

*Forward with Integrity*  
**INTERNATIONALIZATION  
TASK FORCE  
POSITION PAPER**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The internationalization task force asserts that McMaster must promote a broad understanding of internationalization and incorporate it into the academic mission to become a global leader in research and education. McMaster must consider how internationalization is defined, and how the University's efforts can be enhanced in a ways that enrich McMaster and its international partners, and go beyond mere revenue generation. McMaster has the opportunity to position itself strategically to respond to changes in the landscape of international education and research as a result of technological advancements, online resources and reliable electronic information.

To guide the University's efforts, the task force proposes to follow the transformational model of internationalization, which provides both a definition of internationalization and guiding principles that enable global citizenship. The developed vision aims to reinforce McMaster's assertion that it will nurture and sustain international initiatives and partnerships. The task force further outlines strategies to increase McMaster's profile on the international stage and to ensure that every student at McMaster is exposed to international perspectives. Means to increase internal coordination as well as to sustain and enhance international collaborations and research partnerships are proposed. Finally, the task force recommends the formation of a Centre for Global Engagement in order to advance McMaster's internationalization activities and realize some of the objectives, goals and suggestions outlined in the report.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	3
SECTION 1. MCMASTER'S INTERNATIONALIZATION APPROACH .....	4
Guiding Principles .....	5
SECTION 2. THE MCMASTER UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER UNIVERSITIES.....	5
What is Presently Happening at McMaster University .....	5
Student Mobility .....	5
Barriers .....	6
Financial Affairs .....	6
Support for International Students .....	6
Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum .....	7
Research and Scholarship.....	7
Global Partnerships .....	8
University Structures .....	8
What is Happening at Other Institutions.....	9
SECTION 3. GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	9
Goal 1. Develop McMaster's Internationalization Vision.....	9
Goal 2. Become and be Seen as a Major Player on the International Scene .....	10
Goal 3. Ensure Every Student's Education Includes International, Intercultural and Global Dimensions .....	10
Goal 4. Develop a Strategic Approach to International Collaboration.....	11
Goal 5. Enhance Internal Coordination and Communication.....	12
Goal 6. Support International Research and Scholarship.....	12
Goal 7. Establish a Model for Financial Sustainability of International Initiatives .....	13
BRINGING IT TOGETHER: THE CENTRE FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT .....	13
For Undergraduate Students.....	13
For Graduate Students .....	14
For Researchers .....	14
Obstacles and Barriers.....	14
Governance and Accountability .....	15
CONCLUSION .....	15
CITATIONS.....	16
APPENDIX I. THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS ACADEMIC IMPACT .....	17

## INTRODUCTION

Internationalizing Ontario's universities is critical to the province's global competitiveness [1]. Thus, we need to think carefully about how internationalization should be defined and how it can be increased in a way that enriches McMaster, yet goes beyond mere revenue generation. Universities intent on becoming global leaders in research and education must have a broad understanding of internationalization and incorporate it into their academic mission.

Internationalization involves educating students about the world and supporting high-quality research on global problems. These problems often span specialized fields of knowledge and require interdisciplinary input and collaboration between universities, governments, private organizations and communities worldwide. McMaster is well-positioned among Ontario universities to pursue a distinct intellectual and academic approach to internationalization, which has many benefits:

- Draws a strong cohort of Canadian and international graduate students and researchers
- Attracts private donors and public funding
- Capitalizes on McMaster's resources and strengths within and across Faculties
- Facilitates internal coordination, cross-fertilization and exchange of research and teaching
- Offers students enhanced opportunities for learning and career growth
- Provides opportunity for Faculties to engage in international capacity in higher education
- Provides intellectual coherence and moral guidance to our engagement with the world

However, McMaster faces a dilemma with regard to its internationalization activities. On the one hand, members of the University community are actively engaged in global activities, and the University has issued and commissioned several reports and statements highlighting its commitment to internationalization [2, 3]. McMaster also has an extensive network of alumni worldwide, with over 9000 active alumni residing in 140 countries [4]. On the other hand, compared to competing institutions, McMaster's internationalization initiatives are poorly coordinated, isolated and under resourced. As a result, the University has not reached its potential and its external profile does not adequately reflect its accomplishments.

