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# An Analysis of Vermont Academy's Internationalization Effort

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AN ANALYSIS OF VERMONT ACADEMY'S INTERNATIONALIZATION EFFORT

AN ANALYSIS OF VERMONT ACADEMY'S INTERNATIONALIZATION EFFORT

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**Abstract**

While the concept of delivering global education has become a popular trend among American universities and colleges, American secondary schools, particularly independent schools, are also making global educational opportunities available to their students. Vermont Academy, a 141-year-old independent, coeducational, college preparatory and boarding high school in Saxtons River, Vermont, does not have a formal, comprehensive and well-articulated internationalization plan even though various international components have been existing on campus for years. The International Student Program, trimester abroad programs and several global partnerships are some examples of the current internationalization initiatives at Vermont Academy.

The American Council on Education's CIGE Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE) Model for Comprehensive Internationalization serves as a guideline to both secondary and higher educations in the U.S. The model has six components, including articulated institutional commitment; administrative leadership, structure, and staffing; curriculum, co-curriculum, and planning outcomes; faculty policies and practices; student mobility; and collaboration and partnerships (American Council on Education, 2016). This Capstone's goal is to use the CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization as a main guideline to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of VA's current state of internationalization. The Capstone recognizes the existence of several internationalization components such as student mobility, international student support and established global partnerships at VA. Meanwhile, it recommends that Vermont Academy should include more global commitment into its mission statement; create a global academic curriculum; continue to support and refine its existing trimester-abroad programs; support faculty-student collaboration on short-term global travel;

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promote more diversity among the faculty and students; and develop alternative funding sources to support future internationalization efforts. These recommendations would help further internationalizes VA in order to educate students with global competency that suits the needs and challenges presented in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### **Introduction**

According to Farrugia (2014), a growing number of international students are coming to earn a high school diploma and then deciding to pursue higher education in the U.S. (2014, p. 2). The number of international students enrolled in American high schools tripled to 73,019 between 2004 and 2013 and 67% of them continued to study in American universities afterwards (2014, p. 2). Moreover, Asian students made up the largest percentage of the student population, which was 57% of the total number of 73,019 international students in the U.S. in 2013 (2014, p. 3). Furthermore, in 2013, 95% of these 73,019 international students chose to attend American private schools, including “independent schools and religious-affiliated school” (2014, p. 4). In terms of motivations of pursuing a high-school diploma abroad, Farrugia (2014) argues that international students, in particular Asian students, “perceive that studying abroad at the secondary level can provide them with the academic, language, and cultural skills to make them stand out to admissions officers at the most elite universities in the U.S. and other Western countries” (2014, p. 3). They think that such investment in high-quality Western education from high school to university, will ultimately lead them to successful careers (2014, p. 3).

Even though study abroad programs, foreign language learning and faculty diversity are also important areas of internationalization within secondary schools, there is not much relevant and comparative data available for this research. The awareness of global education and communication among secondary schools in the U.S. is, however, active and growing. For

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example, TABS (The Association of Boarding Schools) and NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools) cohost an annual, three-day long, Global Symposium where independent school leaders, administrators, faculty and staff, along with distinguished guest speakers, share different and innovative ways of teaching global competency and bringing global education aspects into their curriculum, residential life programs, and study abroad programs (TABS-NAIS Global Symposium, 2017). Administrators from Vermont Academy have participated the TABS-NAIS Global Symposium as both presenters and audiences in the past three years.

Established in 1876, Vermont Academy is a college preparatory boarding and day school for a total number of 236 students in grade 9 through postgraduate from 20 states and 17 countries (Vermont Academy, VA at A Glance, para. 3, 2017). Vermont Academy is a school that constantly challenges its students in the classroom, on the athletic fields, and in the community. In addition, Vermont Academy students thrive under the close personal attention and support provided by the faculty. The teachers meet students where they are—setting the bar high, while also providing a safety net to catch those who fall short of their goals.

Entering its 142<sup>nd</sup> year, Vermont Academy will welcome Dr. Jennifer Zaccara, as its eighteenth head of school starting July 1, 2017. Dr. Zaccara will bring her knowledge, vision, experience and passion to improve Vermont Academy's STEM/STEAM program, give special attention to diversity, culture, and inclusivity, and to campaign for global education (Vermont Academy, Vermont Academy Names New Head of School, para. 5, 2017). In conjunction with this capstone research on VA's internationalization strengths and weaknesses, the upcoming inauguration of Dr. Zaccara as the new Head of School offers an exciting opportunity to evaluate, discuss, and implement internationalization strategies to help VA better brand itself as a secondary school offering quality global education.

