

**University of Regina Office of International Cooperation and Development  
Unit Review Report  
February 15, 2008**

Review Team:

Dr. Cen Huang, Executive Director, International Centre, University of Calgary  
(Review Team Chair)

Dr. Sheila Petty, Dean of Fine Arts, University of Regina

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Internationalization has had a long history at the University of Regina. The Office of International Cooperation and Development (OICD) at the University of Regina supports and enhances international opportunities for faculty, researchers, students and alumni. The international achievements of the institution are many and include some pioneering initiatives in China such as the 1981 “twinning” agreement between the University of Regina and Shandong University.

The Office of International Cooperation and Development is an administrative unit of considerable strength and experience that should be further developed into a major asset for the University. The unit is blessed with dedicated and passionate staff who are clearly interested in furthering the international agenda of the University of Regina. Members of the university community acknowledge that OICD provides critical services to the internationalization of the University and they provide them with the best effort they can given their limited resources and unclear mandate.

The review team was mandated to examine four broad aspects of the OICD:

1. To appraise the role and key service processes of the UofR OICD and how these contribute to the University’s strategic goals.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness and co-ordination of service structure, delivery processes including staffing, resources, activities planning, communication, training and development as well as service outcomes, including potential and existing client expectations and satisfaction.
3. To assess processes that insure consistency and reliability of services and areas of improvement, innovation and impediment.
4. To provide guidance and recommendations on improvements in any area of service or organizational structure that would be consistent and supportive of increasing the self-sufficiency of OICD activities and a desired growth in international programs and services.

With this in mind, the review team recommends that the University of Regina:

1. Create an Associate Vice President (International) position to lead and integrate the international portfolio at the U of R

2. Develop a single, cohesive vision and strategy that clearly articulates U of R's goals of internationalization
3. Develop an institutional strategy for international student recruitment
4. Develop a comprehensive internationalization communications/marketing plan
5. Establish an integrated and coordinated organizational structure
6. Ensure resources planning for sustainable internationalization
7. Restructure international advisory committees
8. Strengthen relationships with the government, private sector and communities

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the review, as the review team understands it, is to provide information and recommendations that can serve as a basis for strategic planning. The review identifies strengths and weaknesses and is intended to serve as a catalyst for renewal and refinement of the unit and its services and programs.

The Office of International Cooperation and Development at the University of Regina was established in September 2003 as recommended in the 2003 Task Force on Internationalization report. The OICD was a product of previous administrative structures, including the recent International Liaison Office. The OICD, in sum, represents the University's attempt to create an institutional response to internationalization as the University began to experience rapid growth and expansion of its programs and research platform. This expansion, in turn, has led to increased international activity and opportunities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The review team undertook a series of 20 meetings/interviews in two days with representatives from the senior university academic administration, other academic and support units across the university, the OICD administration including the Acting Director, International Coordinator and Administrative Secretary, and two members of the provincial government. The review committee had developed a detailed series of questions for each interview that took place during the 2 day site visit.

The review team examined many documents provided by the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International): see Appendix 1.

The review team experienced some "limitations" during the review process and site visit. These included 1) the tight time frame of the interview schedule that resulted in very little room for further discussion with individual interviewees as well as "de-brief" time between interviews; 2)

the review was intended to focus on one unit, the Office of International Cooperation and Development, but was expanded to touch a broader context. This was because the issues and challenges the unit was facing were not unit specific but more at the level of the institution; 3) some documents were not ready when interviews started and the review members requested these throughout the course of the site visit.

## **OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Office of International Cooperation and Development is an administrative unit of considerable strength and experience with dedicated and passionate staff who are clearly interested in furthering the international agenda of the University of Regina. Members of the university community acknowledge that OICD provides critical services to the internationalization of the University and they provide them with the best effort they can given their limited resources and unclear mandate.

It is universally acknowledged that OICD is a resource centre for international activities and has been very helpful and extremely knowledgeable with good record-keeping. OICD also has a good track record of supporting institutional linkage agreements and international development project proposals. Furthermore, many cited the fact that one of OICD's strengths lies in the organization of international delegations both to the U of R and abroad as well as the coordination of the Visiting Scholars Program. Many consider OICD to be the "hub" of internationalization at the U of R. Many also cited the fact the current Acting Director, the International Coordinator and Administrative Secretary have been instrumental in bringing internationalization to the forefront of the U of R's agenda.