If McMaster's commitment to internationalization is to be realized, far-reaching solutions and initiatives are required. Information/communication technologies can provide significant cost-effective support for international collaboration, while the development of knowledge networks and increased cultural awareness can be

facilitated via international travel. As teaching evolves in response to technological advancements, online resources and reliable electronic information, we anticipate that the landscape of international education will change. McMaster has the opportunity to position itself strategically to respond to these changes.

This report is divided into three sections. The first section considers the concept of internationalization and outlines what we believe is McMaster's distinct approach and contribution to this field. The second section briefly surveys the existing environment at McMaster and other select universities. The third section outlines the views of the task force on the goals and recommendations for internationalization at McMaster.

## **SECTION 1. MCMASTER'S INTERNATIONALIZATION APPROACH**

In the academic sector, internationalization has been aptly described as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions (teaching, research and service) or delivery of post-secondary education” [5]. Internationalization is a comprehensive multi-dimensional approach that includes but goes beyond any of its individual elements, be it student recruitment and exchanges, collaboration, capacity building or developing intercultural knowledge.

Early proponents of internationalization emphasized its promotion of cooperation and global interdependence in an era dominated by cold war insecurities. This model stressed the development of skills conducive to global citizenship and the establishment of mutually beneficial international collaborations to support academic excellence. It continues to serve as the bedrock for every approach of the academy.

Alongside this model, a more market-oriented approach to internationalization has emerged, which is framed by heightened competition for resources, influence and recognition. It is common to see various levels of government promote and structure post-secondary internationalization agendas primarily as market opportunities. McMaster's global stature and pursuit of competitive international research and project grants are valuable and indispensable components of internationalization.

The integration of the models described above provides a value-added view of internationalization strategies. Identifying the motivation and driving forces of the partners is essential and can be defined for McMaster as follows:

1. Cooperation for peaceful coexistence and mutual benefit
2. International demand for the University's expertise in research and education
3. The “civic mission” of the University

Various issues affect our world and present challenges, including climate change, poverty, health crises, political unrest and social injustice. The transformational model

of internationalization, which we propose as the driving force for McMaster, promotes guiding values that enable global citizenship [6]. With the added dimension of critical social awareness, the model is well-aligned with the principles outlined in *Forward With Integrity: A Letter to the McMaster Community* [7]. Moreover, it corresponds with the ethical values and principles to which McMaster has committed itself as a signatory to the United Nations Academic Impact (see Appendix I).

### **Guiding Principles**

In order to help McMaster respond to internationalization opportunities, we propose the following guiding principles:

- Accountability/responsibility/transparency
- Commitment to community
- Ecological sustainability and social equity
- Excellence
- Innovation
- Integrity and respect
- Reciprocity
- Reflexivity
- Sustainability
- Visibility

## **SECTION 2. THE MCMASTER UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER UNIVERSITIES**

### **What is Presently Happening at McMaster University?**

It is difficult to provide a complete picture of McMaster's internationalization activities because of their fragmented and uncoordinated nature. Here we provide a brief picture of the activities and highlight some of our concerns.

McMaster participates in a diverse array of international activities. A compendium completed in the summer of 2009 demonstrated that the University has reached over 100 countries and is involved in over 820 international partnerships, with more than 250 research-based activities [3]. In addition, there are international students from over 80 countries in the undergraduate and graduate programs.

### **Student Mobility**

In the last few decades, McMaster has increased the number of exchange agreements with universities worldwide. It has also made student mobility a reality by promoting independent short-term study programs, international exchanges and

opportunities to work and volunteer abroad. These activities allow students to gain an appreciation of new cultures, history, societies, languages and economics.

McMaster also helps students seeking international career experience. International Student Services (ISS) works with the Student Success Centre to assist students, academic advisors, faculty members and career counsellors. Advice is provided on how to network with the global community and how to build an international skill set.

## **Barriers**

There are a number of limitations to McMaster's international activities. One issue is the extent to which student degree structures facilitate, encourage or hinder student mobility. In some cases, degree requirements make participation extremely difficult. A second issue is how active and rooted formal agreements are in the life of the University. McMaster has signed many agreements, but how many are used by students, departments and programs? A third issue is whether our students have the necessary language and cultural skills to be successful in other countries. Do we have the resources to provide students with language training? Are they knowledgeable about the politics, culture and societies they will encounter? A fourth issue is the financial barriers to student participation, which may increase inequalities of opportunity. These obstacles are also faced by students who wish to study in another part of Canada.

