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# My Path to Engagement with Internationalization Efforts

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# I. My Path to Engagement with Internationalization Efforts

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*Malcolm Daniels, Associate Professor, School of Engineering; Director of ETHOS Center*

The following biographical notes trace my path to engaging with my current internationalization efforts on the UD campus.<sup>1</sup>

- **I come from** a blue collar family in the West of Scotland. I am a first-generation college graduate. This meant I grew up in a family environment that had a narrow, somewhat racist worldview. At that time, vacations in continental Europe were not common; they were more a feature of upper-class British society: “princes and princesses on the Alpine ski slopes.” Generally, the community I grew up in had a distinct and substantial population of Pakistani and Indian immigrants who were shop owners or restaurant owners—stereotypical occupations.
- **I “grew up”** in high school as the UK joined the EU in 1973. This was an exciting time to “become European.” Prior to this, Britain was a somewhat aging colonial power trying hard to sustain the Commonwealth as a viable economic and international entity. I consider this to be a significant, formative event in shaping my worldview.
- **I attended** a “commuter school” when I was 17 (1975) but did not commute. The school offered few mono-cultural housing options. I moved in to an international residence that was 50/50 domestic/international split—mainly students from Hong Kong and Singapore. I developed strong friendships with many international students across academic years—although in retrospect they were somewhat transient and did not survive beyond college. The school achieved this diversity with a super-strong, transfer-student population into the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years. I studied engineering.
- **I traveled.** Entry into the common market or European Union opened up continental Europe to many of us. I spent one month in France, two months in Spain, and traveled to Germany as an undergraduate. These trips (which were primarily unstructured experiences) opened up the world to me in terms of imagining possibilities that were different.

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<sup>1</sup> Author’s note: These are my personal anecdotes and opinions, occasionally unsupported by facts.

- **I studied.** I followed the usual track to graduate school. This was essentially an international experience of its own: I was placed within a research group that comprised students from Iran, Iraq, India, Hong Kong, Nigeria, and beyond. We would eat together and spend many, many afternoons and evenings talking about world issues and our respective perspectives.
- **I worked.** I pursued an industry-sponsored PhD so my summers were spoken for. I definitely missed opportunities in terms of exploring the world during this time. The window to the world had closed, at least temporarily. Real work. Postdoc. The usual professional path. I set my sights on working in the U.S. Subsequently, I worked for something equivalent to UDRI (the University of Dayton Research Institute) and began to travel professionally—fortunately internationally.

### **My Formative International Experiences**

The most formative international experience for me, of course, was to jump ship and seek employment in the U.S. in 1985. I came to UD and, except for a brief leave of absence to teach in the UK, have worked here since. I made it through the culture shock phase—which was fun!—and decided to settle here: in the city of Dayton, not the suburbs of Kettering or Oakwood.

I have had plenty of opportunities to explore the U.S. and Canada. For many of you, this is probably not significant; but for me, it was like studying/traveling/working abroad. I took advantage of these vast spaces united by a common language. I’ve probably driven more miles and visited more states than most of the folks I work with, often just to say I’ve been there!

My professional route through UD was typical of many faculty, I think. I hunkered down, made it through tenure. UD was different then: internationalization or globalism was not a significant part of our language at that time. We had significantly fewer international students. Study abroad seemed primarily confined to students studying languages or taking “mission trips” to Africa and Central America. We have come a long way in the 15-plus years that I’ve been involved in these issues.

### **My Role in Promoting Internationalization on Campus**

I became involved in the ETHOS (Engineers in Technical Humanitarian Opportunities of Service-Learning) program when I was Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs. I will not recount the history of the ETHOS Center, but suffice it to say that I participated on ETHOS trips

to Nicaragua and West Africa. These trips ignited my passion for integrating academic study and international immersion as an essential component of the education of all engineering students at UD—or as many as we can get.

So what are we doing? As ETHOS Director I’m charged to develop academic programs (primarily for engineering students) that engage students in our broader domestic and international community. We’re *not* saving the planet or the environment one student at a time, despite the impression created by our media efforts that are inclined toward highlighting such grand notions. We’re committed as a *school* to the notion that intentionally engaging students in community-based work or service (but primarily work) produces learning beyond what we can achieve on campus. Our hope is that these experiences will help to shape the worldview of engineering students and the roles they play as professionals in addressing the grand engineering challenges that are ever-more present across the globe. The service, of course, is valued and important to the partners we work with, but we are *not* essential to their work. Neither is what I do.

Engineering faculty *are* leveraging their expertise and the capabilities of our institution to help address some of these sustainable-development goals or engineering grand challenges. We are working to honor our commitment to “research for the common good,” although a discussion of this work is best left for some other venue.

### **My Recommendations**

What recommendations do I have for the immediate and long-term future of UD’s efforts to globalize and internationalize? Does the work we do—at ETHOS, for instance—promote inclusion on our campus? What do I think we should be doing? We’re trying to do a lot. What follows are opinions, proposed experiments for moving us forward to a more inclusive campus.

1. **Create new academic models** that offer a multitude of programs that make it difficult for any UD student to avoid a “deep engagement” in some global issue, possibly adding this as a degree requirement for all academic programs. If we believe these are important, persistent, and enduring commitments—rather than a fashionable recruitment angle or the must-have “flavor of the day”—we should codify that in our degree programs. These commitments should not be simply implied by “reading between the lines” of our aspirational values in the Habits of Inquiry and Reflection document or the Institutional Learning Goals. For example, we could stipulate that Semester 4 of all engineering

programs must be completed abroad. We have had close to 500 students at UDCI (University of Dayton China Institute) over the space of two academic terms—is this economically viable?

2. Consider a **moratorium on Eurocentric programming**. I think it is pretty clear from conversations I have on campus that we need to “break the back” of some of our popular programs in Europe to encourage participation in other options. One more English-language reflective contemplation on the aesthetics of the Sistine Chapel or adding black pudding and Guinness to the Sunday brunch menu does not seem likely to achieve the internationalization goals we aspire to—however popular these experiences are.
3. **Engage our international students in “deep experiences”** beyond the UD campus. These students are engaged in an immersive experience by being here, but we are not representative of the breadth and depth of the lived, American experience. We need more intentional development of experiences or requirements that take students off our campus: programs like Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Semester of Service, LaLanne, etc. And to parallel what we might do for domestic students, make these experiences difficult to avoid or a required component of all degree programs.