1) **Leadership and vision:** It became clear through the course of the interviews that the unit's mission and mandate are not well known to the general university population. A further issue is whether or not the unit, as it is currently structured, actually possesses the authority or resources to achieve its mission and mandate. Several interviewees consider the OICD's primary function to be the office of record on international activity, yet its mission indicates that it "integrates an international perspective into the University's three-fold mission of teaching, research and service." It also became apparent that it was difficult to pin down the OICD's mandate when the university's overall position on internationalization is unclear.

2) **Strategy:** A number of interviewees acknowledged that as an institution, there is no coherent plan or overall strategic plan of action for internationalization. This lends a sense of ad-hoc-ness to the OICD's activity. Furthermore, a major challenge for the OICD lies in the fact that the university has not yet developed the capacity for the office to support and assist with the development of new opportunities.

3) **Communication:** Communication was mentioned so many times that it requires investigation. Almost all interviewees expressed desire for more communication and consultation. Many did not realize there is an Internationalization Communication Coordination committee or wondered what its function is. The review team learned there is a President's International Committee which meets once a year and includes community members. The

website was mentioned as a tool that could assist with better and more effective communication. As it stands, it is organized around offices and not “functions” or “interest groups.”

4) **Integration and coordination:** There are several units on campus directly involved in, or servicing international initiatives. These include OICD, the International Student Success Office, the Registrar’s Office, Graduate Studies and Research, ESL, External Relations, International Admissions and Recruitment. There seems, however, to be a strong sense of disconnect between or amongst these units as well as a lack of clarity around each unit’s areas of responsibility, a point which the units themselves acknowledged. The fact that these units report to different vice-presidents further exacerbates the issue. Another issue that was raised is the fact that different units hold different types of data and there is no common database of international activity on campus. This point is interlinked with the issue of communication and duplication of resources. It was suggested that OICD and ISSO need more consolidation around function, thus providing a sort of “one stop shopping.”

5) **Resource allocation:** Most interviewees conceded that OICD is not resourced adequately. Nevertheless, it was difficult to get a good overall picture of resources and budget for international activity on campus. Each unit has its own budget which is comprised of “hard”(mostly salary) and “soft” monies. Each unit conducts its own set of activities. ISSO has launched its own Student Abroad Mobility Program while OICD has a similar program, albeit in the last year of a 3-year pilot. It is difficult to understand if the real issue is one of under funding to OICD specifically, or duplication of resources across campus generally.

## **OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING INTERNATIONALIZATION SERVICES AT U OF R**

Today, internationalization is one of the most important factors shaping universities across the globe. The success of a university’s internationalization efforts not only affects its ability to attract top caliber students, staff and faculty, but has a significant impact on its ability to attract project funding and increased philanthropic commitments based on the school’s enhanced international reputation.

