

**Project South Texas
Academic Administration Working Groups
FINAL Report**

February 14, 2014

Working Group Name	International Programs and Global Initiatives
Working Group Co-Chairs	Cynthia Brown (UTPA), Alla Paroiatnikova (UTB)
Working Group Members	UTB: Joel Garza, Samantha Lopez, Heather Olague, Erendira Santillana UTPA: Sandra Hansmann, Yong Lang, Norma Ramos, John Sargeant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

The International Programs and Global Initiatives Working Group envisions the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) as a globally engaged university, represented by comprehensive internationalization with a special focus on Latin America. The guiding principles established by the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System strongly commit to creating a new university that promotes access to higher education and building a diverse student body to become a premier university of the first class as well as the nation's largest and most successful Hispanic-serving institutions.

The working group recommends establishing an Office of Global Engagement to develop relevant internationalization strategies based on the UTRGV mission, vision and strategic goals and specific academic needs of the University's colleges. The main activities to be integrated under a broad umbrella organization include:

- Centralized administrative Office of Global Engagement
- Center for Latin American Studies
- International Admission and Recruitment
- International Student and Scholar Services
- Global Initiatives and Partnerships
- Study Abroad
- Language Institute

The activities listed above are interrelated and significant synergies will arise from bringing them together. For example, international scholars can be housed at the Global Village and interact with international students as well as UTRGV faculty and students associated with the Center for Latin American Studies. They can also improve their English-speaking skills at the Language Institute. As the Language Institute prepares students to linguistically meet university standards, they will be included in International Student and Scholars cultural and campus events from day one to facilitate their transition to academic programs.

The working group recommendations embrace a strong commitment to the international student –centered approach, service excellence, and utilization of the newest technology to better serve them.

The following summarizes the top three priorities for innovative programs to be implemented at UTRGV. A detailed description of these, along with other recommendations is included in the Recommendations section of this report.

- **International Student One-Stop Shop** – streamlining academic and administrative programs with redesigned processes to promote a student service-centered mode of operation. Integrating international students into the campus culture beginning with the application process will enhance their success at UTRGV.

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- **Global Village Residence** – a community to support and engage international students, scholars, visitors as well as local students, staff, and faculty. The Global Village will foster increased mobility for reciprocal exchanges students and scholars due to the safety, comfort and security provided to UTRGV's international students. Specialized programs organized at the residence could include International Dinners, International Coffee Hours, and International Mentorship.
- **Center for Latin American Studies** – a center that will highlight UTRGV as a “Gateway to the Americas”. UTRGV students are positioned to become the next generation of bi-lingual, bi-cultural, and bi-literate medical professionals, technologists, artists, authors, diplomats, academics, and entrepreneurs linking the US and Latin America. The Center will create the linkages between students and faculty at UTRGV with those at universities throughout Latin America.
- **Bridge Program** – a transition to UTRGV's academic programs for students who are academically prepared but do not meet the required language proficiency standards. This program will allow these students to be admitted to an academic program with the condition of completing language studies before matriculating into the academic coursework. This will help meet the goal of increasing international student enrollment.

FINDINGS

Innovative Initiatives Currently in Place

Study Abroad

Participation in Study Abroad programs at UTB and UTPA has shown to increase student success and retention. The Study Abroad programs at UTB and UTPA provide the opportunity for students to become a “global citizen” - to acquire the skills to interact in and between multiple cultures and to become capable of analyzing issues on a global level. They are also an effective recruitment tool to attract prospective students.

Faculty and student exchange programs

UTB currently has 24 active international partner universities in 15 countries and is working on 4 new partnerships. Forms of cooperation include: students semester/year exchanges, internships, short-term scholars, visiting professors, exchange of exhibitions, visits of music groups and performers, summer workshops for our partner universities' students and international conferences. In the 2013-2014 academic year, UTB hosted 24 incoming students and facilitated the exchange of 26 outgoing students.

UTPA has 41 active international agreements of cooperation with international universities. Forms of cooperation include study abroad programs (short-term faculty led programs, long-term third party programs, and partner institution student exchanges); specialized student visitor programs for internships and summer experiences, individualized faculty teaching abroad and exchanges as well as campus international events.

