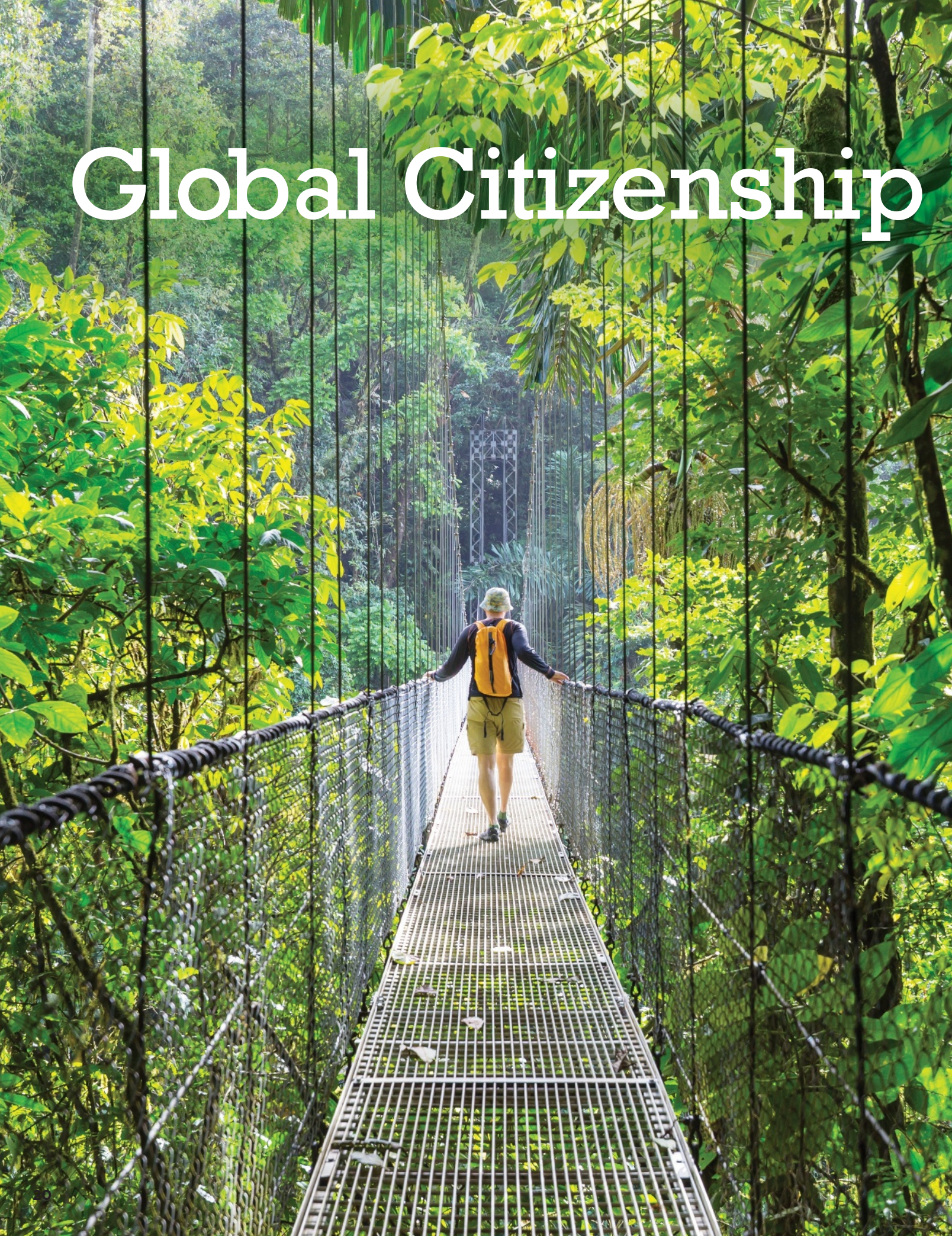


Global Citizenship



By Carly Womack-Wynne

Deep in the heart of the San Luis Valley in the cloud forest region of Costa Rica is a place that encompasses the core attributes of global citizenship. The facility is a satellite campus of the University of Georgia (UGA), located in Athens, Georgia, and it offers classes across disciplines, as well as internships and resident naturalist positions for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and non-STEM majors alike.