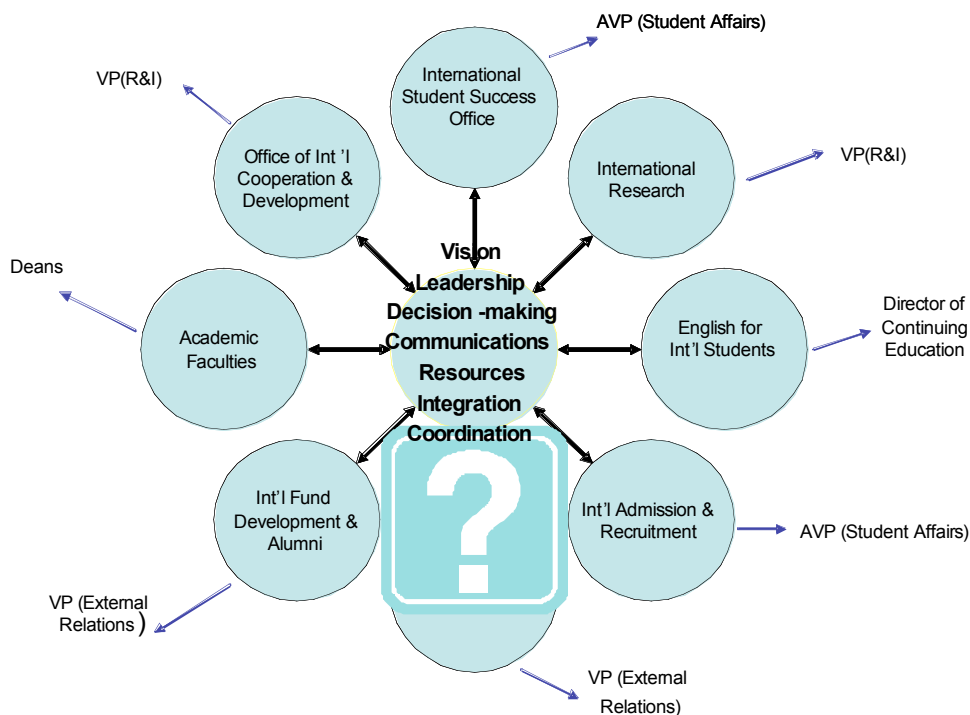
There are many very positive and diverse international programs and projects at the University of Regina that have added values to student experience, to the range and quality of teaching, research and innovation as well as to the promotion of this university as a recognized global leader. Some best practices were identified in this review, including the Hunan 1+1 and 2+2 joint degree programs, which are a multi-faculty initiative and have placed the University as a front runner in Canada in international degree education collaboration. The newly awarded CIDA Tier I Malawi Education Project is another example of the success of international initiative established on the campus. There is enthusiasm and a broad understanding among faculty, staff, academic and administrative leaders that internationalization is crucial to the success of the mission of the University. There are also strong and unified demands and expectations that the University must provide leadership and vision, as well as concrete commitment to move its international agenda.

The experience with internationalization on this campus, however, is one of excellence, but also one of gaps, redundancies and a lack of clear executive level leadership over each and every area and unit with a role in these services. This experience also suffers from a lack of coordination

and integration. While independent units have shown initiative and entrepreneurial creativity, the institutional identity and vision have not shown the same progress, resulting in wasted time and duplicated effort. A number of units dealing with international matters on campus report to different lines of leadership, in keeping with the traditional mandate of their various units (See Chart 1). Important decisions/initiatives are often delayed, or shelved, because there is no clear authority to approve and coordinate them. This has often led to the University's inability to take advantage of major international opportunities; or led to important decisions being made without consultation with relevant units that resulted in difficulties in implementation at operational levels.

To establish the U of R as a leader in internationalization, the University must integrate its efforts in partnerships, programs and projects, recruitment, study abroad, internationalizing the curriculum, research, communications, international alumni and fund development. It also must be innovative in pursuing future international programs, development and research initiatives. In addition, adequate resources must be provided to support internationalization efforts.

**Chart 1: Current Organizational Relations:**



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The review team has made the following recommendations:

- 1. Create an Associate Vice President (International) position to lead and integrate the international portfolio at the U of R**

In an era where global concerns require interdisciplinary approaches, the coordination of campus international programs and services across academic and administrative units is vital.

It is recommended that the University establish an AVP (International) position that will:

- Develop and communicate a **vision** and overall **strategy** for internationalization at U of R and oversee policy development to support that vision
- Provide **leadership** in **decision-making**
- Provide guidance with respect to **allocation** and **integration of resources**
- Provide **coordination** and **integration** of international efforts on campus

To integrate U of R's international portfolio is more than a priority; it is a necessity. With this position leading an integrated, comprehensive and systematic approach the University will be able to increase effectiveness in internationalization efforts and competitions. The "Centre" designation is less effective because of the perceptions of independence from the main stream of campus decision-making. An AVP (International) associated with the VP (Academic) will have greater direct influence and have the authority to coordinate multidisciplinary programs, and to reduce confusion, duplication and perceived ineffectiveness of the University's international portfolio. Furthermore, it will enhance the University's overall reputation, helping the University to attract more funding, scholars and a higher caliber of students.

