



Office of VP Students, UBC

**Student Engagement:
Global Citizenship**

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Why engagement

- *“The VP Students portfolio will **engage** & support our students & alumni in their learning & success”*
 - **Vision articulated in draft strategic plan of VPS, August 2003**
- *“UBC has come through a difficult period of scarcity & restraint. We got caught up in the process of counting & measuring as a way of assessing our success. Trek 2010 calls for a different set of measurements. It ushers in an age of **citizenship, of civility & sustainability**.*

...If UBC can engage every student in the contemplation of that (important) question (posed by Plato) – “the right way to conduct our lives” – it will assure its position as one of the world’s best universities.”

 - **Addressing Excellence, B. McBride, June 2004**

Stated objectives

- To *engage* students and recent alumni in discussions on Global Citizenship
- To *give voice* to students and facilitate their contributions to Trek 2010

Implicit objectives

- **Nurturing student learning** –
through informal but guided conversations
- **Cultivating student leadership** –
through training & practice in group facilitation
- **Community building** –
through engagement & the art of conversations
with students/alumni from different academic
levels/disciplines, cultural/religious backgrounds

Project activities

- **Literature review -- international learning outcomes & global literacy attributes**
- **25 group leaders – a variety of disciplines & backgrounds – recruited & trained to reflect on GC and help shape the process**
- **180 students and alumni – responded from many constituencies & diverse interests – became engaged in 20 discussion groups to share different perspectives & views**

Special features noted

- **Innovative (democratic participatory)**
- **Informed by research but shaped by participants**
- **Interdisciplinary (34 schools/programs)**
- **Intergenerational (undergrad/grad/alumni)**
- **Intercultural/international**
- **Interplay of different perspectives/worldviews**

Project questions

- What does "global citizenship" mean to UBC students and alumni?
- What values, competencies and actions should UBC students develop and practice to be responsible global citizens?
- What kind of programs and activities are available at UBC that contribute to educating students as global citizens?
- What else UBC should do and what should be done differently?

The Meanings of Global Citizenship

- Global citizenship means a world where people are treated and respected equally for who they are. It is about helping people that are less fortunate.

- Global citizenship is about inclusiveness. Interacting and working together is the core of being and belonging, and we need to realize how important our connections are with others in our friendships, neighbourhoods, our communities, and with our planet. Global Citizenship is about everyone.

Global Citizenship: Yes

- *Global citizenship is a form of personal awareness and sensitivity to both local and foreign affairs; recognition of the importance of collaboration and working toward harmony amongst people, governments and environment.*
- *A good global citizen is essentially a good scientist, humble, willing to take the time, willing to collect samples and whatever the result is, he will be able to test them against his preconceptions.*
- *By defining “global citizenship”, we define what it means to be human.*

Concerns about the concept

- I see this concept as an ideology being developed by some Western politicians and business tycoons to put a benign face on their dominance and interference in the political economies of so called developing countries.*
- As a citizen of a state I have a birth certificate, a passport, voting rights, I pay taxes, I am entitled to certain rights, responsibilities and privileges, I have freedom of movement in the country, I am subject to the country's laws, I enjoy the rewards of social policies, I have diplomatic protection abroad and so on. Until we have such parallel structures for the world, I do not see how one can claim global citizenship.*

Further concerns

- *I think they (western politicians) are trying to make people abandon their cultures.*
- *It implies everyone has the same right to travel. It's an American ideal.*
- *Global citizenship isn't something that is going to happen soon. It should be in Trek 2510.*
- *“Global citizenship” is too vague and it's too easy to fall into “broad strokes”, in other words- have no accountability.*

Alternatives

- *“Humanity” would be a better word- understanding how to be a better human being and one’s relationship to the globe- environmentally, socially, politically, economically, spiritually- one’s responsibility, reverence and respect is reinforced but more importantly becomes an act of practice.*
- *“The problem is not the concept: we can like it or dislike it. The key thing is how can we do it?”*

Elements of Global Citizenship Education: Values, attitudes, beliefs and aspirations

Responsibility	Respect	Diversity	Equality and equity
Humanity	Community	Compassion	Humility
Sustainability	Life-long learning	Accountability	Interconnectedness
Peace, human security, human rights	Open-mindedness	Non-judgemental attitude	Individuals can make a difference

Elements of Global Citizenship Education: Knowledge, skills and abilities

Local and global awareness	Self-awareness	Knowledge of social justice issues	Understanding fair trade issues
Knowledge of human rights issues	Knowledge of cultures and religions	Understanding the impact of individual actions	Understanding different perspectives
Ability to adapt	Cultural sensitivity	Intercultural communication skills	Foreign languages
Interpersonal skills	Critical thinking skills	Negotiation skills, conflict resolution skills	Organizational skills

Taking action

- Be aware of what's going on locally and globally
- Make ethical choices
- Participate in your own community
- Don't be apathetic!
- Develop linguistics skills
- Go abroad to study/work/travel
- Treat people as you want to be treated
- Learn about different cultures and share your culture
- Take courses about global issues, interdisciplinary courses and courses that can make you a better person
- Engage in advocacy!
- Challenge injustices!
- Protect environment
- Get involved! Participate in international events on campus
- Engage people in a dialogue
- Reflect on your actions

Are there common values?

- *There must be some common values, but what are they?*
- *It's like defining "universal human rights," but how universal are they? We can only come up with something that appeals to each one us.*
- *People's values are not the same but they can still co-exist peacefully.*

What is more important?