English Language Preparation

The English Language Institute at UTPA and the Language Institute at UTB successfully serve potential students for the undergraduate and graduate programs at both universities as well as those in the community wanting to improve their language skills to personal and professional goals. The current operational details of the language institutes at UTB and UTPA are included in Appendix 1.

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Innovative Initiatives **not** Currently in Place

Bridge program

Universities are increasingly providing language instruction for international students to matriculate into academic programs. For example, an increasing number of universities offer bridge programs which combine academic and intensive English courses into a “pathway” year for international students. The success of bridge programs in increasing international student enrollment has led George Mason University to form a joint partnership market their pathways program to increase international enrollments (<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/11/01/george-mason-turns-corporate-partner-grow-international-enrollments-and-programs#ixzz2tVFUJWkY>).

Comprehensive Internationalization

Broadly speaking, Campus Internationalization is a purposeful institutional effort to build global, international, and multicultural perspectives into the university’s missions, visions and values that are reflected and implemented in learning, teaching, research, and service activities. Successful internationalization includes engagement across a wide variety of institutional units and involves key activities such as faculty development; instructional design; student, staff, and faculty diversity; research and scholarship; development assistance; student and academic support services; risk, resource, and financial management, institutional competitiveness and positioning; and true global engagement. The American Council on Education (ACE) Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE) Model for Comprehensive Internationalization includes four target areas for institutional initiatives, policies, and programs: (1) Administrative Structure; (2) Curriculum, Co-curriculum, and Learning Outcomes; (3) Student Mobility; and (4) Collaboration and Partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The International Programs and Global Initiatives Working Group ~~envisions~~ envision the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) as a globally engaged university, represented by comprehensive internationalization with a special focus on Latin America. The goal is for UTRGV to be known as a premier university preparing socially responsible domestic and international students for successful careers in the global marketplace. UTRGV will combine rigorous academic programs with extensive experiential education in cutting edge research and global preparedness.

Universities aspiring to become truly international go through a comprehensive campus internationalization process. To accomplish this challenging task, it is an established practice to create an administrative structure that supports a “one-stop shop” environment for all internationally related activities of the institution. An office to work closely with other units of the university and provide leadership in the comprehensive internationalization is essential. This will facilitate the demand for international programs/activities by academic units to create customized international programs. This office would also be responsible for international recruitment and admissions as well as international advising, immigration support and international student and scholar services/ activities. Since English language preparation is part of the international student academic services, a language institute plays a very important role in attracting and retaining international students, it becomes an integral part of the “one-stop shop” structure. Thus, it is recommended to establish an Office of Global Engagement to become the driving force of the campus internationalization responsible for its global strategy and effective and efficient implementation. It is the synergistic opportunities among the identified activities that will lead to innovation and true internationalization of UTRGV.

According to the American Council on Education, campus internationalization refers to “the efforts of institutions to incorporate global perspectives into teaching, learning, and research; building international and intercultural competency among students, faculty, and staff; and, establish relations and collaborations with people and institutions abroad”. (<http://www.acenet.edu/higher-education/topics/Pages/Campus-Internationalization.aspx>). These objectives will serve as the overarching goal of the international programs and global initiatives of UTRGV.

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The main activities to be integrated under a broad umbrella organization include a centralized administrative Office of Global Engagement supporting a Center for Latin American Studies, International Admission and Recruitment, International Student and Scholar Services, Global Initiatives and Partnerships, Study Abroad, and the Language Institute. A senior university administrator, responsible for developing a plan for the campus comprehensive internationalization and its implementation, is critical to the successful internationalization of UTRGV. He or she will work together with all the university units guided by the educational needs and academic requirements of all university programs. He or she oversees all the interdependent university's international activities, providing leadership for the respective departments and centers.

The following describes in more detail the activities of the centralized units dedicated to the global engagement of UTRGV.

Office of Global Engagement

The role of the proposed Office of Global Engagement is to develop relevant internationalization strategies based on UTRGV mission, vision and strategic goals and specific academic needs of University colleges, and to establish a network of partners around the world to link specifically to the targeted areas of the world. UTRGV will not only create a network of strategic partners to develop multifaceted cooperation with these institutions, but also establish a Partnership of Partners to expand and enhance its global education reflecting the increasingly interconnected global environment. Moreover, this network of strategic partners will provide opportunities for large scale joint research projects, organizing international workshops and conferences, joint grant applications and publications.