One of the most striking features of this campus is its commitment to environmental sustainability. Not only do faculty, staff, and students utilize and capture the methane breakdown of organic matter produced and discarded on the campus, but they assist local residents in adding this same feature to local homes and farms. In a region where coffee is king, they work with local farmers, entrepreneurs, and agencies to promote sustainability within farming and business practices—enhancing the lives of local residents. Tours of local organic coffee farms, cocoa and chocolate factories, and cheese distributors are all in conjunction with the promotion of local entrepreneurs rather than massive corporations.

This sleepy campus, nestled snugly in the Monteverde region within view of the cloud-crowned continental divide, strives to ensure that its contributions to the community and the environment outweigh what it takes and consumes. Students and visitors to the facility are immediately struck with the sheer level of commitment to sustainable and ethical engagement the administrative staff, on-site staff, and community have developed. Students are deeply immersed as they work closely with the local population to find solutions to problems impacting the life and economy of the residents. This concept has been sustainably developed in a way that supersedes any single experience abroad or single person's efforts.

Such approaches have dramatic impacts on host communities in each country where a business or campus is housed. Students who participate in these programs are impacted as well—and higher education can be an invaluable resource in the struggle to galvanize this new breed of leader.



The cloud forest itself serves as a classroom at UGA's satellite campus in Costa Rica, where programs are designed to be equally beneficial to its host community.

Preparing a curriculum for students that supports understanding, builds on the commonalities of all humanity, and is designed with self-reflection and analysis will equip future leaders to make the connections that will ultimately set the tone for the future of all humanity. UGA's satellite campus in Costa Rica is an example that helps us understand the meaning of global citizenship 2.0.

When students are immersed—deeply, authentically immersed—they see not only their culture, but the world in a new light. These perspective-altering, life-changing realizations are not new to those of us who are scholars and practitioners in the field of education abroad. Research has long supported the transformative nature of this profession. Critical to the development of student dispositions are the connections they make to people

What Is a Global Citizen?

This label does not come without controversy. Definitions are varied and complex, but tend to focus on an awareness of global concepts.

For more than 20 years, educators and scholars have examined and adapted the common characteristics at the heart of a global citizen. Certain traits are critical to the construct across definitions: cultural empathy, self-awareness, social and political participation, an understanding of global challenges, and ethical decisionmaking. Individually or collectively, these characteristics are the tip of the proverbial iceberg in capturing the essence of the new breed of global citizen that educators, as a profession, need to develop. To adequately face the challenges of the current political and economic global conditions, educators must continually refine practices in order to achieve this goal. In short, the methods of bygone eras are no longer working.

Global citizenship is not a new concept, yet a unified definition and framework has never been implemented. Some argue that national identity should supersede the desire to identify as a global culture; while others suggest that educators must strive to develop students who see themselves as agents of change, rather than global agents who view the world through a single construct which they impose on all situations. Global citizenship shouldn't be relegated to a purely economic, or specifically capitalistic, characteristic unassociated with culture or society.

The philosophical underpinnings to the concept are as varied as the definitions. Arguments can be made that academics have no place in developing the moral compass of students or addressing values in the curriculum. While values-based education and global education are two independent concepts, they are not entirely separate entities. In her January 2012 article for NAFSA's *Trends & Insights* publication (<http://bit.ly/2EX83Gx>), Madeline Green notes that a global education could potentially connect the concepts inherent to both the curriculum of multicultural education as well as internationalization in general. Though many educators are supportive of the tenants of internationalization within the curriculum, few implement these concepts in their own classrooms. Even fewer consciously include multicultural elements to the curriculum that are not inherent to a particular discipline.

What Is a Global Steward?

More than a buzzword, the concept of creating global stewards rests on the premise that educators are providing opportunities for students to self-reflect and discover who they are within a global society. Global stewardship reaches beyond the awareness of global trends and issues and explores the underlying motivations of decisionmakers. By definition, a steward is someone who manages or cares for persons or property. In the case of global stewards, future leaders are caring for the social and political state and the economic health of the global economy. Ideally, this would be accomplished via ethical decisionmaking, passionate advocacy, and an ingrained understanding of the critical concept of social justice.

Global stewards are passionate advocates for social justice, conservation of both environmental and economic resources, and, not just equality, but more importantly, equity for all members of the global society. Chief among the acquired dispositions is empathy for those who are fragile circumstances—a quality that future political and military leaders must embody in order to truly contribute on a global stage.

in the host culture during their immersion experience. When the walls of expectation fall, they reveal the core of transformation on which students build a foundation of how they will view global constructs for the remainder of their personal and professional lives.