## **Financial Affairs**

Studying abroad creates serious financial issues for many students. McMaster offers assistance through two on-campus resources: ISS and the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships (SFAS) office. The latter administers government and institutional funding. Students who wish to study in certain countries (e.g., Germany, France or India) may also have access to country-specific financial assistance. It is important to note that while internal and external funding is available, it is limited.

## **Support for International Students**

International students, visiting scholars and post-doctoral fellows and their families are offered support through several offices under Student Affairs. ISS works with organizations on and off campus to provide a range of services for students. These include reception and orientation; advice on immigration matters; University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP); mentorship; ambassador programs; trips and social activities; and liaison with sponsoring agencies, foreign governments, consulates and embassies.

In addition, the Emerging Leaders in the Americas Program (ELAP) allows students from the Caribbean, South/Central America and Mexico to attend McMaster for four to six months to participate in an exchange program or research work with a McMaster supervisor. ISS also provides international students with counselling

services and advice on financial and legal matters. The office plays a pivotal role in coordinating activities related to international student organizations and the implementation of programs that expose students to community life on campus and in Hamilton.

Although concerted efforts are being made to provide support for international students, challenges exist. Some departments have reported that international students experience severe financial hardships. Possible reasons include a lack of resources and students being unaware of the resources that are available. There is also high demand for English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction and assistance with academic skills.

### **Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum**

As far as we are aware, internationalization of the curriculum has not been actively promoted as an institutional objective to date. At the undergraduate level, there are some courses focusing on international affairs and the societies and cultures of other countries, including a stream in International Studies as part of the Engineering and Society program. At the graduate level, there are innovative programs emphasizing an international dimension, including MA in Globalization Studies, MA in International Relations, MSc in Global Health and Water Without Borders. Although departments and programs may be internationalizing their curricula, we have no further corroborating information.

### **Research and Scholarship**

McMaster is engaged in a wide range of international research at the individual and group level. Areas of interest include the militarization of childhood, water use in sub-Saharan Africa, medical education in Uganda and nursing regulation in Bangladesh. Units such as the Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition, the Centre for Climate Change and the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health bring together researchers and students around particular topics.

While the quality and extent of this research is impressive, more is required to expand its reach. Relatively small amounts of new or increased core funding for existing research institutes/centres would provide crucial administrative functions to amplify research endeavours. Additional external funding would attract post-doctoral fellows and help foreign researchers and graduate students. The exchange of information between researchers, institutes and centres should also be improved. To this end, greater institutional support and infrastructure are needed, as is the allocation of physical space for researchers to convene and disseminate their knowledge. Currently, there is no central meeting space in either the administrative or the physical sense.

## **Global Partnerships**

Creating global partnerships is a key element of a successful internationalization strategy. One of McMaster's partners is the Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU). The Confucius Institute (CI) for Culture, Language and Business at McMaster offers courses in Mandarin, which are taught by BLCU faculty members. The CI also hosts a number of cultural events that are open to the McMaster and Hamilton communities. Another recent initiative involves a partnership between McMaster University and Maastricht University in the Netherlands and affiliates in India and Thailand. Leadership and stewardship of the program is provided by an international advisory board with Her Royal Highness Princess Margriet of the Netherlands and representatives from Japan, Canada, Switzerland, the Netherlands, South Africa and India. This program uses a new global decision-making paradigm with students and faculty engaging in international synchronous sessions addressing issues in international policy culminating in an international symposium in India. Graduates qualify for positions in the international arena, the private sector and both non-governmental and government agencies.

Partnerships extend beyond individual collaborations that emerge out of faculty interest – important as they may be – and establish a framework for cooperation between institutions in several areas of activity: student exchange, joint research projects, guest lecture/professorships and educational programs. However, there may be limited personnel and financial resources to form and maintain partnerships. Thus, the establishment of “Sister Institutions” may be appealing.\* In either case, it is essential that the appropriate infrastructure be created to support international funding bids, administer international projects and clarify who is doing what and with whom.