Center for Latin American Studies

One of the guiding principles established by the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System is that the UTRGV will serve as a "Gateway to the Americas." The working group believes that UTRGV is uniquely positioned to serve as the primary institution of higher education in the country linking the United States and Spanish speaking Latin America. The Edinburg campus is located 16.5 miles from the Pharr International Bridge while the Brownsville campus is literally a stone's throw away from the border. UTRGV will open its doors in Fall of 2015 with over 30,000 students, the majority of whom have strong English and Spanish language skills. A high proportion of faculty/staff/administrators at the UTRGV are also fluent Spanish speakers. UTRGV students are positioned to become the next generation of bi-lingual, bi-cultural, and bi-literate medical professionals, technologists, artists, authors, diplomats, academics, and entrepreneurs linking the US and Latin America.

Neither UTPA nor UTB has an institutional initiative in place to develop target skilled sets (formal degree programs, internships in Latin America, a broad range of co-curricular activities, aggressive recruiting of Latin American undergraduate and graduate students, etc.) and to open doors for our students to Latin America. We propose the creation of the Center for Latin American Studies to serve as a lead component of a comprehensive initiative to link the UTRGV with Latin America. The Center will provide a physical and intellectual space for students, faculty, and staff to gather and accelerate the creation and growth of a vibrant scholarly community as well as a community of practice.

The formation of this Center will send a strong message to the university and the RGV community that UTRGV is committed to expanding its influence in the Americas. This Center will also serve as an effective marketing tool bringing together the substantial resources that exist within the University and changing the mindset of internal and external stakeholders regarding the institution's commitment to increasing our relevancy. Specifically, the Center would facilitate the growth of initiatives in the following areas:

Teaching and Student Success

Increasing the awareness/knowledge of Latin America with our students is critical to the Center's success. We propose faculty associated with the Center develop and offer an Introduction to Latin America class as part of the core curriculum. A certificate program and/or minor available to all students can be developed to enable students in all majors to increase their knowledge of the region and obtain formal recognition for this expertise. The Center can also play a role in promoting study abroad opportunities in Latin America and organizing and promoting a

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variety of co-curricular activities (lecture and brown bag series, film series, faculty and student awards, service learning projects, Pan American Days, etc.). Another key factor is to increase the number of international students, especially those from Latin America, taking classes at UTRGV. These students are critical to increasing the knowledge of and interest in opportunities in Latin America for students from the Rio Grande Valley students. The Center will also proactively search for and help place faculty from Latin American universities (sabbatical year, Fulbright, etc.) in teaching assignments. The Center leadership will work closely with the Senior University Administrator leading the Office of Global Engagement to ensure these and other focused Latin American initiatives are successful.

The Center's commitment to students will not end at graduation. The Center will develop relationships with key decision makers in government, the private and social sectors, and with institutions of higher education with the goal of linking our students with attractive employment and educational opportunities.

Research

The Center for Latin American Studies can promote faculty and student research in a variety of ways. By providing a physical meeting place, faculty and students can come together, interact, and reenergize. The Center can offer a research colloquium and speaker series where key topics are discussed and debated. A variety of web-based technologies can be used to facilitate interactions between students/faculty and Latin American thought leaders. The Center can also create a working paper series to promote discussion and demonstrate the intellectual contribution of the UTRGV to knowledge creation relevant to our region and community. Scholarships, fellowships, and travel grants for students and faculty can be channeled through the Center to incentivize fieldwork. The Center can sponsor short- and long-term visits for faculty from Latin American universities.

The Center is proposed to operate as an academic and administrative unit under the Office of Global Engagement. To be successful, the Center must work closely with and contribute to the success of the various entities (language institute, study abroad, international admissions, international student recruitment, etc.) that will operate as part of the Office of Global Engagement. The Center must also work closely with and contribute to the success of other initiatives at UTRGV that are based on leveraging the bi-lingual, bi-cultural, and bi-literate skills of our students and linking these with leadership opportunities in the private and public sectors.