### **Literature Review**

The CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization helps secondary schools develop strategies to coordinate and unite different programs and initiatives to turn schools into more global-oriented institutions (American Council on Education, 2016). Articulated institutional commitment, as the first component of this model, requires an institution to articulate its internationalization commitment in its mission statement and develop specific action steps. More specifically, the model asks an institution to form an internationalization committee to engage key stakeholders such as students, faculty and staff to gain their support, and design internationalization goals with evaluation. Secondly, the model calls for an active involvement and collaboration among administrators and an International Office to lead the internationalization effort on and off campus. Third, the model demands a globally-focused curriculum and co-curriculum to be infused into an institution's education system where the students can take classes that incorporate foreign languages, learn international issues and perspectives, and interact with foreign faculty and students. The school needs to create an evaluation system to measure students' learning outcomes on global competency. Fourth, the model suggests that a school should consider hiring more faculty with international background and teaching experience to enrich intercultural learning on campus while providing professional development opportunities for faculty to bring global perspectives and knowledge to their classes. Fifth, the model emphasizes supporting both inbound and outbound flow and exchange of students through financial aid, re-entry support and credit transfer for students studying abroad, and orientation and support system for international students. Lastly, the model recommends schools research and establish global partnerships to offer "international experiences for students



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and faculty, enhance the curriculum, generate revenue, and raise the visibility of institutions at home and around the world” (American Council on Education. 2016).

A variety of research has proven that internationalization of education has a profound impact on students' global competence and economic competitiveness. The National Education Association (2010) defines global competence as “the acquisition of in-depth knowledge and understanding of international issues, an appreciation of and ability to learn and work with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, proficiency in a foreign language, and skills to function productively in an interdependent world community” (The National Education Association, 2010). Hudzik (2011) suggests that internationalization in education helps “enhance knowledge, skills, attributes, and careers for graduates to be effective citizens and workforce members” (2011, p. 16). Engel (2014) also argues that teaching global competence as an important part of internationalizing education, serves as a necessary response to the rapid changes brought by globalization when “societies around the world are becoming more ethnically and culturally diverse” (2014, p. 1). She continues to point out that gaining global competence not only helps students acquire “attitudes and skills to live within such as diverse society,” but it also trains them with “cross-cultural communication, foreign languages and global understanding skills, as well as non-cognitive skills such as flexibility, creativity, and curiosity” (2014, p. 1). This research indicates the positive impacts of internationalization in education on students.

Regarding implementing internationalization in education, Knight (2008) recommend three areas of focus, including curricular and extra-curricular internationalization, student exchange through study abroad, and global partnerships (2008, p. 12). Moreover, Kehm and Teichler (2007) put an emphasis on “funding for study abroad” and “support structures for

international students.” (2007, p. 234) Additionally, Kehm and Teichler (2007) suggest that keeping foreign languages offerings in both domestic and study-abroad curriculum is vitally important for students to acquire global competencies as a part of implementing internationalization in education (2007, p. 235). To summarize, some common themes of such implementation include funding, curricular and extra-curricular internationalization, global partnerships, support for international students, study abroad and foreign languages.

There are also some cautionary notes about internationalization in education discussed in recent years. In her research, Engel (2014) corrects some of the wrong assumptions. First, Engel (2014) argues that not every student is able to study abroad but can still gain global competence from their daily global-oriented curriculum at the home campus (2014, p. 3). In fact, “one high school student out of 10,800 participates in a semester or year-long exchange program” according to the 2013 Mapping the Nation data, (2014, p. 3). Since there are still very few study abroad opportunities with low participation rates among high school students, developing global-oriented curriculum that connects to the local, national, and global communities could encourage students to learn about other cultures, current world affairs and the interdependency among different cultures. Second, increasing resources and supply for internationalization content in education may not translate well into students’ global competence (2014, p. 3). Rather, Engel (2014) suggests that schools need to utilize these resources on an institutional scale and in a holistic, comprehensive, and integrated way that penetrates across different disciplines and is expressed in lesson plans and school mission (2014, p. 4). Finally, increasing student and faculty diversity does not automatically lead to institutional gain in global competence (2014, p. 4). While striving to enrich diversity on campus, schools need to purposefully design and promote cross-cultural interactions and activities among all students to foster global-competence learning

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opportunities and a global-minded school culture (2014, p. 5). Engel's counter arguments prevent future research from repeating these assumptions while encouraging critical and creative analysis on this topic.