## **University Structures**

Internationalization is a complex process. Therefore, internal structures must be flexible and responsive to reflect current and anticipated activities and address the needs of the university. Currently, McMaster's internationalization structures are idiosyncratic. For example, the Office for International Affairs is engaged in activities ranging from international partnerships to undergraduate exchanges, yet it reports to the Vice-President of Research and International Affairs. Institutes and researchers working on international topics are often geographically and institutionally separated and isolated. There is no up-to-date inventory of our international work. Moreover, there is limited infrastructure to support international initiatives. Whatever structure is created, it has to focus on international research, innovative programs and unique student experiences.

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\* As suggested by Rama Singh during the Open Forum on April 4, 2012.

## **What is Happening at Other Institutions?**

On the educational front, there is a strong desire and perceived need to create mechanisms to harmonize programs internationally and ensure transfer of credits. There is increased interest in ensuring that once knowledge is acquired, it can be used in any locale. The Bologna process is designed to harmonize educational systems in the European Union. The goal is to create parity among graduate and post-graduate degree programs across Europe and enable students to study and receive credit in multiple countries.

Cooperative agreements among countries vary from shared supervision and multi-institutional study/research to joint curricula approval and franchised degrees from one institution to another (e.g., British degree programs awarded by a Dutch university). Institutional partnerships have become a prominent educational strategy in Europe, and North America is making efforts to include formal institutional collaboration through joint degree programs.

Several Canadian universities have highlighted their interest in global affairs and made impressive financial gains. Prominent examples include the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo, which has attracted well over \$150 million in public and private sector funding, and the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto, which has attracted over \$71 million in private donations. McMaster has not pursued similar opportunities.

Under the direction of the Office of the Vice-President of Research and International Relations, McGill University, the University of British Columbia and the University of Alberta offer international research and study initiatives, student exchange programs and post-doctoral fellowships. Universities in Australia, the United Kingdom and elsewhere are developing academic units with a global focus and establishing international teaching and research partnerships, which include overseas offices and satellite campuses. Given these efforts, McMaster faces intense competition in the field of internationalization.

## **SECTION 3. GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In light of the aforementioned points and based on our discussions with the University community, we propose the following broad goals and specific recommendations.

### **Goal 1. Develop McMaster's Internationalization Vision**

Global engagement is a response to the complex ways in which globalization has changed the world in which we live. It sees the many challenges of the contemporary world—climate change, poverty, health, human rights, peace and justice – as requiring a form of global responsibility. Global engagement also speaks to the emergence of new institutional spaces through which this responsibility can be enacted. McMaster must

demonstrate commitment to and encourage involvement in international activities and cross-cultural collaborations in order to support and sustain global engagement. As part of its vision for internationalization, the task force recommends that McMaster adopt the practices outlined below, which are consistent with the transformational model.

#### *Recommendations*

- McMaster will engage with the global community (broadly understood) and establish partnerships guided by reciprocity, reflexivity, sustainability and transformation
- McMaster will participate in global engagement as an institution and foster global citizenry among students, faculty and staff
- McMaster will support research and academic excellence through strength in international initiatives

### **Goal 2. Become and be Seen as a Major Player on the International Scene**

It is essential that internationalization become part of McMaster's identity and that the university strive to establish a reputation and public profile for successful international activities. McMaster should identify clear entry points to international initiatives and pursue opportunities for active outreach.

#### *Recommendations*

- Advocate for coherent provincial and national policies for internationalization
- Communicate the university's vision for internationalization internally and externally
- In conjunction with the Office of Alumni Affairs, involve our extensive network of international alumni
- Provide incentives to faculty, staff and students to engage internationally
- Publicize our international activities and interests externally and create a strong and attractive web presence
- Showcase and reward successful initiatives

### **Goal 3. Ensure Every Student's Education Includes International, Intercultural and Global Dimensions**

McMaster's mission and all of its functions (i.e., teaching, learning, research and services) should be redefined to integrate globalization in the student experience. The University should include an international dimension in its courses via relevant new content and materials. It should also offer workshops to help faculty and researchers share international points of view and learn from each other. In addition, McMaster should promote the value of study abroad and encourage students to travel. We need to diversify the countries from which students are recruited and adjust how we deliver services to better accommodate international students. In order for McMaster to be a

truly global institution, it is necessary to routinely monitor internationalization goals, assess budgets, measure progress and decide what is most effective.