International Admission and Recruitment

The working group recommends creating one office of international admissions and recruitment that works in collaboration with undergraduate and graduate general admissions to ensure that international admissions are handled by experienced and knowledgeable staff. We further recommend that a recruiter be dedicated to attracting international students to UTRGV. We recommend that the international recruiting effort target both individual students to specified programs and government sponsored students using innovative recruitment strategies through internet and social media channels.

The International Admission and Recruitment Department will facilitate the targeted recruitment for specific high-demand programs such as biomedical or computation sciences as well as professional graduate programs such as business or public administration. One strategy is to establish UTRGV Centers at partner universities in Latin America to promote the University and to provide academic and language preparation programs for prospective students. Another strategy to create a strong presence and visibility in Latin American is to partner with Education USA centers run by the US Department of State.

Other possible strategies to increase international student enrollment include:

- Develop a one-year preparatory program for international students wanting to attend medical schools in the United States. The program would include language preparation as well as MCAT test preparation.
- Focus on international transfer students (2+2 for undergraduate students and 1+1 for master's level students).

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- Recruit government-sponsored students from countries such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Malaysia, Qatar, Singapore and Costa Rica.
- Participate in joint recruitment fairs with the UTRGV Language Institute in targeted geographic areas.

To provide the desired customer service to international students, it is recommended to have a special position for a SEVIS coordinator on each campus to manage SEVIS updates, semester registrations batch process and provide computer software support for F-1 and J-1 programs. It will be important to obtain guidance from the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that the J-1 program can continue to offer J-1 visas to exchange students, interns and scholars and to ensure that F-1 visa can be offered to degree seeking students as well as those seeking language training.

In summary, the working group is recommending highly centralized offices on each campus dealing with recruitment, admissions, and SEVIS support that provide high quality student services and programming as well as study abroad services and short time international visitors to campus projects.

International Student and Scholar Services

The areas of International Student Admission and Recruitment and International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) will play a critical role in supporting the mission of UTRGV and implementation of strategic initiatives, services and activities to attract many students around the world and to have a campus with students from different cultures, backgrounds and customs. Once the student has been admitted into UTRGV, it will be taken care by the International Student and Scholar Services department. The International Student Advisors will take care of each international student to make sure they comply with all rules and regulations in order to maintain their immigration status in good standing in the U.S. Also, this area will help international students to adjust into the new lifestyle in the U.S. The ISSS will have International Student Coordinators who will be in charge of developing cultural programs throughout the year to motivate and engage the students.

Specific areas examined by the group include student recruitment, admissions policies and processes, service centers, orientation and international student recruitment. Our recommendations embrace a strong commitment to the international student –centered approach, service excellence, and utilization of the newest technology to better serve them.

While the group developed its recommendations, it also identified several significant issues vital to a successful implementation.

- Streamline academic and administrative programs and re-design processes to increase productivity and promote a student-and-service-centered mode of operation.
- Promote access to postsecondary education to a diverse student body to become one of the largest and most successful Hispanic-serving institutions in the U.S.A.
- Fully integrate next generation technology and customized learning to increase affordability and maximize student success.

An innovation that is strongly recommended by the working group is the establishment of Global Village residence facilities at one or both campuses of UTRGV. These will be international student and scholar residences with unique social, cultural, and recreational activities, serving to attract more students from other countries where they will find a safe place to live and mingle with other students from around the world. The residence will offer food for different student needs depending on their culture as well as a place to host cultural events. The Global Village will serve as a tool for international student support and retention as well as providing international programs to domestic students. Examples of specialized programs organized through the Global Village could include International Dinners, International Coffee Hours, International Mentorship with designated students and faculty mentors, an International Speaker Series, International Women's Day,

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International Education Week, and International Festivals. This is an integral component to the internationalization of the UTRGV campus.

Another recommendation is to develop a Global Scholar program for students who have interests in international, global, or cross-cultural issues that will include (1) a first-year specialized one-hour credit Global Learning Community and (2) an enriched on-campus curriculum following the successful model of the Honors Program. The Global Learning Community will introduce first-year students to the phenomena of internationalization and globalization across and within various disciplines. It would be especially valuable students interested in course of study or careers with multicultural and global dimensions. As a Global Scholar, students would complete selected courses having a significant global and/or international theme or focus, and participate in co-curricular activities as a cohort. As a capstone experience, they would also complete an internationalization experience that could include various activities such traditional education abroad, a cross-border experiential learning activity, or an internationally focused research project or thesis, just to name a few options.

