

Brown University Faculty Forum
Subject: Internationalization Committee Report and Recommendations
October 18, 2007

The Chair of the Faculty Forum, Professor Tom Banchoff, called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. in Salomon 101. After explaining the procedure to be followed at the forum, he introduced Provost David Kertzer who gave introductory remarks about the Internationalization Committee Report. The Provost commented that Brown is neither the first nor last university to release such a report. He identified Internationalization as a strategic goal, and he asked what that means given that there is already a large amount of international activity at Brown. The Provost explained that a faculty committee was formed less than a year ago to brainstorm about how to strengthen Brown's internationalization, including running a search for a leader. Now that the committee has released a report, the purpose of the Faculty Forum is to get feedback from faculty. The Provost commented that the new Internationalization Initiative Seed Funding program received 44 proposals from disciplines such as physics and comparative literature. He then briefly introduced the new Vice President for International Affairs, David Kennedy, as a former Brown undergraduate who worked in international law at Harvard Law School for 27 years, and explained that Professor Kennedy was scheduled to speak at the end of the forum.

Next, Professor Banchoff solicited topics of concern from the audience. They were, in order of mention: Foreign languages, how to balance resources around the globe vs. in Providence (center/periphery), Junior year abroad for math and science students, the means of prioritizing decisions, contemporary vs. historical types of international work, how to use international media on campus to enrich education, support for new vs. ongoing activities, conflicting values of non-Western countries, and support infrastructure. To organize the discussion, Professor Banchoff grouped these topics into the larger issues of Content, Procedure, and Culture.

Professor Banchoff then opened the floor to discussion, beginning with the topic of how to balance resources at home and abroad. Professor Abbott Gleason commented that the proposal seems to be not so much about programs coming here as it is about bringing Brown abroad, which is a complex and important enterprise that will require great resources and will be a challenge for Brown with its resources.

Next, the topic of Junior Year Abroad (JYA) was raised. Professor Herbert Freed was concerned about the miniscule number of undergraduates (and graduate students) in the math & sciences students who participate suggested that it would be possible to create a science-oriented program for credit done in English in a place such as in Paris taught by extremely qualified professionals in a Brown-certified program, or else we could have people take leaves of absence. One faculty member stated the opinion that any new initiatives should benefit Brown University and Brown students, not the development of other countries. Having many institutes around the world could drain money. A representative from the Office of International Programs said that Brown is well above the national average in participation in JYA and there is no shortage of destinations: the

challenge is in conveying to students what is possible, and planting the seed early by working with faculty advisors so that it does not have to add an additional semester to school. He was asked how the new internationalization will affect JYA and he responded that it will attract more students to Brown who want to do a JYA, thus bringing the world to Brown. Professor Bruno Harris stated that students could just go to Boston to see Math & Science outside of Brown, but that it's important to go to a new place, e.g. Asia, China, and not just Europe, to learn a new culture and language; either faculty members or students doing this would have great experiences. It was asked why graduate students don't study abroad, and a response was given that people are working on identifying good centers where graduate students could participate in places such as Africa, South America, China, and India. A faculty member added that the internationalization effort is presumed to offer a new benefit beyond just new and better ways to send students abroad – something that will justify the expense and new institutional forms and administration being created, something more innovative. A member of the Internationalization Committee commented that they have identified 15 potential research collaborations in Tasmania, etc. and that it is difficult to do research in the third world if you don't have strong ties – it's hard to start from scratch, and the host country has to get a benefit too; it doesn't work to have it be just a one-sided benefit for Brown. Michael White from the Global Health working group responded that they want feedback on this issue: do we want to make partnerships with specific institutions in other countries, or just let 1000 flowers bloom and have people go wherever they want? Someone asked whether we should try to emphasize new programs. A working group committee member responded that there are a lot of global initiatives at Brown but trying to study it was difficult because there was no central place on campus where one could find out who is working where, especially with multidisciplinary work; the Dean of Biology commissioned a group to study this issue but still may not have discovered everything going on. The hope is that this initiative will form a central facility for information. A faculty member noted that the model has always been based here and asked if one could imagine a Brown abroad where students would be abroad longer and not go through an orthodox Brown experience: could we do a radical change in how projects are created and how people participate?