#### *Skills and Experiences We Value for our Students*

- Critical thinking
- Cross-cultural knowledge, skills and sensitivity
- Global political literacy
- Reflexivity
- Second language acquisition
- World class scholarship in a global environment

#### *Recommendations*

- Develop strategies for internationalization at the departmental and Faculty levels
- Establish further joint degree/twin programs
- Foster cultural intelligence and sensitivity
- Give credit for student participation in international activities at home and abroad
- Increase flexibility in student work time allotment
- Increase programming for students abroad
- Strengthen language training for students planning to travel abroad and those arriving from abroad
- Work towards mutual recognition of credits from programs of similar quality

#### **Goal 4. Develop a Strategic Approach to International Collaboration**

The task force believes it is particularly important to identify specific institutions, countries, regions and research areas that will offer the best opportunities for learning, sharing knowledge and enhancing research and education. There should be seed money available to encourage collaborations that are strategically important to McMaster's international goals. Moreover, the University should create innovative structures that provide support for the incubation of new ideas/initiatives and support world class research in a global environment.

#### *Recommendations*

- Create a pool of seed funds to support international collaborations
- Establish a model for international partnerships (contracts)
- Identify particular regions, programs and partners to focus our attention
- Promote capacity building for higher education at an international level
- Provide guidance to faculty who are involved in research and education at an international level

- Target select institutions worldwide for formal cooperation in research and education

### **Goal 5. Enhance Internal Coordination and Communication**

Although McMaster is engaged in various international activities, many are not well organized or publicized, and individuals are generally unaware of what is happening outside their immediate area. Better coordination and communication are required to facilitate knowledge dissemination and foster connections campus wide.

#### *Recommendations*

- Conduct annual reviews of major international activities
- Create a mechanism for internal coordination
  - Direct fundraising to establish and support this initiative
  - Include and serve all Faculties
- Create a regularly updated inventory of international research and education initiatives
- Merge academic and administrative functions
  - Consider methods to more closely align the administrative and academic aspects of internationalization activities
- Provide opportunities for cross-Faculty dialogue and collaboration
  - Presidential forums specifically for sharing among international exchange participants and those who have not (yet) participated; such an event needs to be widely publicized internally and externally

### **Goal 6. Support International Research and Scholarship**

While securing funding for research and scholarship activities usually falls within the obligations of individual faculty members, international initiatives often require activities that fall outside of traditional Tri-Council funding schemes. The grant competitions exist at national and international levels and the development of complex international proposals as well as the administrative maintenance of successful initiatives requires the same level of support that exists for our present research endeavours. The University should financially assist such efforts as part of its internationalization strategy (see below).

It is equally important, however, to give tangible evidence to faculty and staff that international engagement is a valued activity.

#### *Recommendations*

- Incorporate criteria that recognize international activities in the evaluation of research, teaching and service in tenure and promotion

- Include international activities as an explicit entry into the annual activity reports
- View international activities as a valuable form of capacity building in higher education

### **Goal 7. Establish a Model for Financial Sustainability of International Initiatives**

It is important that McMaster be able to participate in new opportunities and initiatives while maintaining its current international collaborations. In order to support existing relationships and build new ones, the university must develop a model for sustainability. This will require aggressive pursuit of funding opportunities through close connections with provincial and federal governments and may include targeted direction on the use of international student visa fees.

#### *Recommendations*

- Allocate a percentage of the university gross budget to support international partnerships, curriculum and exchanges
- Establish a long-term plan for sustaining existing initiatives and fostering future opportunities
- Prepare development prototypes that will be attractive in order to secure external (donor) support

## **BRINGING IT TOGETHER: THE CENTRE FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT**

In order to advance McMaster's internationalization activities and realize some of the objectives, goals and suggestions outlined in this report, we recommend establishing a University-wide Centre for Global Engagement. The three primary objectives of the Centre would be as follows:

1. Coordinate existing activities and knowledge about internationalization
2. Highlight McMaster's global activities and engage with diverse communities
3. Promote and support new initiatives

The Centre would assist student and faculty activities by supporting curricula and program development, experiential learning and the development of international research initiatives and partnerships. Outlined below are some of the ways this could be actualized.