It is also recommended that each campus have a dedicated staff to provide programing and retention services under the "One-Stop Shop" model to better serve international students.

Global Initiatives and Partnerships

The Department of Global Initiatives and Partnerships will foster relationships with international partner universities worldwide. The selection of strategic partners is based on the following criteria: high quality of academic programs, student centered, sharing the same values, and a focus on the same areas of research. The selection of strategic partners is done based on a thorough review by the Office of Global Engagement and the academic colleges which includes identifying multiple areas of cooperation such as student and faculty exchange, joint academic programs and research projects. After the Strategic Partnership Agreement is signed, these programs and projects are owned by respective college(s) and the Office of Global Engagement acts as a facilitator for their implementation employing all its units: admissions, student and scholar services, study abroad and Language Institute, if required.

The forms of cooperation will include student exchanges for a semester for academic year, internships, short-term scholars, visiting professors, exchange of exhibitions, visits of musical groups and other artists, summer workshops for partner universities students and international conferences. The activities described are all two-way with UTRGV students and faculty participating in these types of activities at the partner universities as well as hosting partner universities' students and faculty.

UTB and UTPA currently engage with a large number of partner universities with countries all over the world for student exchanges and/or individual research. UTRGV will focus on new strategic partnerships focusing on Latin American universities. It will also be important to identify large scale joint research projects meeting urgent socially relevant demand of the region. UTRGV will need to hire highly experienced visionary staff with an extensive knowledge of international academe to lead the Global Initiatives and Partnerships efforts as this will be a strategic international powerhouse working closely with university colleges and international institutions.

Study Abroad

Study Abroad programs provide students with the experiential learning opportunity to enhance their education by participating in high quality, safe and cost effective program preparing them for a competitive global market.

The format of each study abroad program at UTRGV will be determined by the academic goals and specific program requirements for participating programs and/or departments. The role of the centralized Study Abroad Office is to customize each program along these academic goals and program requirements as well as to facilitate the logistics of student participation and the course offering. The focus of the Study Abroad Office will be on creating new hybrid, multifaceted, affordable programs including not only academic courses but also different forms of experiential learning,

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such as foreign internships, service learning and research. Modern technologies in education provide opportunities for new forms of virtual study abroad programs, joint online courses with students from partner universities and other innovations.

Language Institute

The working group recommends UTRGV Language Institute that will play an integral role in fostering global engagement at the University. With the growing diversity in the South Texas region, it is fundamentally important that UTRGV integrate into its operation an English language program that is ready to serve foreign, Non-English speaking professionals, students, and scholars interested in pursuing academic degrees or engaging in scholarly research. Furthermore, with the implementation of a new medical school in the Rio Grande Valley, the Language Institute is positioned to provide English language courses for those medical school students who may require English language training in order to meet admission requirements.

The Language Institute will be a non-academic, self-sustaining program that meets the needs of the communities on both sides of the border and students around the world who seek English language training. It is recommended that the UTRGV Language Institute operate on both the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses, serving adult students – professionals, foreign students, and the general public – who seek English language training for non-academic purposes either in an intensive or semester based program. The curriculum will target communication skills development in English at various levels and reinforce the academic language skills for international students who seek admission to UTRGV or any other university in an English speaking country. The program will also serve international students with its Bridge Program (described below) to academically and linguistically prepare students for university academic programs. Appendix 2 describes the proposed operations of the UTRGV Language Institute.

BRIDGE Program

The BRIDGE Program is designed for International students who are academically qualified, but are unable to provide a language proficiency score acceptable for admission to an academic program at UTRGV. This program will offer students the foundation and essential language skills required to succeed academically. Combining language preparation in the admission offer will increase access to the programs worldwide.

Synergies

The Office of Global Engagement will build a strong and efficient operation providing an umbrella organization for international recruitment, admissions and student services making a smooth and high quality transition for prospective international students. The areas described above are all interconnected and together will foster a climate to create the internationalization of UTRGV and ensure that UTRGV reflects the guiding principles established by The University of Texas System Board of Regents. The working group recommendations embrace a strong commitment to the international student –centered approach, service excellence, and utilization of the newest technology to better serve them.