The topic of discussion then turned to prioritization and infrastructure. Professor Bruno Harris noted that he had collaborated in China while housed in a hotel on campus and that Brown should do that too, to save money for visitors. Talia Field from Literary Arts brought up two success stories - that RISD got money for a video project in Cameroon with students, and the University of Montana has a faculty swap program – and said that incentives are crucial, such as larger grants and initiatives, and she suggested that this should be done to encourage creative ideas before fixed institutions are set up. Another faculty member agreed and said that Brown housing costs have gone way up and this is a problem for faculty visiting for a long time such as 5 months. It was stated that it is better to have an accord with a National Institute that spans many universities than with just one University.

Merle Krueger from the Center for Language Studies said that our international students need an expanded support infrastructure beyond the present understaffed office – in addition to help with visas, they need language and cultural help.

It was pointed out that we need a strategic view about Languages to decide what new languages to add and how to integrate them into the curriculum: is a foreign language just a patina that an educated person is supposed to have or do they really use the languages in their careers? We should encourage professional level proficiency in undergraduates. International media can help prepare students and faculty members for going abroad by bringing media to Brown in a broad-based robust way but there is no umbrella infrastructure now.

It was stated that there is a role technology can play in creating opportunities with other countries, e.g. we don't have a lot of studios for teleconferencing, and we need to think strategically about this issue.

Kimberly Delgizzo from Career Development said that students need more internship opportunities abroad.

Richard Fishman, Director of the Creative Arts Council, said that all of the artists he represents are enthused about this initiative, but one concern is the different in values across cultures; artists in particular may make comments that create conflict. It was commented that internationalization is sometimes seen as equivalent to contemporary globalization, but we should attend to historical studies that are international as well.

A member of the Global Media project at the Watson Institute for International Studies said that they realize they have not communicated enough of what is going on at Brown and that media is very important globally.

Professor Banchoff from Mathematics spoke on behalf of two of his international students who are at Brown on scholarships; they feel alone because most of the other international students are paying their own way and are from a different economic strata; we should increase the economic diversity of our global students by working to identify excellent students everywhere in the globe.

It was pointed out by Professor John Emigh that certain countries have been named as priorities, and it was asked how we might encourage departments that could benefit from this; e.g. would this help in prioritizing a faculty search in Visual Arts looking for someone specializing in Roman, Greek, Indian, or Middle Eastern art? There are some departments that are disciplinarily based rather than geographically based.

The discussion turned to Ongoing vs. Continuing initiatives. Professor Kurt Raaflaub was concerned that, although support for new initiatives is justified, there is a danger that it could obscure current efforts that are undersupported, and gave two examples. First, international colleagues who come here need help with their English to be able to

communicate with Brown students. Second, the Classics department has an outreach program in South America, Asia, Africa; international colleagues come here for the good opportunities offered here. This ongoing effort has had very little support – those visitors usually bring their own money, and even then it is hard to find workspaces for them. He made a plea that the administration will remember these ongoing efforts too.

A faculty member said that Brown should go slowly with this expansion so as to let the infrastructure catch up to the new initiatives (e.g. the expansion in Brown faculty was not accompanied by an appropriate increase in infrastructure such as graduate fellowships for the new faculty).

When the discussion ended, Professor Banchoff turned the floor over to the new Vice President for International Affairs, David Kennedy. Vice President Kennedy thanked the forum participants and the committee. He stated that he is now hoping to uncover things that were left out of the report and welcomes input. The result of the report is not a list of initiatives, but rather a better understanding on campus of how Brown can respond to its challenges: first, how can Brown play a role at a global level in the same way it rose from a regional college to a college of national prominence? Brown's reputation and resources in the future will increasingly be a function of its international stature. Brown has established an identity for itself as a special place with common vision of what education is about with concrete programs – some old, and some new. The second challenge is that to be cutting edge in any topic (contemporary issues, religion, philosophy etc) you need to interact with global peers. This should start with undergraduates. They need very intensive language experiences either in Providence or abroad. Also, they need intensive experiences with ideas in another culture, and the experience of work or practical activity elsewhere.

Vice President Kennedy invited people to contact him with new ideas, not just with the annual report of an institute that they collaborate with. He closed by saying that we need to make the transition wisely to being global as we deepen our contact with global peers, and he looks forward to more conversations with faculty.

The Forum was adjourned at 5:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie M. Heller
Secretary of the Faculty Forum
(Cognitive and Linguistic Sciences)