There are examples of internationalization among secondary independent schools in the U.S. where global-orientated curriculum and co-curriculum, faculty with international background and experience, student mobility, and foreign languages are evident and prominent. Lakeside School, a Seattle independent school serving students from grade 5 to 12, provides a successful case of a comprehensive global education model of many other independent schools. First, Lakeside purposely hires faculty and staff who have international teaching, working, and living experience and supports initiatives to include global perspectives into their classes (Lakeside School, A Globally Focused Curriculum, para. 1, 2017). For example, Lakeside's English classes teach "a broad range of international writers and perspectives," and some of Lakeside's History classes focus on human rights, gender studies, and genocides in modern world (Lakeside School, A Globally Focused Curriculum, para. 2, 2017). Second, Lakeside is a member of the Global Online Academy where its students can regularly discuss global topics such as Global Health, 9/11 in Global context, and Global entrepreneurship with other independent school students worldwide (Lakeside School, A Globally Focused Curriculum, para. 3, 2017). Third, Lakeside supports student-run international clubs on campus such as Amnesty International, Model UN, Current Events Club, and Global Health Club, to promote global learning on campus (Lakeside School, Global Clubs, para. 1, 2017). Furthermore, all Middle School students will participate in an eight-day Global Service Learning trip to "one of the six Pacific Northwest communities where issues of economy, environment and culture intersect" at no extra cost to the students' families (Lakeside School, Global Service Learning, para. 2, 2017).

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Finally, the Upper School juniors can study in France, Spain, Italy, China, Jordan, Vermont, coastal Maine, or Washington D.C. to broaden their worldview, acquire language skills and gain cultural competency (Lakeside School, Study Away, para. 1, 2017). The successful implementation of global education at Lakeside School offers relevant case study for Vermont Academy to compare and evaluate its current internationalization status and offerings.

### **Background of Vermont Academy**

#### **Student, Faculty, and Staff Breakdown**

During the 2016-17 academic year, Vermont Academy welcomed 236 students from 20 states and 17 countries. 80% of the students are boarders while the rest are day students. In addition, 40% of the students are girls and 60% are boys, including two transgender students. Furthermore, 80% of the students are domestic whereas 20% are international (Vermont Academy, VA at A Glance, para. 3, 2017).

This year, Vermont Academy has a total number of 102 faculty and staff, including 58 females and 54 males. More specifically, there are 42 teaching faculty members, 5 of whom are part time. 7 out of the 42 teaching faculty members were born and raised outside the U.S. Among the teaching faculty group, 18 hold master's degrees, and one has terminal degree (Vermont Academy, Faculty and Staff, 2017). The faculty and staff members belong to eight academic departments: Math, Science, History, Art, Music, World Language, English, and Learning Skills (Vermont Academy, Curriculum, 2017). The administration team has 11 members, including the Head of School, Director of Admissions, Director of Global Programs, Athletic Director, Director of IT, Dean of Students, Director of Marketing and Communications, Business Manager, Director of Alumni Engagement, Director of Health Services, and Academic Dean.

#### **Academic Programs**

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To successfully graduate from Vermont Academy, a student needs to pass a total number of 17 classes: four in English; three in Mathematics; three in History; three in Science; two in World Languages; one in Art and one elective. Currently, there are four foreign languages offered at VA: Spanish, French, Chinese and Russian. Students can take Spanish, French, and Chinese from beginning to AP level with a total of 5 levels, and Russian from beginning to advanced with a total of 2 levels (Vermont Academy, World Language, 2017).

Learning Skills (LSK), the MAPS advisory system, and the Global Programs, make Vermont Academy a growth-minded and global-oriented community. The LSK Office consists of seven full-time faculty members whose passion and expertise fall into the following four core areas of academics: “building motivation and confidence; coaching for executive function and ADHD; managing long-term projects; and tutoring for specific projects” (Vermont Academy, Learning Skills, para. 5, 2017). Both academically-challenged and high-achieving students work with LSK teachers on campus to make academic progress. MAPS, which stands for “My Action Plan for Success,” is a student-centered, goal-setting program that is associated with VA’s advisor system. At the beginning of each trimester, each student sets up his or her academic, personal, and athletic goals with specific action steps. Then, the student’s advisor and parents share their feedback to refine the goals and action steps. Throughout the trimester, the student will regularly revisit the goals with his or her advisor to reflect, adjust, and plan for new goals (Vermont Academy, MAPS, para. 3, 2015).

The Vermont Academy Global Programs Office, a team of eight full-time faculty members, oversees inbound and outbound international programs. For the inbound programs, the Global team serves as the advocate and liaison between the international students and their

teachers while organizing cross-cultural events such as an International Community Lunch, a Lunar New Year Celebration, and a Flag Ceremony to promote global awareness on campus.