The following are the top priorities to create an internationalized campus for UTRGV and provide the highest level of services to international students, scholars, and academic programs:

- **International Student One-Stop-Shop** – streamlining academic and administrative programs with redesigned processes to promote a student service-centered mode of operation. Integrating international students into the campus culture beginning with the application process will enhance their success at UTRGV.
- **Global Village Residence** – a community to support and engage international students, scholars, visitors as well as local students, staff, and faculty. The Global Village will foster increased mobility for reciprocal exchanges students and scholars due to the safety, comfort and security provided to UTRGV's international students. Specialized programs organized at the residence could include International Dinners, International Coffee Hours, and International Mentorship.

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- **Center for Latin American Studies** – a center that will highlight UTRGV as a “Gateway to the Americas”. UTRGV students are positioned to become the next generation of bi-lingual, bi-cultural, and bi-literate medical professionals, technologists, artists, authors, diplomats, academics, and entrepreneurs linking the US and Latin America. The Center will create the linkages between students and faculty at UTRGV with those at universities throughout Latin America.
- **Bridge Program** – a transition to UTRGV’s academic programs for students who are academically prepared but do not meet the required language proficiency standards. This program will allow these students to be admitted to an academic program with the condition of completing language studies before matriculating into the academic coursework. This will help meet the goal of increasing international student enrollment.

Required Actions for Implementation – Fall 2015

1. Reconcile differences in fees, policies, procedures and practices related to current international activities, including Study Abroad, partner relationships, Language Institutes.
2. The following is the outlines the important steps related to the issuance of immigration documents for F and J programs for UTRGV:

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Actions</u>
December 2013	Initiate Letter to the Department of State for J-1 Program procedures
January 2014	Initiate Letter to SEVP-Department of Homeland Security F-1 Program
January 2014	Receive Instructions from the Department of State
February 2014	Receive Instructions from SEVP- The Department of Homeland Security
February 2014	Process form DS-3036 For J-1 Program
February 2014	Pay a designation fee of \$3,982.00 at pay.gov
March 2014	Process I-17 for F-1 Program UT RGV and both ELI's
March 2014	Pay 1700 .00 for Certification
March 2014	Pay 655.00 For Site Visit
9-12 months	Designation Approval of the Program
April 2014	President of new university announced
May 2014	Receive all program information for degrees offered. Will also need ELI's information
Fall 2014	Implementation of People Soft - HR & Financial Modules
2014-2015	Implementation of People Soft - Review compatibility with SEVIS batch process reg. Student & Academic Module
2014-2015	Accreditation of both English Language Institutes as they are not stand alones
2014-2015	Required by Accreditation Act for ELI
October 2015	Open registration for UTRGV through Apply Texas or Embark
Feb 2015	J-1 Program Designation UTRGV (This is if it takes a year)
Feb 2015	F-1 Program Certification UTRGV (This is if it takes a year)
June 2015	SACS approves new university
Aug 2015	Inaugural class enrolls in new university

Possible Consultations

1. NAFSA, the leading association of international educators, has an inventory of the most successful efforts in international programs. The database includes the winners of the Annual Senator Paul Simon Award, which

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recognizes the most innovative international programs. These programs can be used to guide the development of new programs and improve the existing ones.

2. Dr. David Aronofsky, Texas International Education Consortium (<http://www.tiec.org/>)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Profile of activities at the language institutes at UTB and UTPA

Appendix 2: Proposed structure and activities of the Language Institute at UTRGV

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Appendix 1 University of Texas Brownsville Language Institute

Program

The Language Institute program operates on a semester basis. Courses offered in semesters run during fall, spring, and summer of each year. The program is made up of 6 levels of English as a second language with concentrations in grammar, writing, conversation, and reading. The objective of the program is two-fold: communicative competence and academic reinforcement.

Courses

In addition to ESL courses, The Language Institute program offers Preparation for the TOEFL, Preparation for the ACT, and Translation Courses (English/Spanish). We are in the process of offering a Preparation for the SAT course and a Preparation for the GRE course. Foreign language courses offered include Spanish, French, Portuguese, German, Russian, Italian, and American Sign Language.