- *People who have lived abroad feel that their identity belongs to different countries. They question their identity. This is a valuable reflection.*
- *Only people who have money can go abroad. It increases the gap between students who have money and resources and who have not.*
- *I have not been to Africa but just hanging out with refugee students made me so aware of African countries and cultures.*

Not enough

- *You don't have to accept but you have to respect. I am eating tofu, you are not eating tofu. I have to respect that. You like cheese, I don't like cheese but I respect your cheese.*
- *The instructor seemed to be very "sensitive". She kept asking me in front of the class: "Are you comfortable with my English?" She made me uncomfortable.*
- *It's about attitude. If you are going to think that everybody is ignoring you, it's going to be a very difficult year.*
- *But for international students, attitude is not enough. If they don't have good English skills, it's hard to make friends. We need more opportunities to improve English.*

Best Practices at UBC: Courses and programs teaching about...

- World affairs
- Local and Global issues
- Ethics
- Interdisciplinary studies
- Environmental issues
- Cultural studies
- Comparative studies of social systems, educational systems, religions
- Sustainability issues
- Self-discovery through arts
- Social awareness about gender, race and class issues
- Agricultural and natural resource systems
- Social impacts of technology
- Cross-cultural examination of social problems

Best Practices:

Extra-curricular activities providing opportunities to...

- Interact with people from diverse cultures
- Learn about different world regions
- Contribute to the community
- Engage in self-reflection and better understand oneself
- Gain leadership skills; diplomacy, advocacy and negotiation skills
- Understand sustainability issues
- Gain awareness of global affairs, local and global issues and issues of international development
- Gain belief that people can make a positive change in the world and engage in humanitarian projects

Recommendations: University practices

- Be a “vocal advocate for local issues” (labour practices, relations with indigenous people and purchasing policies)
- Become a more environmentally responsible institution
- More value on teaching rather than just research
- Ensure diversity in student recruitment and faculty/staff hiring
- Stop tuition increases
- Increase support for international students

Recommendations: University practices

- Practice more understanding of people from developing countries
- Decrease class size
- Increase support for student initiatives
- More student space on campus
- Increase recognition of the work on anti-racism, sustainability, community service etc.
- Publish stories about good student role models
- UBC should become a leader in global citizenship

Recommendations: Curriculum

- Raise awareness about global issues
- Develop understanding of local issues in the global context
- Pay attention to environmental issues, social justice issues, aboriginal issues and international development
- Develop knowledge of human rights
- Integrate issues from developing countries
- Increase knowledge of different world regions, cultures and religions
- Integrate gender issues, sexuality issues and ethnic minorities issues
- Highlight women's contributions to different disciplines
- Develop understanding of individual, social and global responsibilities
- Develop analytical skills, critical thinking skills and intercultural communication skills
- Involve community service components and research components

Recommendations: Extra-curricular Activities

- More encouragement to participate in events discussing local and global issues
- Improve advertising for international events (e.g. broadcast large international events to all UBC students; create a web-site for all international events at UBC)
- Organize large international events in the Student Union Building
- Increase awareness of the role of International House on campus
- More opportunities for interaction between international and Canadian students
- More opportunities to engage in projects that seek solutions to global problems
- Increase awareness about volunteer opportunities to help other countries
- Provide incentives to go abroad on exchanges and internships
- Build a community of people based on respect, value of diversity and open-mindedness

Impressions from discussions

- *It made me think of things that I had never really thought or talked about.*
- *It was good to keep it diverse; we had good group dynamics.*
- *It was a good opportunity to practice public speaking skills and to connect with people interested in discussing local and global issues.*

More impressions

- I realized I have a lot of ideas, a lot to say and a lot to offer.*
- This is a wonderful farewell for me as I am going back to Botswana. I encourage you to keep up the dialogue.*
- I think Trek 2010 is a good start. It's good they are asking us what UBC should do more of. It's a good initiative to keep everybody in the loop.*
- The good thing is that these discussions are taking place at all. My wish is that it is not just a public relations thing.*

Feedback & Comments

- Group leaders find the **student-led group process** empowering and engaging for addressing institutional issues and recommend more student & campus-wide engagement to use this process
- *“A very worthwhile **exercise in participatory democracy** on important issues in the life of the University...I highly recommend doing a similar project with faculty...staff ”*
– a faculty member
- *“Congratulations! You **took the risk** in adopting this approach and **gave voice to students with diverse views.** ”*
– a staff member

Conclusions and Reflections

- “Global citizenship” means different things to different people
- Concept to be defined in a way that is acceptable to most University constituents
- An in-depth academic inquiry to be launched to understand critically the concept and its value for educational practices
- A framework to be developed for integrating this concept into university practices, academic programs and extra-curricular activities

Next steps for the project

- Continue to engage campus community (students, staff & faculty) in similar discussions
- Set up a committee of experts on global citizenship issues
- Show examples of good global citizens
- Define “the corners of global citizenship that can shine through in all faculties”
- Publish findings from this project to educate more students about the topic

Questions: Beyond the pilot

- **Will it be helpful to share the findings more widely on campus?**
- **How to do it effectively? And for what purpose? (one suggestion: to use this report as a working document to inform other campus activities on Global Citizenship)**
- **To start a similar process to engage faculty? Staff? Alumni?**
- **Any interest for an on-going web-based forum on the web?**
- **Ownership of the project in future & academic leadership?**