For the outbound programs, the office designs and runs three trimester-abroad programs in China, Chile, and Spain in which VA students and faculty study, live, and travel to gain global understanding and intercultural competence (Vermont Academy, Global Education, para. 4, 2017). VA started the trimester in Spain Program in 2009 and opened Chile and China in 2014 and 2015 respectively. VA students can choose to participate in all three programs, either during one academic year or during different academic years. Each program can take up to 15 students and two faculty members, and financial aid available for academically and financially qualified students.

### **Institutional Context and Need Assessment**

This is my fourth year working at VA as the Assistant Director of Global Programs and the only Mandarin Chinese teacher. More specifically within the Global Programs, I oversee the International Student Program and the trimester-abroad Program in China. Although Vermont Academy provides several cross-cultural study-abroad programs, along with strong academic and social support to its students, there are still areas of improvements according to the CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization. First, VA's mission statement lacks emphasis on global education, making it unclear about the school's commitment to educating global citizens. Second, besides the trimester abroad programs, there are not many global perspectives infused in the curriculum and co-curriculum. The concept of global education seems to only mean to study abroad instead of teaching global education on campus for the large majority of students who may not be able to study abroad. Third, VA has not made a deliberate and conscious effort to hire faculty members with international backgrounds and experiences, nor has it been able to

provide the faculty consistent professional training opportunities in global education. Fourth, a few faculty and international students demand a more comprehensive integration of the international students. Finally, several students who wanted to study abroad have been denied financial aid. The goal of this Capstone is to provide viable proposals to solve these issues.

### **Current Internationalization Breakdown**

#### **Curriculum and Co-Curriculum**

There is a lack of a global component in both the curriculum and co-curriculum at Vermont Academy. It does not seem to appear that the academic departments frequently discuss ways to include global perspective into their classes, nor do they seek interdisciplinary collaborations between different subjects. Additionally, there could have been more active knowledge and experience sharing between the students coming back from the three trimester-abroad programs and the rest of the community through facilitated activities. Furthermore, VA only requires two years of foreign language learning and does not require international students to take another language besides English. Since Spanish, French, Chinese, and Russian may not be available in some of the international students' native countries, taking one additional foreign language along with English would further broaden international students' understanding of the world through language, culture, and potential trimester-abroad programs in Spain, Chile and China. Next, VA currently has the following co-curriculum options that are related to global education: Model UN, Environmental Club, Cheese Club, Gender Sexuality Alliance, and Bread Club. Finally, the Global Programs team is discussing how to create a Global Education Curriculum that is interdisciplinary, connects to the abroad programs and make it also a requirement of graduation. More details about this curriculum will be discussed in the recommendation section.

### **Faculty Policies and Practices**

Because faculty directly interact with the students, it is important for Vermont Academy to provide financial resources and professional training for faculty to gain international experience and knowledge that can be transformed into their daily teaching, advising, dorm parenting and coaching. Since 2015, VA has been sending one support teacher to each trimester-abroad VA program as the academic and support teacher. Six non-Global Programs teachers have lived, traveled and worked abroad along with the participating students and the program director, to gain invaluable professional development. Also, Global Programs at VA maintains an annual budget to send staff to various conferences about global education such as TABS-NAIS Global Symposium and NAFSA conference. In addition, a few language teachers received grants to pursue coursework in foreign language teaching to hone their teaching skills with the global perspective.

### **Student Mobility**

Vermont Academy Global Programs Office has established campuses on three continents: Asia (Hangzhou, China, in fall), South America (San Clemente, Chile, in winter), and Europe (Santiago de Compostela, Spain, in spring). Each program can take up to 15 students and they continue to take their VA classes while taking country-specific electives. For example, students going to China can take courses in Chinese paper cutting, calligraphy, Hangzhou History, and Chinese Literature (Vermont Academy, China, para. 2, 2016). Students going to Spain can study Renaissance Art and Conversational Spanish. The Chile Program students can take Latin American Literature, Sustainability, and Environmental classes. Two VA faculty members are the leading faculty of the program and one of them is the Program Director. Additionally, there are partner-school teachers to provide academic and extra-curricular supports.