## **2. Develop a single, cohesive vision and strategy that clearly articulates U of R's goals of internationalization**

The review team found that there is not an internationalization strategy that has been recognized and implemented on campus. There are various documents and reports with recommendations on internationalization in the past 20 years, but none of them was considered a strategy and most recommendations were rarely followed up.

It is recommended that the University establish a single, cohesive vision and strategy that clearly articulates U of R's goals of internationalization, which should build on existing institutional strengths, identify gaps and provide a plan for moving forward in areas of international education, research, development and engagement.

The following three internationalization goals are recommended to be considered:

### **1). Strengthen global awareness through innovative programs and educational outreach**

- Include an international component in undergraduate programs
- Expand international interdisciplinary program offerings on campus and abroad
- Provide support systems for faculty engaged in international programs, projects and research initiatives

### **2). Increase international learning opportunities**

- Increase study abroad opportunities and participation (5-10% graduating class ?)
- Increase and diversify international student enrolment (10-15% ?)

- Strengthen support systems for international students and students engaged in international activities

### **3). Enhance U of R's reputation nationally and internationally**

- Develop a comprehensive internationalization communication/marketing plan
- Establish strategic partnerships with government, private sector and other external communities to support university internationalization
- Position UofR as a recognized leader/centre in innovation and international education

### **3. Develop an institutional strategy for international student recruitment**

Recruiting high quality international students was identified as a top priority during the review. However, at the present, the University does not have a set of clear goals and objectives for international student recruitment. There is a lack of coordinated effort at the institutional level when decisions are made on recruitment. Many offices have a role to play, but not a single office assumes leadership and coordination.

It is recommended that the University establish an institutional strategy for international student recruitment that will address the following questions: “Do we want international students?” “Why?”, “How many?” “In what programs?” “What are the best practices to recruit them?” “Where to recruit?” “Do we have adequate services to support the success of international students on campus?” and “Are there innovative ways to expand our international programs overseas?” etc.

### **4. Develop a comprehensive internationalization communications/marketing plan**

The purpose of a comprehensive communications/marketing strategy is to develop an integrated approach to organize, highlight and share important information and knowledge of U of R's international activities, achievements, and opportunities with both the university and external communities. The strategy will help engage others more effectively in profiling the University and attracting more students and opportunities.

The strategy should address the following questions: who are the stakeholders of U of R internationalization and what are their communication requirements? How should information be received, organized, shared and disseminated? What are the most appropriate communication media? Who is responsible for planning and implementing various communication strategies? How should an international communications/marketing strategy be coordinated with that of the University?

Four action items are recommended to be included in the strategy:

- 1) Create a U of R International website, which will be organized by functions rather than offices so that there is a unified image and it will be user friendly
- 2) Create a U of R international marketing plan - Launch a campaign: U of R - an international oriented university in the Canadian Prairie, as part of the university branding exercise

- 3) Create a U of R international database through an institutional inventory of all international activities and function areas.
- 4) Develop effective communications materials that encourage the recruitment and retention of highly qualified students from around the world; and to provide communications materials that promote the internationalization achievements and contributions of the faculty, staff and students both internally and externally.

It is very important that the University not only develop successful internationalized programs and ventures, but also communicate them in a clear, compelling, concise and consistent manner to the larger world. It will help promote University's international image, and increase opportunities for the University to attract the people and resources required to secure its reputation as one of the leading international universities in Canada.

