

## Update on MSU Re-Accreditation Review and Internationalization

Michigan State University completed its self-study review process on schedule for the site visit of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) in late February 2006. “Internationalization Across the University Mission” was the special focus of the self-study review (see the spring 2005 issue of this publication). Re-accreditation by the NCA is a process that occurs every ten years and is mandatory for MSU’s survival as a university—maintaining accreditation entitles MSU to participate in federal and state programs of benefit to higher education.

The internationalization document that the Self-Study Committee produced was distilled and folded into the broader institutional self-study report as chapter eight, “Special Emphasis: Internationalization.” (The entire accreditation self-study report can be accessed on the web at <http://accreditation2006.msu.edu/report/index.html>) The document reviews MSU’s historical and current international involvement, outlines priority areas for future effort, and requests input from the review committee on how best to pursue the stated goals. It also presents the university community with “a set of issues for discussion and possible options for action that would take seriously President Simon’s goal of sustaining and expanding our international efforts across the campus and across the world.”

To a certain extent, this document is meant to be the first part of a conversation between the university and the NCA reviewers. ISP Acting Dean Jeffrey Riedinger said he and other internationally involved administrators are very pleased that six of the thirteen members of the NCA review team are senior international officers from major U.S. universities. For that reason, the document ends with a series of questions directed not only internally but also at the review team about key areas for future internationalization efforts.

MSU is both redefining itself as an internationally engaged university and hoping to redefine the national paradigm of internationalization for American universities in this new century. “What will ‘internationalization’ look like in a land-grant, Association of American Universities institution in 2020?”

the committee asked. Based on analysis of MSU’s current strengths, the committee suggested that MSU should develop a strategy of pursuing a “21<sup>st</sup> century public internationalization” that involves “understanding and responding to the benefits, opportunities, challenges, and costs of the globalization of human and environment interactions.”

While the specific path remains to be defined, a number of general areas of emphasis were suggested. As a university, we need to:

- Extend our international reach through in-depth relationships with strategic partners chosen with our research strengths in mind and calculated to maximize our impact and investment
- Promote internationalization on campus through better-integrated curricular and co-curricular offerings for undergraduate and graduate students in area studies and international/global education
- Enhance language offerings using a variety of instructional models, including online language pedagogy, and paying special attention to less commonly taught languages
- Increase international engagement of faculty and graduate students through expanding both opportunities and rewards
- Balance area/regional studies efforts with thematic efforts (e.g., in agriculture, business, education, health, international development) to address global issues in expanded and better integrated ways
- Expand our reputation in study abroad, not only by making study abroad experiences available to an even larger number of our students, but also by continuing our leadership in enhancing health and safety in study abroad, improving curricular integration of study abroad, assessing the impact of the study abroad experience, and developing more faculty-led programs.

—Jay Rodman

## Assessing International Learning at MSU

Michigan State University is collaborating with the American Council on Education and five other colleges and universities in a three-year U.S. Department of Education-funded project to examine international learning outcomes among undergraduates. In addition to MSU (a large “doctoral extensive,” public, land-grant university), the diverse participating institutions are: James Madison University (a smaller public research university), Dickinson College and Kalamazoo College (private liberal arts colleges), and Kapi’olani and Palo Alto Community Colleges. The project, with funding from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), will assess international learning outcomes on these campuses.

At MSU, the Assessing International Learning project involves a web-based inventory of 200-500 students called the “Beliefs, Events and Values Inventory” (BEVI). To provide data on their international understanding, attitudes, and skills over time, students will take the inventory twice, once at an early stage in their academic programs at MSU and again later in their studies. In addition, a sample of 50-100 of these students will volunteer to participate in an ongoing electronic portfolio project. Project organizers antic-

ipate that these students are likely to be enrolled in international majors or specializations and/or to have participated in study abroad. Students will post some of their relevant class work from courses with international content into a web-based portfolio. Their international learning as expressed in this work will be assessed as part of the study. MSU faculty raters will review the international learning that is demonstrated in the “e-portfolios” on the basis of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The findings from the MSU e-portfolios will be linked to the BEVI taken by each student.

The findings from all six participating institutions will be aggregated and analyzed by James Madison University’s Craig Shealy, professor of graduate psychology, executive director of the International Beliefs and Values Institute, and developer of the BEVI. MSU will be conducting subsequent analysis to evaluate international learning on its campus.

MSU’s participation in the Assessing International Learning project is being implemented by ISP Associate Dean Dawn Pysarchik (principal investigator) and Anne Schneller (project manager), with technical assessment assistance from Kelly Funk.

—Anne Schneller

## MSU to Launch Global and Area Studies Major

Beginning in fall 2006, MSU students will be able to choose a new multidisciplinary major that will help them understand global systems and processes, including global change and U.S. interdependence with the rest of the world. Global and Area Studies, in the College of Social Science, will offer concentrations in five world regions, all with a foreign language requirement: Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, and Russia and Eurasia. Or students can choose between two global themes—international development or gender and global change—both requiring significant foreign language and/or international experience.

International Studies and Programs and the College of Social Science developed Global and Area Studies in collaboration with faculty members from a variety of departments. Eric Freedman, ISP acting assistant dean, represented ISP in the development of the new degree. Several innovations set it apart

from existing majors, including an emphasis on combining social science and humanities coursework. Students will also have the option of relevant classes in fields as diverse as nutrition, fisheries and wildlife, journalism, and forestry.

The educational objectives include cross-cultural knowledge and awareness, as well as recognition of how a region’s geography, history, economics, politics, culture, and society intersect and how critical issues such as hunger and environmental sustainability affect people throughout the world.

Because one goal of the new major is to better prepare MSU graduates for careers in government, business, and nongovernmental organizations that are engaged with the world beyond U.S. borders, students will be strongly encouraged to have at least one international experience through study abroad, foreign internships, or independent study.

—Eric Freedman