### **For Undergraduate Students**

- Maintain and publicize an inventory of international internship programs
- Offer support for international and Canadian student exchanges, including detailed coordination with individual departments and programs

- Provide administrative support for undergraduate student activities that engage with students and the broader community such as the annual Global Citizenship Conference, McMaster Canada International Council and World University Service of Canada
- Provide mentorship and support for international students at McMaster

### **For Graduate Students**

- Create a targeted language training program for select incoming graduate students
- Highlight the university's internationally focused graduate programs (e.g., MA in Globalization Studies, MA in International Relations, MSc in Global Health and Water Without Borders)
- Maintain and publicize an inventory of international internship programs
- Offer support for internationally focused research, which could include research fellowships in lieu of teaching assistantships or travel grants for field research
- Provide augmented support for foreign students attending McMaster

### **For Researchers**

- Administer seed money for faculty preparing research funding applications on international topics and/or with international partners
- Allocate funds for teaching releases for faculty engaged in major international research initiatives
- Compile and maintain an up-to-date inventory of McMaster's international research and collaborative research projects
- Facilitate seminar series, visiting speakers and presidential forums on international research
- Hire a Research Development Officer with advanced skills in applying for and administering international projects and contracts
- Offer space and support for international post-doctoral fellows and visiting scholars
- Provide a meeting place for researchers and research institutes/centres working on international issues

### **Obstacles and Barriers**

There are a number of obstacles to creating such a Centre:

- Challenge of coordination across units (i.e., departments, Faculties, offices)
- Lack of existing resources that could be diverted for this purpose
- Need to improve the relationship between academic and administrative functions
- Waning interest in creating new bureaucratic structures or silos within the university

It is vital that the Centre is viewed as a mechanism for bringing additional resources and prestige to McMaster. Similar organizations have garnered hundreds of millions of dollars of private and public sector funding/donations to support international activity. Targeted fundraising emphasizing McMaster's impressive accomplishments and potential should be conducted. In the interim, it is possible to start building the centre by reorganizing existing resources and providing supplementary core funding.

The Centre would serve as the initial contact point for information about all things international at McMaster. It would network with units that are globally engaged such as Graduate Studies, the Office of the Vice-President of Research and International Affairs, ISS and the Student Success Centre. The intent is not to replace or duplicate existing international activities and initiatives but to coordinate and inform them.

By aligning the administrative and academic arms of internationalization, the Centre could significantly benefit McMaster. There would be a closer association between administrative initiatives and intellectual activities. In addition, administrative functions would be more engaged with faculty, students, programs and projects.

### **Governance and Accountability**

The Centre would require a robust governance structure to facilitate accountability and effectiveness. Lines of accountability should flow (1) up to the President to ensure that the Centre is fulfilling a University-wide mission; (2) down to Faculties and departments to guarantee that it is meeting the needs of its constituencies; and (3) horizontally to other administrative structures to facilitate University-wide coordination. In addition, the Centre should draw upon outside expertise and experience to enhance its activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

An integrated and dynamic internationalization strategy is vital to McMaster's continued success as a world-leading teaching and research university. This report has outlined suggestions for wide-ranging changes that move the University in the right direction. The task force thanks the members of the McMaster community for their input and hopes that this document stimulates discussion and action to strengthen McMaster's engagement with the world.

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## **APPENDIX I. THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS ACADEMIC IMPACT**

1. A commitment to the principles inherent in the United Nations Charter as values that education seeks to promote and help fulfil;
2. A commitment to human rights, among them freedom of inquiry, opinion and speech;
3. A commitment to educational opportunity for all people regardless of gender, race, religion or ethnicity;
4. A commitment to the opportunity for every interested individual to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for the pursuit of higher education;
5. A commitment to building capacity in higher education systems across the world;
6. A commitment to encouraging global citizenship through education;
7. A commitment to advancing peace and conflict resolution through education;
8. A commitment to addressing issues of poverty through education;
9. A commitment to promoting sustainability through education; and
10. A commitment to promoting inter-cultural dialogue, understanding and the “unlearning” of intolerance through education.