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In terms of the housing structure, the China Program students live on the campus that belongs to the Chinese partner boarding school with Chinese roommates from Sunday through Thursday. They spend weekends with their host families from the same partner school. In that sense, they experience both the Chinese boarding school life and host family life. In Chile and Spain, students live with their hosts during the entire trimester, which gives them lots of free time to explore the small towns of San Clemente and Santiago de Compostela together with their host siblings and families after school. During each program, students travel extensively to gain hands-on learning, apply their classroom knowledge to real-life scenarios, and reflect upon their travels through writing. For instance, students taking Chinese Calligraphy and Renaissance Arts will travel to the Forbidden City in Beijing and the Vatican Museum, respectively, to study the ancient calligraphy art pieces and deliver on-site presentations about the Sistine Chapel ceiling. Students in the Chile Program take a week-long backpacking trip to the Andes and learn about outdoor leadership skills (Vermont Academy, Chile, para. 1, 2016). Upon their return to their headquarters (Hangzhou, San Clemente, and Santiago de Compostela), they write and discuss reflections of their travels. So far, VA Global Programs have taken students to the following cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Nanjing, Sanya, Xi'An, Taipei, Hualian, Rome, Madrid, Barcelona, Prague, Florence, Paris, Pau, and Santiago de Chile. It has been an incredible and eye-opening experience for those VA students coming from small towns in America to see famous, multi-million-population cities all over the world. In the end, providing students the chance to study abroad on three continents for a full trimester distinguishes VA from many other independent schools.

### **International Student Support**

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The most important aspect of the inbound program at VA is the International Student Program (ISP). There is no doubt that international students play crucial role at VA, demographically, financially, and culturally. Out of the 236 students, 70 are international and they come from 17 countries: China, Canada, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, India, France, Spain, Finland, Zambia, Taiwan, Hungary, Brazil, Mexico, the Czech Republic, Georgia, and Switzerland (Vermont Academy, International Student Program, para. 1, 2016). Additionally, most of the international students pay full-tuition of \$54,500 per year. They collectively contribute roughly \$3 million to the overall \$7 million operating budget of VA. Furthermore, such a diverse international student population offers an incredible cultural learning opportunity for every member of the VA community. Therefore, it is crucially important for the VA community to value, respect, and support this special group of students.

There are several key sub-programs supporting the international students here at VA. First, the International Student Program offers a week-long Jumpstart New International Students Orientation Program from late August to early September. The Jumpstart Program aims to offer new international students a smooth transition into VA. Participating students arrive a week earlier than the rest of the new students to get comfortable and organized before the academic school years starts and avoid jet lag. In addition, they are picked up by VA teachers at nearby airports and then can unpack and set up their dorm rooms. Global Programs staff take the students to go shopping for dorm and school supplies, visit local farms, go hiking, visit Burlington, VT, and play afternoon sports. The students take their English and Math placement tests, register to their classes, order their textbooks online, and meet their teachers, dorms parents, advisors and coaches. They also attend LSK and Writing Center workshops to become familiar with VA's academic system and expectations.

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The First-year Thanksgiving Program and American host family placement are two other services that ISP offers. Many parents of the first-year international students worry about where their children can stay for a safe and meaningful 8-day Thanksgiving break. ISP provides VA-teacher led Thanksgiving trips to Boston and New York to address this concern. Participating students have gone to the Boston Freedom Trail, visited the September 11 Memorial, and enjoyed some down time shopping at Times Square and Newbury Street in Boston. Similarly, ISP helps place international students with local American families, usually within the VA community, for both Thanksgiving and Winter Break. The cross-cultural exchange and language immersion are highly valued and appreciated by both the international students, their families, and the American host families.

The third key feature of ISP is the International Student Committee, which consists of a group of 7 teachers from ESL, History, and Global Programs. This committee meets for one hour every other week to discuss any international student concerns and how to better serve the international student population academically and socially. Members of this committee also created a joint humanity class of teaching American Literature and American history to the international student. This project is designed exclusively to accommodate first-year, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, international students to help them fast-track their English comprehension and writing skills so that they can enter the mainstream English and History classes during their senior year.

Continuous financial support is one the most important aspects of ensuring the future success of international students support at VA. Although VA's Business Office charges a \$1,750 international student fee to its 70 international students, there is no clear budget breakdown about which department uses this revenue, and how it is spent. Ironically, the International Student Program does not directly and specifically receive any revenue from this

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international student fee. Part of this fee goes to the overall Global Programs annual budget, as opposed to the whole budget being spent on international students. One consequence of that is the ISP is not able to hire TOEFL, SAT and ACT tutors to help international students on regular basis, even though this individualized and customized tutoring service would help international students better prepared for these standardized tests. Similarly, a few international parents suggest VA organize college visits during breaks, but this proposal cannot become a reality due to an insufficient budget.

