

**Executive Summary**

**purpose**

The goal of this project was to undertake a comprehensive analysis of internationalization activities at Carleton across the academic, research and student services portfolios and offer recommendations for improving our internationalization efforts campus-wide.

**Internationalization**

Benchmarking Project

Presented to the Organizational Excellence Steering Committee

January 2016

The Internationalization Benchmarking Project was initiated by the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International) to assess Carleton’s progress towards realization of the Strategic Integrated Plan’s articulation of “internationalization and global outreach” as part of the university’s vision. More specifically, the closure in 2014 of *Carleton International* initiated debate about how best to coordinate and align our external international activities with our internal processes and, simultaneously, ensure the strategic alignment of internationally-focused academic and research goals and objectives. The objectives of the benchmarking exercise were: to facilitate the creation of an effective internationalization framework at Carleton that builds on our institutional strengths and successfully bridges the academic and research enterprises; to determine principles and commitments that will inform Carleton’s international strategy; to maximize the coordination of international activities at Carleton to avoid duplication of efforts; to increase the institution’s capacity to respond quickly and efficiently to international opportunities; and to enhance the university’s reputation as a global university.

Over the course of the benchmarking exercise, two main findings emerged: Carleton University is deeply involved in internationalization and global outreach that spans the research, academic and student portfolios of the university; unfortunately, that activity occurs without university-wide strategic coordination and collaboration, which impedes the institution’s capacity to maximize our global engagement potential. Implementation of the recommendations from this project will address this central challenge by facilitating an integrated and coordinated approach to internationalization that will better position Carleton as a globally-recognized university.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Recommendation 1**: **Coordinate** **strategic action on internationalization by establishing structures to oversee and implement Carleton’s international goals.**

The absence of coordinated leadership has inhibited Carleton’s progress on internationalization. A gap exists with respect to university-wide priorities and strategic planning around internationalization while the closure of *Carleton International* created an operational vacuum. How the university understands internationalization within the broader context of its overall strategic approach remains unclear. There is confusion among the university community as to who directs Carleton’s internationalization agenda, how the university plans to move forward and where one accesses services and information related to international matters.

The benchmarking team recommends these issues be addressed by:

1. immediate crafting of an interim international strategy based on the research compiled in the benchmarking exercise, with a view to mainstreaming internationalization within the university’s next Strategic Integrated Plan;

2. re-establishment of a central international office to act as the university hub for international resources and information and to coordinate outreach activities, manage international partnerships, identify prospects and opportunities for international research, teaching and learning, as well as organize international delegations and events; and

3. formation of a permanent Steering Committee on International Activities reporting to senior administration through the Vice-President (Research and International) and composed of representatives from across the curriculum, research and student portfolios. The mandate of this committee should include implementation and oversight of the internationalization plan and development of assessment methods.

**Recommendation 2**: **Strengthen collaboration on international activities by adopting policies and processes that facilitate effective cooperation within and across the student, academic and research enterprises.**

Because of the decentralized and diffuse nature of the international portfolio, a risk to Carleton’s performance in this field is that inadequate collaboration within and across portfolios, coupled with cumbersome policies and processes, may lead to duplicated efforts and/or lost opportunities. The benchmarking team heard how the siloed nature of data collection and/or the absence of adequate campus-wide tracking of international activities can compound our inability to respond quickly and efficiently to time-sensitive prospects.

In response to these concerns, the benchmarking team recommends: a review of policies and processes related to various aspects of international initiatives, including but not limited to, Memoranda of Understanding, student exchange agreements, and partnership evaluation; adoption of a tracking system to better capture and more easily disseminate data on all forms of international engagement; and increased attention to opportunities for closer collaboration across areas of responsibility to maximize coordination.

**Recommendation 3**: **Improve internal and external communication of** **Carleton’s internationalization agenda and activities.**

Insufficient information sharing about international activities, opportunities and services is a significant barrier to increasing and improving our international engagement. Because of the decentralized nature of international activities, there is a serious gap in knowledge exchange both within and across the research, curriculum and student experience portfolios. Additionally, external communications about Carleton’s global endeavours must be expanded to enhance our global profile.

Faculty, staff and students require a single point of access for information related to our international agenda. A web portal, accessible from the Carleton homepage, is required to link information about all elements of Carleton’s international activities into a user-friendly format. Working in conjunction with the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International), the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and the Office of the Vice-President (Students and Enrolment), the Department of University Communications should explore an external communications strategy to showcase Carleton’s international achievements and opportunities.

**Recommendation 4**: **Foster a campus culture that support and promotes internationalization.**

Despite our many forms of international engagement, the benchmarking research revealed that Carleton still lack an overall campus culture that supports internationalization. As our comparative research made clear, internationalization is most successful when it is mainstreamed throughout all sectors of the campus and acknowledged as a shared institutional value in which everyone is a stakeholder. A comprehensive approach to internationalization creates a culture that recognizes and substantively supports diversity and cultural exchange; promotes a global perspective in teaching, research and student supports; understands that internationalization occurs both on campus and abroad; and inspires the campus community to recognize both the benefits of internationalization that accrue to the university as well as the contributions Carleton can make globally through our international engagements.

Throughout this exercise, the project team identified several initiatives that appropriate units on campus should implement to strengthen our campus culture of internationalization. These include: further efforts to globalize the curriculum, through, for example, online courses with overseas institutions and other opportunities for students to internationalize ‘at home’; enhanced pedagogical support for faculty members teaching increasingly diverse student bodies; training on cross-cultural competencies for faculty and professional staff; more opportunities to solidify connections between international and domestic students; support for international research linkages; strategic support to recruit high-quality, research-intensive international students; and consideration of technical assistance international development opportunities as a way to leverage our expertise and experience.

1. The benchmarking team adopted a broad definition similar to that articulated in the AUCC Internationalization Survey that refers to internationalization as “institutional efforts to integrate an international, global and/or intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of universities” (2014:3). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)