Raising Awareness vs. Creating Activists

Historically, the goal of educators has been to raise awareness and spark a fire of curiosity and creativity that burns long after students leave an institution's hallowed halls and begin their careers—a flame that would ignite their desire to become culturally sensitive, and, ultimately, globally aware. But awareness can no longer be the end goal. The new generation of leaders and activists should have a burning desire to be catalysts for change. They must possess both the awareness of global issues and the personal drive to be change agents in a global environment, driving ethical decisionmaking and raising the bar. Awareness alone is no longer an ethical, acceptable result.

The second incarnation of global citizens must emerge—students who possess the knowledge base, awareness, and personal empathy to forge new realities for all the world's citizens. This new generation must be able to navigate cultural differences, connect passionately but respectfully with others, and work with a multitude of people and perspectives to inspire solutions to global challenges.

They should also be an amalgamation of analysts and politicians, able to utilize this paradigm shift to view challenges through fresh eyes and truly embrace solutions geared to the greater good. Students must be prepared to become critically analytical leaders who have the ability to make ethical decisions that positively impact the global community.

Informed Global Citizens in Higher Education

In the global citizenship 2.0 world, students need a more comprehensive education than has been previously incorporated into the existing curricular models. Adding the development of personal and cultural empathy to a litany of values will properly prepare students to be informed global citizens. Ultimately, it is empathy for others—their personal connection to vulnerable populations or the plight of those in conflict—that helps a leader make ethical decisions.

While these qualities are integral to the ability to relate to another culture and truly understand the dynamics in play, leaders must have an internal mechanism to care about not only the nuances, but the people who embrace



Coursework is just one part of the comprehensive curriculum for UGA students at the Costa Rica satellite campus. Their interactions with the host community build their understanding of different cultures.

The Case for Full Cultural Immersion

Caribbean breezes and music waft from coffee-scented cafes, and azure seas create a postcard-like setting in Cienfuegos, Cuba. Not the typical images most Americans have of rural Cuba. Rather than downtrodden, oppressed masses attending re-education-style facilities, lively colleagues and students welcome visitors to the campuses of the Universidad de Cienfuegos.

“While the academics are the underpinning of our programs, the goal is to create culturally and socially responsible populations to lead our future generations,” says Dairo Moreno, president and CEO of CIVITAS Global Education, Inc, based in Los Angeles. The small but active provider has operated exclusively in Cuba since 2014, with a goal of building mutual cultural understanding between the the people of Cuba and the United States. Through CIVITAS,

Moreno has established programs between universities nationwide and their counterparts in Cuba, with the focus being sustainability. (Read more about Universidad de Cienfuegos’s partnership with the University of Missouri on page 40.)

Another institution leading the charge to immerse students in local communities is Regis University, a small liberal arts university in Boston. Each spring break, Regis relocates to a coastal village in Peru called Villa El Salvador. There, Regis students focus on cultural immersion and are able to access all facets of the host society, from young children in local orphanages to elderly residents in nursing homes, as well as youth at the local university and parish.

“This is a sustainable program that has a profound impact on both the locals and students. It is an emotional journey as many of our students have never left the New England area,” says David Crisi, director of the Center for Global Connections. Regis specifically designed these experiences abroad for students who desire to utilize their time and talents to help those most in need.

“I have personally designed and traveled on many student trips that are all enriching,” he says. “However, it is the immersion trips that have the most impact on both the local community and students alike as they learn from each other.”

Maximizing Education Abroad Experiences

Though the prevailing theory in education abroad concludes that the length of time spent in a country is a critical factor in developing awareness and global mindedness, even short-term programs abroad benefit students. To confront the new realities of a changing world and facilitate personal growth, students need a curated predeparture experience that models self-reflection and explicitly teaches principles of social justice and diverse concepts. This method will help cultivate

and live according to the norms of that culture. By challenging students to critically analyze their own values and beliefs, their ability to see past their own worldview and relate to that of others grows.

If thoroughly integrated, the true internationalization of campuses and curriculum could easily increase a student’s self-awareness and geopolitical awareness. In order to understand the dynamics of political challenges, it is essential for students to understand regional and global factors that impact political and economic decisions, including the relationship of one country’s physical location or political relationship to another. For instance, without understanding the proximity of Pakistan to India, can a student understand the full impact and potential domino effect of political and economic decisions that could potentially impact one or both countries?