### **International Partnerships**

VA currently maintains its international partnerships through two avenues. The first avenue is through the three trimester-abroad programs in China, Chile, and Spain where these partners provide housing, learning facilitates and after-school activity arrangements. In Hangzhou, China, VA partners with the Hangzhou Entel Foreign Language School, a boarding school that has a total number of 1,500 students in its middle school and high school combined. Since 2013, the Entel School has also been sending one student to VA every year. In Chile, VA collaborates with the Vertical Institute and the San Clemente Town Government. The Vertical Institute provides excellent outdoor leadership training to VA students in Chile, including camping in Chile's various national parks and hiking in the Andes. The town government of San Clemente offers education facilities, helps find host families, and arranges related cultural exchange opportunities. In Spain, VA works with the local church leaders in Santiago de Compostella to provide learning facilities, trips, and cultural activities.

One similarity among these global partners is that they mostly receive and host VA students and faculty instead of sending their staff and students to VA. Furthermore, the Entel School and the Vertical Institute have not developed new partnership projects beyond the

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trimester-abroad programs with VA. The Entel School has an advantage in the number of students and faculty, whereas the Vertical Institute has an advantage in its knowledge and experience leading outdoor leadership trips. VA and the two partners could potentially benefit from each other's strengths in future collaboration projects such as professional development for teachers, new outdoor leadership programs, and a bigger scale of student and faculty exchange.

The second avenue of international partnership is the relationship with international education consultants, mainly in Spain, China, South Korea, and Central Europe. Since 2013, there has been a more diverse international student population at VA. The VA Admissions, Global Programs, and the education consultants are the main driving forces behind this accomplishment. Maintaining these important relationships while adding new and trustworthy education consulting companies would reinforce and strengthen the increasing diversity in VA's international student population and help market VA's new global initiatives such as the Global Leadership Summer Program and the Jumpstart Orientation Program.

### **Stakeholder Analysis**

There are seven identified stakeholders within the internationalization case of Vermont Academy, including the Board of Trustees, Administration, Global Programs Office, Admissions, teaching faculty, students and parents. It is difficult to identify which specific stakeholder has the most important impact on internationalization because they all make invaluable contributions and are interdependent. Figure 1 analyzes each stakeholder in terms of their interests and challenges regarding VA's internationalization.

**Figure 1: VA Stakeholders' Interests and Challenges in Internationalization**

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Interests</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
The Board of Trustees	Approves final strategic decisions and provides financial support to projects	Lack of different avenues to have communications with faculty, students, and parents

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	and programs	for various opinions on school programs
Administration	Connects to the Board, faculty, students, and parents. Provides vision and action plan to design, refine, and deliver programs	Different opinions among the admin team about school’s priorities
Global Programs Office	Supports study abroad initiatives, helps international students, maintains existing partnerships and develops new global partnerships	Lack of institutional support in finance and staffing
Admissions	Student enrollment	Difficulty with sustaining and increasing student diversity
Teaching Faculty	Provides comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and quality curriculum and co-curriculum that prepare student with the challenges presented by the global world	Lack of awareness, resources and support of gaining global teaching experience through workshops, conferences, and professional development opportunities
Students	Student diversity, financial aid for study abroad and related global experience; international student cultural and academic support; foreign language learning opportunities	Lack of rich student diversity and financial aid for student mobility; limited foreign language classes; insufficient integration of international students to the domestic student population
Parents	Overall quality of the education experience; English language acquisition of international students; college placements; academic support and study abroad safety	Lack of understanding about the value for global education; limited financial ability to support study abroad; cultural bias against certain study abroad destinations

### Internationalization Analysis and Recommendations

#### Data Presentation

I conducted in-person interviews from eight of my colleagues who are directly involved in global education. During the interviews, I also received opinions and suggestions about VA’s current internationalization effort from the same colleagues, who included three administrators

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and five teaching faculty. The administrator group included the Admissions Director, Dean of Students and Business Manager. The teacher group included five full-time teachers whose work and experiences are relevant to VA's internationalization. They are the Director of Chile and Spain Programs, two trimester-abroad programs support teachers, one ESL teacher and one History for International Students teacher.

There were two sets of questions to separate the areas of expertise between administrators and teaching faculty. Both sets asked the interviewees to identify VA's current internationalization efforts; share their views on the quality of international student support; and suggest how VA provides global education to its students through home and abroad programs. The differences of the interview questions include asking teachers to reflect upon how much global perspectives they have been adding to their classes. The questions also asked administrators to assess VA's support to multicultural and multi-perspective voices on campus and their suggestions for better marketing and branding strategies to help VA's internationalization effort.

The survey results revealed both commonalities and disagreements on certain topics. First, there was a unanimous agreement on the excellent support provided to the international students. Related programs that were consistently mentioned were "International Student Program, advisory system, Jumpstart New International Orientation Program, ESL Program, and International Resource Center" (faculty participant A, B; administrator participant C). One interviewee mentioned that "our international students receive a good amount of support in pretty much every area of their life" (faculty participant E). Another interviewee recalled that "the international students are well supported at Vermont Academy. All students are treated the same and all our students are provided a caring advisor, small class sizes, and good living spaces.