Staff

The Language Institute program operates with one Program Director (full-time), one Administrative Assistant (full-time), and one Learning Instructional Specialist (full-time). One Administrative Secretary works part-time. Approximately 10 to 15 part-time instructors are hired during the fall and spring semesters and 5 to 8 are hired during the summer. Part-time instructors are hired based on enrollment numbers.

Registration Process

Students wishing to register for courses at the Language Institute for the first time go through the following process:

1. Take a placement exam (COMPASS/ESL) – This instrument is computerized and targets listening, reading, and language use. An oral and written evaluation is also administered to the student. After all components are evaluated, a recommendation for the appropriate level is provided to the student.
2. Registration – Based on the placement results, the student completes our registration form indicating the amount of courses he/she wishes to take.
3. Student Visa – International students are assisted and guided by our staff through the process of applying for a student visa.

Performance

In addition to regular course examinations, student performance is monitored with pre- and post-evaluations done each semester. This gives our program a broader picture of student learning gains and/or areas that need to be addressed.

Enrollment

International Students – On average our program enrolls between 80 and 110 students every fall and spring semesters and between 40 and 60 students during the summer on either a full-time (F1) or part-time (F3) student visa.

Domestic Students – On average our program enrolls between 50 and 60 domestic students every fall and spring semesters and between 20 and 30 students during the summer.

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University of Texas –Pan American English Language Institute Intensive English Program

The English Language Institute (ELI), a component of UTPA, is a non-credit academic program, which prepares non-English speaking students in the English language through intensive English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

The ELI was established in 1982 to provide English language instruction to three different types of non-English-speaking individuals. These include: (a) Hispanics native to the region, both north and south of the border; (b) a rapidly increasing number of recent immigrants; and (c) a smaller number of non-immigrant international students from all over the world. Each type of individual enters the ELI program in order to learn English for personal, professional, and/or academic reasons. The ELI offers two programs, intensive and semi-intensive.

Admission Requirements

The intensive and semi- intensive English programs are open to all students 17 years of age and older who can dedicate their full /part-time to studying English, and whose native language is one other than English, and who have received a high school diploma or the equivalent in another country. Students must be literate in their native language and must have knowledge of the Roman alphabet in order to succeed in an English program.

Placement Procedures

Students who are accepted into the English program at the ELI are given a two-hour placement test to determine their level of English proficiency. Students' initial placement levels and progress throughout their study in the ELI is measured by the University of Michigan English Placement Test (EPT), as well as a short writing sample and an oral interview, each conducted in English.

Level Placement

Once the students' levels are determined, students are then placed into one of the levels in the ELI according to their proficiency in grammar, listening comprehension, writing, Reading and speaking. The intensive English program curriculum consists of the following proficiency levels:

Level 100 (Basic), Level 101 (Low Beginning), Level 102 (Beginning), Level 103 (High Beginning), Level 104 (Low Intermediate), Level 105 (Intermediate), Level 106(High Intermediate), Level 107, (Low Advanced), and Level 108 (Advanced).

The semi-intensive program curriculum consists of the following proficiency levels:

Basic I, Basic II, Low Beginning, High Beginning, Intermediate, High Intermediate, Low Advanced, High Advanced, Adv. 1, Adv. 2, Listening & Speaking I &II, and Conversation/TOEFL Prep.

Program Hours

Students in the intensive English program study in class twenty hours per week for eight weeks. Each course or level consists of five hours of instruction per day in five skill areas: grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students receive extensive practice in these skill areas, as well as in building vocabulary, improving pronunciation, and learning about different cultures. Students must attend a teacher-directed language laboratory on a daily basis, a program component consisting of a one-hour structured listening class in a fully equipped, state-of-the-art audio and video laboratory. Students may also utilize the computer laboratories for computer assisted English instruction on a voluntary basis.

Courses

The intensive program offers five eight-week sessions (Fall I, Fall II, Spring I, Spring II, and Summer I). The semi-intensive program offers four (4) 12-week sessions a year (Fall, Spring I, Spring II and Summer). Each session might consist of 12 levels of English, ranging from a Basic level to Elective courses.