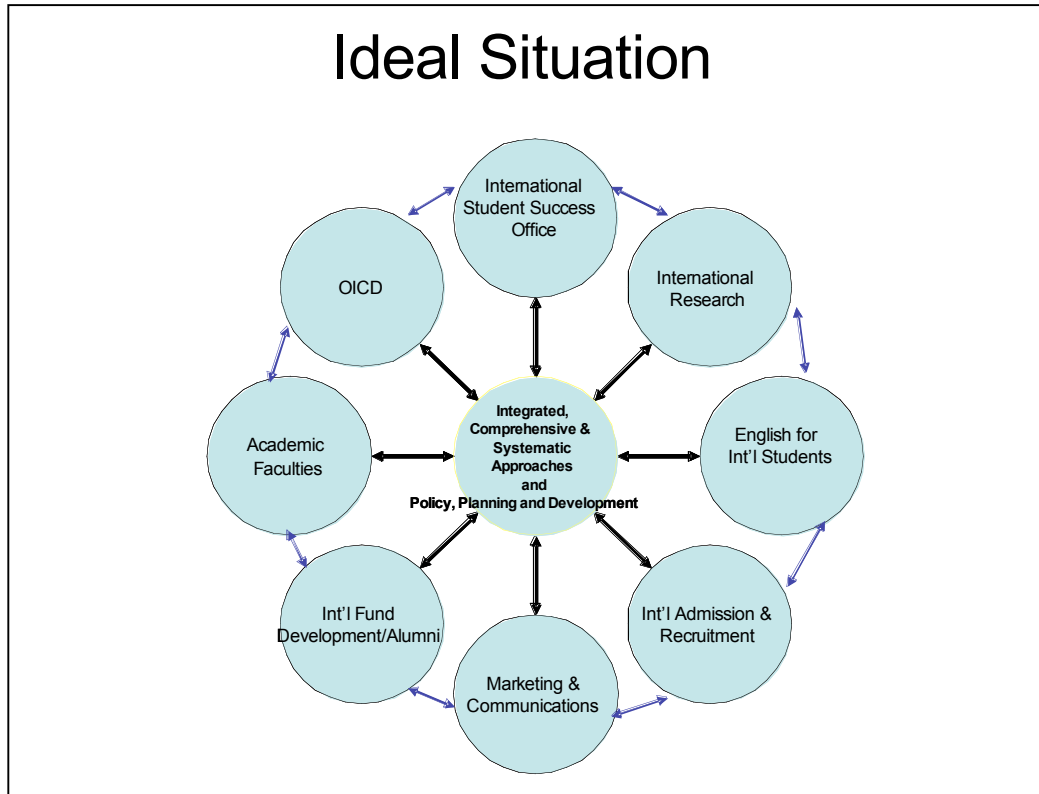
#### **5. Establish an integrated and coordinated organizational structure**

Some of the Canadian universities scanned by the review team have a more comprehensive and layered structure than that of U of R. The international centers of those universities appear to have the capacity to manage a wider and more diverse range of international initiatives within a unifying strategy framework and administration. Their organizational structure – with a single locus and focus of international services, programs and projects – is not necessarily better but it is less fragmented. A less fragmented model is advantageous to the extent that synergy is gained by the combining of functions under one administrative roof. The review team believes that the U of R's "loosely coupled" units supporting international work across the campus can achieve a reasonably high level of synergy, but only if there is a strong institutional vision and visible and coordinated leadership, as well as various units being willing to cooperate and share with one another as they respond quickly to opportunities and problems.

It is recommended that the University establish centrally coordinated international services to support the diverse elements of internationalization under the leadership of the Associate Vice President (International). This new structure will create not only horizontal integration, connection, and communication which are currently lacking, but also create a one stop shopping presence for all international activities at the University. The purpose of this structure is not to create a mechanism for central control but rather to provide coherent and comprehensive support to the international agenda of faculty, staff, students and external communities (See Chart 2).

The review team recognizes that to move all international offices physically together can be a challenge, but a more coherent and co-located appearance, as well as a clear organizational chart with reporting and working relations between different offices, will help the University reduce confusion of who does what, reduce the duplication of resources, and enhance the visibility and effectiveness of international services on campus.

**Chart 2: Recommended Organizational Model**



**6. Ensure resources planning for sustainable internationalization**

In order to achieve internationalization goals, the University must ensure that adequate financial resources are committed and made available to support strategic international initiatives and the central administrative units dealing with international responsibilities.

The University gains revenues from various international research projects and programs and fees paid by international students. Income from international sources should be used to provide the needed institutional support to sustain University's internationalization activities.

It is recommended that the University establish a revenue re-distribution formula to allocate a fixed % of international income to support international services and activities, as well as to invest in the development of new opportunities.

