfrp/studentexperience.


cultural practices compared with students who did not participate in study abroad. This includes a range of functional cultural skills including the ability to compare and contrast cultures, locate information in a newspaper, talk their way out of tough situations, knowing different ways to express ideas, and various navigational skills in new environments. 23

Finally, students who study abroad grow in their knowledge of cultural context whereas those who did not participate remained static in their knowledge. Students who study abroad learn that different settings, and language and cultural differences, affect one’s own style of interacting. Students who do not participate in study abroad remain static in their knowledge of the importance of cultural context. 24

Study abroad returnees value the enhanced cultural competence gained through the study and travel abroad experience. The vast majority of returnees report that the language and cross-cultural skills they learned abroad are personally and professionally valuable. Paige et al argue that the experience also builds social capital, a payoff with consequences well beyond the individual participants. 25

**Study abroad is associated with shorter time to degree and higher rates of graduation and retention.**

Research from several institutions demonstrates that regardless of gender, ethnicity, income group and SAT scores, students who study abroad show improved time to degree and graduation rates than the general student population. These results are especially strong on 4-year graduation rates. At the University of Georgia, these results held even when measured against a control group to test against self-selection for study abroad. Study abroad students also earn higher mean GPAs.

UC San Diego studied the Fall 2002 freshman cohort to determine if study abroad had an impact on retention, graduation, and time to degree. They found that students who studied abroad were retained at a higher rate than their counterparts who did not and graduated at four, five, and six years at a rate higher than those did not participate in study abroad. This favorable effect held generally constant across gender, ethnicity, major field of study, status as first or second generation college student, parental income, predicted first year GPA, SATI composite range, high school GPA and high school quintile, and first quarter UCSD GPA. While the margin of difference varies among these variables, the direction of influence is consistent: students who study abroad do better than students who do not. 26

At the University of Georgia, study abroad students graduated at a rate 17.8% higher in four years, 10.6% higher in five years, and 6.4% higher in six years compared with students who did not participate in study abroad. 27

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23 Ibid., pp. 15-17.
24 Ibid., pp. 24-25.
25 International Center, University of California San Diego (2010).
27 Sutton and Rubin, op cit., p. 49.
Tracking freshmen who entered over a six year period beginning in 1999, the University of Minnesota found that study abroad does not delay time to graduation. Over the six years, the percentage of graduating seniors on the Twin Cities campus who studied abroad and graduated in four years was an average of 20.9 percentage points higher than those who did not study abroad and graduated in the same time frame. (For example, for freshmen entering in Fall 2000, 29.5% of those who did not study abroad graduated in 4 years vs. 51.4% of those who studied abroad.) For those who graduated in five years the average point spread in graduation rates favored study abroad students by 31.5 percentage points; for six year graduation rates the average difference was 32.4 percentage points, again favoring study abroad.28

Alumni Satisfaction
Current students and alumni who study abroad consistently report that the experience was a highlight, or even the experience with the greatest impact, of their undergraduate careers.29 Alumni satisfaction with the experience contributes to their career choices, enthusiasm for recruiting students and faculty to their alma mater, and propensity to give back to education and a wide array of civic outlets through service and contributions.30

The University of California, San Diego conducted a survey of study abroad returnees, beginning in summer, 2008. Among respondents, 100% agreed that the experience was overall valuable. Fifty-one percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that study abroad influenced their choice of career and 39% agreed or strongly agreed that study abroad helped them to obtain their first job after college. Moreover, 99.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the cross-cultural skills they learned abroad were valuable to them personally, and 93.7% agreed or strongly agreed that they were professionally valuable.31

Maintaining UC’s Excellence and Competitive Edge
The University of California’s reputation for excellence attracts international scholars and students and is also enhanced by their presence. Four UC campuses (Berkeley, Davis, Los Angeles and San Diego) are among the top seven institutions hosting the largest number of international scholars; one (Los Angeles) is among the top ten hosting international students.

The University of California is also leads by hosting international scholars, contributing in this way to the internationalization of research. In 2009-10, four University of California campuses ranked second, fifth, sixth and seventh among the top ten institutions in the United States in terms of the number of international scholars each hosted that year. In order, this includes Berkeley (2,950), Davis (2,583), Los Angeles (2,573) and San Diego (2,375).32 Looking at the top 40 institutions in 2008-09, in addition to these four campuses, UC Irvine ranked 27th and UC Santa Barbara ranked 34 among the top 40.33

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29 Paige et al, p. 12 and 45.
30 Paige et al. p. 46 to 56, 90-91.
31 International Center, University of California, San Diego, op cit, p. 7-8.
33 Bhandari and Chow, op cit, p. 112.
International scholars are important partners in the university’s research and teaching mission. They contribute to grants, publications, patents, education of graduate and undergraduate students (especially in laboratories), and through them the preparation of new cohorts of scholars and practitioners. Hosting international scholars enables UC to build ties with future researchers in public and private sectors, to influence knowledge creation and economic production, and to forge institutional partnerships once hosted scholars become established in their careers.

The University of California also sets an important national standard in enrollment of international students. In 2009-10, UCLA ranked seventh in the nation among top institutions hosting international students, enrolling 5,685 students. In the past several years UCLA has ranked either 7th or 8th in the nation by this measure. In 2008-09, UC Berkeley ranked 26th among the top 40 institutions, enrolling 3,506 students.

The University of California is also a leading institution for study abroad programs. University of California campuses rank among the top 20 institutions in several categories of study abroad programs. University of California campuses rank among the top 20 institutions in several categories of study abroad programs. For example, in 2008-09 the campuses at Santa Barbara, San Diego, Berkley, Santa Cruz, and Irvine ranked among the top 20 doctoral institutions in long term duration of study abroad participation. Among leading institutions for short term duration of study abroad programs, UC Los Angeles ranked 14th. In 2007-08, two UC campuses ranked among the top 40 doctoral institutions in the U.S. based on the total number of study abroad students. UC Los Angeles ranked 5th with 2,330 and Davis 35th with 1,322.

Competition for research talent and economic investment is increasing among countries and institutions of higher education. New technologies and government subsidies are expanding the nodes of knowledge production around the globe. To maintain its reputation for excellence, the University of California must expand international teaching and research partnerships, especially in the most rapidly expanding economies.

According to research reported by the National Science Board in 2004 and cited by NASULGC, “The institution that is able to create and sustain networks of collaboration among the best researchers, scholars, artists and students will be most successful in fulfilling its discovery mission and in reaping financial benefits from its research.”

Nationally, international scholars are concentrated in Biological and Biomedical Sciences (22%), Health Sciences (20%), Engineering (13%), and Physical Sciences (11%). These fields will be vitally important in the economics of service and health care delivery, basic and

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36 NASULGC Task Force Report, op cit., p. 15.
37 Bhandari and Chow, op cit., p. 25.
transformational science, and high tech industries. Their numbers in the UC system roughly approximate the same concentration by field\textsuperscript{38}

International partnerships can contribute to the rankings of the University of California and each campus. For example, about 22.5\% of the \textit{US News and World Report} ranking is based on institutional reputation from high level leaders at other academic institutions. Institutional partnerships can raise the University’s visibility among those leaders both in the US and abroad.