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Curriculum

The skills within each level of the program overlap and build upon each previous level completed. While the focus at the beginning levels is improvement of basic listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing skills, the more advanced levels concentrate on the higher-level cognitive skills of reading, writing, and test-taking skills geared toward academic preparation. In Levels 107 and 108, the main course objective is for students to improve their reading, writing, and grammar skills to the point where they will be able to score 500 or more on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), which most American universities require for undergraduate and graduate admissions. Levels 107 and 108 prepare students with the English skills necessary to succeed in academic studies and to score sufficiently well on the American college Testing Program (ACT) to gain admission to and undergraduate degree program.

Office Staff

The English Language Institute operates with (1) Full-time Program Director, (1) Full-time Administrative Assistant/DSO, (1) Full-time System Analyst , (2) Full-time Office Assistants , (1) Part-time Office Supervisor.

Teaching Staff

The ELI operates with (2) Full-time Learning Specialists, (5) Part-time intensive Instructors, and (5) Part-time semi-intensive instructors.

Program Hours

Students in the intensive English program study in class twenty hours per week for eight weeks. Each course or level consists of five hours of instruction per day in five skill areas: grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students receive extensive practice in these skill areas, as well as in building vocabulary, improving pronunciation, and learning about different cultures. Students must attend a teacher-directed language laboratory on a daily basis, a program component consisting of a one-hour structured listening class in a fully equipped, state-of-the-art audio and video laboratory. Students may also utilize the computer laboratories for computer assisted English instruction on a voluntary basis.

Student Enrollment

Combined student enrollment in all ELI programs each year averages about 1,200 students.

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APPENDIX 2 University of Texas Rio Grande Valley LANGUAGE INSTITUTE RECOMMENDATION

UTRGV Language Institute Program Description

The new UTRGV Language Institute will be a non-academic, self-sustaining language institute program that meets the needs of the communities on both sides of the border and students around the world who seek English language training. Its curriculum targets communication skills development in English in various levels and reinforces the academic language skills for international students who seek admission to UTRGV or any other university in an English speaking country.

Benefits

The services and courses offered by the UTRGV Language Institute allow for the recruitment of students who are not entirely prepared linguistically to succeed in academic programs. Some of the benefits of having a Language Program are as follows:

- Improve general English language proficiency in listening, speaking, vocabulary, reading, and writing for limited English proficient students
- Develop conversational skills that allow non-English speaking students to function in an English speaking academic environment
- Understand basic American cultural values
- Promote more international enrollment regardless of English language proficiency
- Prepare students for university programs
- Assist in producing bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate students
- Promote diversity in our university and the Rio Grande Valley communities

Rationale

With the growing diversity in our South Texas region it is fundamentally important that The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley integrate in its operation an English language program that is ready to serve foreign, Non-English speaking professionals, students, and scholars interested in pursuing academic degrees or engaging in scholarly research. Furthermore, with the implementation of a new medical school in the Rio Grande Valley, it is essential that The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley provide English language courses for those medical school students who may require English language training in order to meet admission requirements.

Target Population

The UTRGV Language Institute will operate in Brownsville and Edinburg serving adult students – professionals, foreign students, and the general public – who seek English language training for non-academic purposes either in an intensive or semester based program. The program will also serve international students with its Bridge Program to academically and linguistically prepare students for university academic programs. A brief description of the Bridge Program is as follows:

BRIDGE Program

The BRIDGE Program is designed for International students who are academically qualified, but are unable to provide a language proficiency score (or who provide one that is slightly below the minimum). This program will give students the foundation and essential language skills required to succeed in an Academic program.

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International students, who apply to UTRGV and meet all general admissions requirements, but have an English proficiency examination score slightly below the university's requirement for Undergraduate or Graduate admission, will be admitted conditionally. These students will be required to enroll in the Bridge English Enrichment Program at The English Language Institute.

In order to be admitted to the Bridge Program, a student must fulfill the following requirements:

- Student must be enrolled full-time at the English Language Institute
- Student may choose to enroll for the length of time necessary to successfully meet the English proficiency examination score required. Students will be advised on which module to follow when they register.

BRIDGE Program Description

The program will consist of a fall, spring, or summer session designed for students of all levels of English. The BRIDGE program will prepare international students with high-quality English language instruction.

Students will study in an intensive program through the development of:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Standardized test preparation
- Academic study skills