In a way, this effect is a cultural manifestation of string theory—when one “string” is pulled, it has direct and indirect levels of impact on a variety of other interconnected factors. Some impacts are immediately perceptible, yet others are delayed but equally impactful. Educators must search out ways of training students to critically analyze and anticipate these impacts and become proactive rather than reactive in order to understand the mechanics of the relationships between strong and weak economic forces, political relationships, and global interdependence. In essence, it is the synchronicity of humanity.

Numerous exceptional programs exist that are helping mold future global citizens. Challenging students to critically analyze concepts from a variety of perspectives, especially those that differ from their personal system of beliefs, is essential to creating informed global citizens. Students must be challenged to learn a language and culture other than their own, or at least have exposure to them.

CHECKLIST

Best Practices for Guiding Student Learning Through a Global Citizenship Lens

- 1 Help students identify their own cultural identity.** This will allow students to better compare their values and beliefs with those of their host environment.
- 2 Prepare students for the expectations, customs, values, and beliefs** they are likely to encounter in a host environment.
- 3 Prepare students for communication styles and preferences of their host culture.** Communication is the key to all relationships and experiences.
- 4 Set realistic expectations for students.** This will differ between cultures and vary depending on the amount of time spent abroad.
- 5 Prepare students to experience culture shock** and provide them with coping techniques to reflect and internalize the experience. Once such technique is Hess's "action-reflection-response strategy."
- 6 Explicitly teach social justice concepts.** Until students understand that oppression, dominance, power, and privilege exist, they cannot reflect on those concepts and eventually internalize them.
- 7 Model self-reflection and critical analysis.** Students who have never engaged in these practices do not inherently understand how to self-reflect or critically analyze. These concepts must be explicitly taught.
- 8 Encourage students to feel discomfort, speak their truth, and engage in the honest dialogue** that will result in transformation.

future leaders who are equipped to act as catalysts for positive change, make ethical decisions based on fact that benefit all constituents, and become responsive local, national, and world leaders.

With this tailored experience, students are better able to understand who they are; through self-exploration prior to departure, they can more easily realize the potential maximization of immersing into another culture. The predeparture curriculum's purpose is to offer students the ability to frame experiences, yet unintended benefits, such as self-analysis, are also highly likely. This curriculum can help students as they confront and process experiences that may challenge their internal belief systems, leading to critical analyses of long-held values that may or may not be congruent with the local culture.

Currently under development at the University of North Georgia in Gainesville, Ga., is such a program. Set to launch this summer to about 400 outbound students, the program's

researchers are optimistic that those who are exposed to the social justice curriculum will have an enhanced experience abroad and deepen their cultural understandings compared with their peers who do not receive exposure to the curriculum.

If appropriately prepared prior to departure, students can maximize their time abroad and experience perspective-altering shifts in disposition. While these programs have a shorter exposure time, the experience could be just as impactful if a skilled educator sets the stage, fully prepares students prior to departure, and crafts an in-country experience that allows students to interact with the local community.

Duarte Silva, Stanford University's executive director of the California Foreign Language Program in the College of Education's Graduate School, prepares his students for abroad experiences by ensuring they are aware of the pressing social issues in each host country—especially those not mentioned or covered accurately by the media—and their relevance to societal views.

"Students arrive and are shocked about events in the country," says Silva. "We try to prepare students to be able to engage in conversations with their host families and peers." Stanford's Institute for International Studies has also played a role in Silva's programming, he says: "over the last 20 years they have made a tremendous impact in internationalizing the general curriculum, especially at the undergraduate level."

Stanford is not alone in its quest to create globally competent leaders. Faculty from the University of Wisconsin-Madison are working to normalize global curricula so that students are motivated to increase their global competencies. In addition to traditional offerings, the university implemented international learning communities, certificates in areas of study related to international curricula, interdisciplinary international curriculum development, and both immersion and intensive summer language programs. The University of North Carolina has implemented a Global Ready school designation and created a Globally Competent Teaching Continuum for public schools to prepare students prior to university entrance.

Modeling Respect for Future Leaders

While highly structured, thoughtfully curated predeparture curriculum is critical, educators themselves have an important role to play in students' experiences abroad. If students have a theoretical framework on which to pin their experiences, an understanding of self prior to departure, and an educator to guide them through their reflection in country, they will likely have a more meaningful experience than their peers who had to process their experiences on their own.