**7. Restructure international advisory committees**

Currently, the University has two institutional committees on internationalization: 1) President's International Committee, and 2) International Communication Coordination Committee. These two committees were established to provide advice to, and coordination of, international activities at U of R. However, from the feedback of the committee members and review of meeting minutes, these committees have not effectively met their mandates.

The review team recommends that the University revisit the mandates of the two committees and consider restructuring them into the following two functions: advisory (external) and coordination (internal). Each should have a set of clear, concrete and distinctive mandates:

1) U of R Internationalization **Advisory** Board

The Board should serve as advisor to the President and consist of senior university administrators and internationally oriented business, government and community leaders.

Purposes of URIAB

- To engage key business, government and community leaders in supporting the transformation of the University of Regina into one of Canada's leading international universities.
- To provide advice on strategic planning for internationalization policy and activities of the University of Regina

2) U of R Internationalization **Coordination** Council

The Council should be chaired by the Associate Vice-President (International) and consist of directors of various international offices and representatives from Deans' Council, external relations, URIAB, Student Union and key academics.

The Council provides oversight of internationalization at U of R with the following purposes:

- To provide guidance and advice to the University's senior administration with respect to internationalization.
- To provide a forum for sharing of ideas, opportunities and best practices, and a forum for policy advice and input related to internationalization at the University.
- To provide a forum for linking academic units and international offices in discussing new initiatives, reviewing existing programs, and identifying challenges and solutions, etc.

## **8. Strengthen relationships with the government, private sector and communities**

In Canada, internationalization is a shared vision among educational institutions, government, private sector and communities. It is crucial that the University of Regina make an effort to strategically engage external partners to advance its overall internationalization agenda.

Canadian firms and corporations expect universities to produce competent graduates who are able to live and work in a global economy. Business, in turn, can provide universities with advice on program development, and e student and faculty opportunities at home and abroad and lend financial support for international activities. Effective university-business partnerships will generate good will and support for campus wide internationalization among the business sector.

The University should take advantage of being located in the capital city of the province, and build strategic alliances with the provincial ministries to join force in solving labor shortage and other urgent economic issues. International recruitment and skill training of foreign students and immigrants are some of the areas in which the University can play a role to support the provincial economic development strategy.

It is recommended that the University consider the following factors when developing its partnerships with external communities:

- 1) Alignment between university international initiatives with the economic development goals of the city/province
- 2) Bridging the gap between internationalization as an academic activity and internationalization as an economic activity that will help the city/province thrive
- 3) Partnership with internationally oriented businesses, NGOs, and community organizations and facilitate their valuable contributions through advisory boards, recognition of achievements, and financial support of international activities at U of R.

### **Appendix 1: Documents Examined by the Review Team**

- OICD Unit Review Self-Study (July 2007)
- “Report in Increasing Internationalization at the University of Regina” by Larry Symes
- “Report to OICD – Hands on China – a Study Tour in China” by Dongyan Blachford and Philip Charrier (October 14, 2007)
- “Policy Framework Discussion Paper for the Office of International Cooperation and Development of the University of Regina” by Ken Sagal (June 8, 1999)
- “Office of International Co-Operation and Development Policy Document” by Garth Pickard (September 2001)
- “Task Force on Internationalization” (April 2003)
- The review team examined these additional documents during the site visit:
- “Official Outgoing Delegations”
- “Adhoc Committee on UR International Activities”
- “Agreements Table”
- Note from Bev Ross re: CBIE
- Report from First Nations University of Canada re: Centre for International Academic Exchange” and “Activities Report 2005-2007”
- Report from Centre for Continuing Education, Harvey King/Bertrand Lee, Feb. 4, 2008
- Report from Mary Vetter, Academic Dean, Luther College, Feb. 4, 2008
- Report from Rosetta Khalideen, Faculty of Education, Jan. 28, 2008
- Report from Don Millard, University of Regina Liaison, Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, Universities and Adult Learning Branch, Jan. 24, 2008
- University of Regina President’s International Committee Terms of Reference and 2007-2008 Committee Membership
- International Visitors 2002-2007
- Selected other Canadian universities’ international websites