

Vision of the Role and Status of International and Intercultural Communication within the Department of Communication at UW-Whitewater: 2005

The Department of Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater recognizes that societies in the twenty-first century continue to become increasingly interconnected. Factors driving these changes include: new demographic trends within the population of the United States, growth of world economic markets, advances in telecommunications and electronic forms of communication; international political events; and an increasing awareness of the complexities of establishing and maintaining one's own cultural identity within a multicultural environment. In order to be more prepared for living and working in this environment, graduates must be culturally competent communicators. That is, they must be able to interact effectively and appropriately with persons of different cultural and/or national backgrounds.

The Department applies the National Communication Association's definitions of International and Intercultural Communication. International Communication refers to communication between persons of different national identities, and Intercultural Communication refers to communication between persons of different cultural backgrounds within the geographical boundaries of the USA.

The Department of Communication follows a five-pronged approach in providing educational opportunities for students, faculty, and instructional academic staff to develop and enhance their international/intercultural communication competence:

- 1) Introducing students to the field of international and intercultural communication through courses such as the Cross-Cultural Communication course, the Cross-Cultural Communication Practicum, etc., and through the infusion of related theories and skills in other selected courses such as Interpersonal Communication, Nonverbal Communication, Listening Behavior, Mass Communication in Society, Public Opinion, etc.
- 2) Developing and promoting international and intercultural opportunities for students to experience cross-cultural communication through:
  - a) semester- or year-long student exchange opportunities for UWW students who wish to study abroad and international students who wish to study communication or journalism at UWW; and
  - b) short-term travel study courses.
- 3) Developing a formal program in international and intercultural communication, such as a module, certificate program, minor, or emphasis, and courses needed to support these efforts.
- 4) Developing and promoting Intercultural Communication service learning opportunities for students.
- 5) Developing and enhancing International and Intercultural faculty and academic staff exchanges, research, service, and training and development opportunities, and recognizing and rewarding faculty and staff for participation.

This five-pronged approach has been developed within the framework of the University's core value to develop a sense of community, respect for diversity, and global perspectives. It is also consistent with the University's mission of: providing a range of undergraduate programs, including interdisciplinary programs; providing graduate programs that build on the university's undergraduate strengths and emphases; and supporting scholarly activities that build upon its undergraduate and graduate programs and special mission. This approach is consistent with the Department's mission of: encouraging the practice of communication through skill-based applications of theory; addressing the ethical basis for decision-making about communication and its impact on the wider society in which our student practitioners live and practice; and encouraging service to others as an act of good citizenry as well as a manifestation of the unique talents of communication professionals.

5-17-05