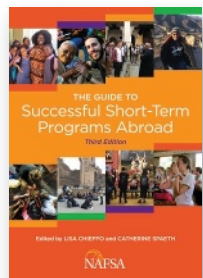
It is critical that international educators promote a culture of knowledge and respect for all cultures and perspectives, especially those with which they disagree or that create fear. It is crucial to professional success—as well as the future success of students—that they are taught how to push past fear, explore stereotypes,

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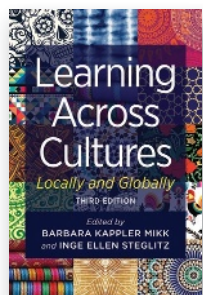
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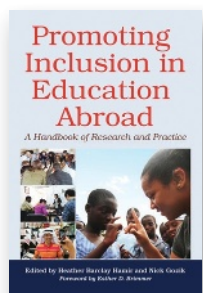
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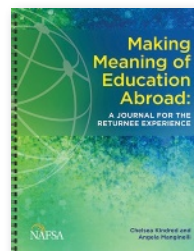
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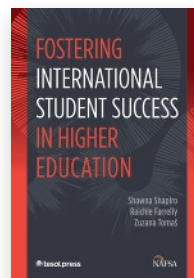
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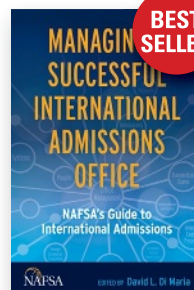
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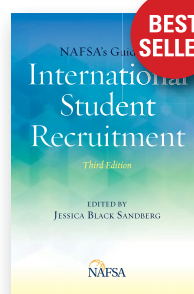
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The program design at UGA's satellite camps in Costa Rica sets students on the path to global citizenship and stewardship.

and sift through the chaff of opinion to find grains of truth. Educators must model for their students the platform of initiating dialogue on a difficult subject, then promote the discourse between potentially opposing sides.

By facilitating this exchange of ideas in the classroom, local communities, and communities abroad, students will begin to refine their own ability to engage in respectful dialogue with those who disagree with them. It is the educator's responsibility to champion free speech and free exchange of ideas on campuses and model for and teach students how to disagree and still find common ground. Respectful exchange of ideas at the local and personal level will become a characteristic of personal interaction and dialogue as the student matures, giving rise to the future of diplomacy in this the United States.

If educators embrace this sense of purpose, the future is less daunting. It is all too important for educators to embrace their roles as support systems for students' development as future leaders and help them develop a strong and clear ethical compass to guide themselves and the country.

Global Citizens in a New Reality

In a rapidly changing environment where political alliances shift quickly, educators are tasked with not only preparing students to navigate cultural nuance, but also to confront a new reality both at home and abroad. This new reality is fraught with difficulty as students face and overcome their own biases, as well as those held by others. This requires a degree of self-awareness not sufficiently provided in current models of preparation for the creation of effective global citizens. These dispositions are rarely acquired by those of traditional college age without direct instruction or life experience to prompt an increased level of understanding. It is essential to build students' capacity to understand their own cultural values so they can expand their capacity to understand all cultural values and perspectives.

As Thomas Jefferson once noted, "An educated citizenry is a vital requisite for our survival as a free people." At few points in history has this sentiment become so profoundly meaningful to the world. There is seemingly no shortage of powerful and influential global leaders who are blinded by an aggrandized view of their power. Educators and practitioners have an ethical responsibility to embody and model the values that they want their students to emulate. They must engage in self-reflection in their own lives and continually push both themselves and their students to see beyond the media, stereotypes, and fear that limit the ability to authentically connect with others.

The responsibility includes engaging students in the exercise of introspection in order to create a new generation of leaders—leaders who are able to confront this new and frightening political landscape and combat inequality and inequity at every turn. Students should be encouraged to confront bigotry at its root, fight injustice

where they find it, and embrace the values and dispositions critical to the foundation of a free and democratic society.

Students must be equipped with the mental acumen and strength of will to stand firm in and embody the values of an informed global citizen who is willing to serve as a change agent. Colleges and universities are not producing individual graduates; they are cultivating catalysts who are motivated to focus their collective efforts and energy for the good of humanity. ■

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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