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We do pay extra attention to housing our international students so that they do not live with someone from the same country particularly in their first year” (administrator participant A). Second, there was a mixed impression on the quality and quantity of VA’s global education opportunities to its students. One participant noted that “The Global Programs we offer are fantastic. Providing the students with the opportunity to study in three continents is amazing” (administrator participant A). The two participants disagreeing with this statement argued that more home-based global elements and activities need to take place in VA’s campus so that students who cannot study abroad with VA can still gain global competence (faculty participant B, D).

The participants also pointed out areas for improvements in international student support and study abroad programs in the future. Two administrators thought that the price (\$4,500) for the trimester-abroad programs is still too expensive for a lot of VA students and some underclassmen are not mentally and academically ready to be away from their families, friends, and the well-established academic structure and support on campus (administrator participant A, B). Additionally, there is a lack of afternoon sports and activities designed more exclusively for the international students (faculty participant B). Another participant mentioned that some of her international students on the dance team wish that they could choose dance as their year-round sport to cultivate their skills. In reality, they must choose two other sports that they have little interests in because doing three seasons of sports during every academic year is a graduation requirement at VA (faculty participant A). Furthermore, three teachers expressed their disappointments of the lack of attractive and fun weekend activities to excite the international students (faculty participant B, C, E). Next, there seems to be inadequate college counseling and American standardized tests prep supports such as SAT, ACT, and TOEFL classes, offered at



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VA (faculty participant D). International students come to study in the U.S. with the hope that they can get into excellent universities in the U.S. Consequently, it is important for VA to recognize this need and provide the appropriate individual and group support in this aspect.

To summarize the interviews, while the interviewees at Vermont Academy recognized several internationalization programs such as the International Student Program, International Resource Center and the Study Abroad Programs, adding global perspectives to the curriculum, co-curriculum; offering academic, cultural and athletic accommodations to the international students; and making study abroad option more diverse, and financially accessible, would further internationalize VA. The following six recommendations combine the CIGE Model and interviewees' suggestions with my own observations on VA's current internationalization status and collectively provide a comprehensive roadmap for VA's internationalization.

### **Recommendation # 1: Add global education perspective to the mission statement.**

The CIGE Model suggests that “strategic planning involving key stakeholders articulates an institution’s commitment to internationalization and provides a roadmap for implementation” (American Council on Education, 2016). In other words, including a global education commitment into a school’s mission statement would help it set an educational goal supported by future action steps. Vermont Academy’s mission statement currently does not have clear wording about teaching global education. Therefore, adding such an important component will not only send a clear message of making global education a priority to attract more diverse prospective students, families, faculty members, but the revised mission statement will also serve as a guideline directing VA’s education strategies and action steps towards a more global-minded institution and community. Below is the new mission statement suggested adding global perspective:

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“By providing a supportive, diverse, global-oriented community that gives close personal attention to its students and promotes global awareness and connections to the world, Vermont Academy develops confident, active, life-long learners and global citizens.”

Such drastic change will need to be carefully and thoroughly discussed among the Board of Trustees, along with the administration, faculty and staff, and students, because the decision will affect VA's educational, strategic, financial, and logistical focus and redirect these resources to support this change in the mission statement. Furthermore, VA community needs to be patient because this discussion and final change may take several months to pass or to be rejected. However, the discussion process will be a relevant, timely and beneficial collective effort worthy of everyone's time and opinions.

### **Recommendation # 2: Design a graduation-required Global Education Curriculum.**

The CIGE Model also emphasizes the importance of blending academic curriculum with global content, arguing that “an internationalized curriculum and co-curriculum ensure that all students are exposed to international perspectives and build global competence” (American Council on Education, 2016). Brustein (2015) suggests that a true global education as a part of the internationalization process shall be reflected in all academic departments' interconnected and interdisciplinary curriculum (2015, p. 4). Vermont Academy needs to put global education into practice to further distinguish itself as a secondary school emphasizing global education. VA's Global Programs Office will need to present the Global Education Curriculum plan to the Academic Dean and the Curriculum Committee for initial feedback and discussion. I propose the Global Education Curriculum to have the following graduation requirement features. First, each student needs to acquire a strong foreign language competency by choosing either to study four years Spanish, French, or Chinese or studying two languages, each for two years, before

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graduating from VA. Second, he or she can either participate to one of the three current trimester-abroad programs in China, Chile, and Spain, or take four out of six interdisciplinary global courses on campus. The six courses are:

- Global Environmental Sustainability (Science)
- Introduction to European Arts and Architecture (History and Arts)
- Introduction to World Major Religions (History)
- World Literature Appreciation (English)
- World Music Appreciation (Arts)
- Contemporary Global Economy (History)

Among these six classes, only Contemporary Global Economy and World Music Appreciation are not currently or previously taught at VA. Therefore, formally creating these courses will require funding for teachers willing to design, develop, and teach the curriculum. The Global Programs Office and the Academic Dean should discuss a funding and delivery timeline for opening the courses once the proposal is approved by the Curriculum Committee and the Head of School.

