

EVERY LITTLE BIT COUNTS:
FINDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAREER INTEGRATION
THROUGHOUT THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE

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Career Integration Conference

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OVERVIEW OF GEORGIA TECH

- Public, research-oriented university
- 14,500 UG; 7,000 GR
- 80% of students are in STEM fields
- 69% male, 31% female
- 47% of undergraduates participate in an international experience by graduation
- 85% of undergraduates participate in a professional development experience by graduation (co-op, internship, or international internship)
- Strong history of and support for both professional development and global experience – graduates are prepared for real world challenges.

INTERNATIONAL PLAN

- Created in 2005 as result of QEP
- Optional degree-long internationally-focused program that is integrated into undergraduate curriculum. Comparable to honors program.
- Set of experiential and academic requirements
 - At least 6 months of study, work, and/or research abroad related to major
 - Demonstrate foreign language proficiency
 - Three globally-focused courses
 - Internationally-focused capstone in major
- Degree designator = recognition on diploma and transcript
- Approx. 200 freshmen join each year; current enrollment is approx. 800
- Administered out of Office of International Education; support consists of faculty oversight committee, plus designated faculty and advisors in each department

INTERNATIONAL PLAN

- Career integration is key characteristic of the IP
 - “...globalize its educational experiences by preparing students for success and leadership roles in business, government, and academic careers with advanced communication and technical skills developed within an international context...”
 - “increase the number of undergraduate students who graduate with global competence in the international practice of their major...”
 - “use cultural frames of reference and alternate perspectives to think critically and solve problems within the discipline in the context of at least one other culture, nation, or region”
 - “collaborate professionally with persons of different cultures and function effectively in multicultural work environments”
- Hallmark of IP is *coherence*. There should be a clear connection between an IP student’s major, international experiences, and application to intended career throughout the program.

CAREER INTEGRATION THROUGHOUT

Connection to major and intended career reinforced throughout the undergrad years

- IP section of Freshman Seminar (Freshman)
- Statements of Coherence (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior)
- Possible international experiences (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior)
- Intercultural communication workshops (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior)
- Capstone projects (Senior)
- Communicating the value of the IP to employers (Senior)

IP program structure provides built-in opportunities, but there are elements that could be introduced at any institution

INTERNATIONALLY-FOCUSED FRESHMAN SEMINAR

- GT offers over 100 sections of GT 1000, a freshman seminar. About 85% of freshman take the course.
- Can choose from a themed/cohort section, major-specific section, or general section. For students in the IP, we offer a cohort section.
- Common curriculum: adjusting to college, campus resources, study skills, time management, resume writing, major and career development, communication skills, and teamwork
- Additional IP cohort themes: intercultural communication, global citizenship, what does global competency mean in your major / career, planning coherent IP international experiences, composing a resume for international opportunities

COHERENCE STATEMENTS

- IP students are asked to state how their two international experiences fit together and complement their major(s), minor, and intended career path.
- Forces student to consider long term goals when selecting international programs and requires them to thoroughly research programs and take ownership of their international experiences. (Don't just do what your friends are doing.)
- Requirement of the IP program. Must consult with and be approved by faculty advisor.
- Examples:
 - Biomedical Engineering + Leadership Studies = Leadership for Social Change summer program, service-learning in the DR spring study abroad program, science/pre-med focused summer study abroad → Apply to BME IP capstone, develop leadership skills needed to be physician in public health sector
 - Biology + INTA + German + French = Exchange program in French-speaking Switzerland, German language immersion, research projects focused on international biosecurity (science and diplomacy) → Professor focused on ethical development and use of biotechnologies
 - Civil Engineering + Pre-Med = Healthcare Industry in Spain summer program, Biology focused spring study abroad program, water treatment projects in Fiji and Uganda, capstone course on green water management system → Global Engineering & Health, Community Development

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EMBEDDED IN GT'S INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

- GT offers over 130 study abroad programs, plus many internship or research abroad opportunities. IP students choose the combination of experiences appropriate for their major and goals.
- Some of these international programs directly integrate professional development:
 - Internships: Directly related to major/career, also includes pre-departure goal setting and plan for development of global and professional skills, follow-ups throughout internship, and re-entry program to unpack experience and develop elevator pitch
 - LBATs: Summer language immersion programs, “Language for Business and Technology”, includes site visits with local industries and networking opportunities in-country
 - Industrial Engineering summer program in China and Singapore: upper-level major courses plus site visits to manufacturing and logistics hubs
 - International Affairs EU summer program in Brussels: numerous meetings with EU officials, experts, diplomats, policymakers, and site visits to EU institutions, NATO, think tanks, multinational firms, and NGOs
- All returned study abroad students have opportunity to take part in a “Marketing your International Experience” session co-hosted by OIE and Career Services (separate from IP programming)

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION WORKSHOPS

- Workshops and simulations that help students develop intercultural competency are offered year-round
- Two in particular focus on applying intercultural communication skills in the workplace:
 - Blast Off – teambuilding activity that simulates the International Space Station. Participants are divided into four teams (that correspond with actual ISS members US, Europe, Russian, Japan) and must work together to build a rocket. Cultural values and behaviors that reflect real-life cultural orientations are introduced. Discussion focuses on intercultural teamwork and understanding different [cultural] work styles. Very relevant to Engineering students. Effective for students who have not yet had significant international experience.
 - A World of Difference – video focused on multinational work group overcoming cultural differences. Discussion centers around identifying underlying values driving behavior, how to bridge those differences, and what a leader of a multicultural group should do to cultivate cohesive group while meeting project goals and deadlines. Most effective for upper level students who have already had significant international experience from which to draw.

IP CAPSTONE PROJECT

- All students must take a senior design or capstone course in their major. IP students introduce an international dimension to their project/paper/research.
- IP students receive guidance from their major's IP faculty advisor. OIE also offers a workshop to help students think through international/intercultural aspects of project.
- Can take on many forms depending on major and nature of project. Must demonstrate advanced level of thinking and application of major to a real-world problem.
- Examples of IP Capstones:
 - Multidisciplinary group (Biomedical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Industrial Design) designed an inexpensive, mobile toilet for Muslim refugees in Kenya that lowers fecal-oral contamination and reduces stress on the body while maintaining the cultural practices of squatting and anal washing. Won \$20,000 Inventure Prize and free US patent filing.
 - Five Industrial Engineering students wrote group paper that explored international applications of their individual senior design projects.
 - Computational Media student completed her capstone project while participating in an exchange program in Denmark. Worked on a project for a Danish company as part of a multicultural group.
 - Architecture student completed his senior studio/IP capstone project while participating in an exchange program at an architecture school in Paris. Designed French apartment building, compared French aesthetics and building regulations to those in the US.

“COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF THE IP TO EMPLOYERS” WORKSHOP

- Workshop offered specifically to outgoing IP seniors, many of whom are actively interviewing for jobs or grad school
- Most GT students go on to positions in engineering, computer science, or other technical fields. Need to help them find opportunities to mention the IP in interviews, as they are oftentimes not asked specifically about their international experiences.
- Purpose of workshop:
 - Discuss how to represent the IP on one’s resume
 - Practice elevator speech about the IP – many employers not familiar with the term
 - Discuss global competency and transferrable skills
 - Reflect on all of the different components of the IP and how they affected the student’s education and world view
 - Use the STAR technique to practice articulating what the student gained from the IP
 - Think about what aspects of the IP would be most interesting to a prospective employer based on the company’s profile. Identify global perspectives and insights they have developed of their discipline
 - Identify opportunities to incorporate the IP, international experiences, and global outlooks into one’s interview, especially if not directly related to position.

QUOTES FROM IP GRADUATES

“The IP helped me figure out how all of my interest fit together, something the regular Biology program could have never done. Had I not done the IP, I might have had to give up one of my interests when selecting a career.” - 2013 graduate, Biology major, German minor, International Plan

“The IP has helped me a develop a diverse skillset and wide range of experiences that go far beyond the “typical” college experience, thus enabling me to competitively position myself in the workforce to leverage my background in language and engineering at the global scale.” – 2011 graduate, Electrical Engineering and Spanish majors, International Plan

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

- Choose which topic you'd like to learn more about and possibly implement at your institution:
 - IP-themed freshman seminar
 - Coherence statements (i.e. connecting overseas experience to major / career)
 - Intercultural workshops / simulations
 - “Communicating the Value of the IP to Employers” workshop
- More detailed information on each topic available at assigned table
- Discuss:
 - What types of similar initiatives are taking place on your campus?
 - Do you have similar initiatives but that lack a career component (which could be inserted)?
 - What would you need to consider if you were going to introduce this activity/program at your institution?

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