This flexible option of choosing between a trimester-abroad program and taking four home-based global courses gives students a realistic choice in terms of their family's financial situation and their individual readiness to live and study abroad as a high school student. In addition, some students may choose to take full advantage of this hybrid Global Education Curriculum by learning multiple foreign languages, studying abroad and taking these six global courses. Meanwhile, those who would not normally consider either of the global-oriented options now have to pick between study abroad and global courses. Students may initially dislike and resist such an academic requirement but given the nature of independent schools where academic, athletic, and cultural curiosities are constantly encouraged and promoted by faculty and other adults on campus, students should be able to understand and accept this change. In short,

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combining foreign language competency with the flexible abroad-domestic academic experience, quantifies and qualifies the revised global perspective mission statement at VA with real global contents.

### **Recommendation # 3: Continue to support and enhance the existing global programs**

This recommendation is about “student mobility” from the CIGE Model (American Council on Education, 2016). The Model defines “student mobility” as “both to the outward flow of domestic students to other countries to engage in an education abroad experience and the inward flow of international students to study at U.S. campuses” (American Council on Education, 2016). As presented in the earlier sections, there are a variety of student mobility programs that function under the umbrella of Vermont Academy Global Programs Office. On the home front, the International Student Program (ISP) hosts an annual International Flag Ceremony and a monthly International Community Lunch to honor and celebrate VA’s diversity. The ISP also provides daily international peer academic tutoring sessions during evening study hall; organizes school break traveling, transportation and host family arrangements; and runs the Jumpstart New International Student Orientation and the Global Leadership Summer Program. Additionally, the ISP teachers meet every other week to discuss, and address any academic and wellness concerns among international students. For outbound programs, more than 30 VA students every academic year have joined the three trimester-abroad programs in China, Chile, and Spain. These programs, services, and initiatives provided by the VA Global Programs Office promote a strong cultural interaction between domestic and international students, enhance VA students’ understandings and awareness of the world, and ensure the 72 international students’ academic and social wellbeing at VA. Thus, it is crucial for Vermont Academy to continue to support these programs and services.

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For the trimester-abroad programs, VA needs to provide more support to the on-site directors and support faculty. Hulstrand (2013) suggests that teaching and leading abroad programs is quite different from doing the same thing on home campus. While faculty on campus have “an army of professionals to support them - deans, medical and mental health personnel, safety and security officers... residential life staff, student activities officers, faculty members who direct a program abroad can feel ill-equipped to handle the variety of situations that can come up” (2013, p. 40). To solve that, Hulstrand recommends that faculty who have returned from abroad share their reflections and experience with the upcoming faculty during program orientation (para, p. 40). Additionally, VA may consider sending one of the supporting staff from its Health Services abroad each trimester to provide adequate physical and mental health for the students and faculty. A medical staff member not only possess valuable medical experience, but he or she would also know the VA medical procedure and would have established relationships with some of the participating students prior to the abroad program, which offers trust and comfort. Finally, Friend (2012) recommends that all institutions involved in sending students abroad, should develop a comprehensive protocol for crisis management in the sequence of “awareness, assessment, communication, decision, action, resolution, and return to normal” (2012, p. 1). Fortunately, VA abroad programs have already developed a crisis management plan, although it has not yet been tested by an emergency. The Global Programs Office needs to reflect and discuss with Health Services and Dean's Office on a regular basis (at least once a year) to update and refine this plan for effective response to emergency and crisis.

Stronger marketing and communication effort advertising and advocating VA's current global education programs will also enhance VA's global education programs. First, there has not been an updated written flyer or brochure introducing all the Global Programs' initiatives,

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services, and trips in details to prospective students and their families, domestic and international, during their campus visit. Creating and updating such informational brochure will also help the Admissions Office send it to the educational consultants with whom the Office works. It is not complicated for VA to run these global programs and services, but the Admissions should do a better job passing them to the current and prospective VA students, alumni, and education consultants know they exist with values and benefits. Second, the Global Programs Office needs better collaboration with the Communication Office to constantly upload trimester abroad program's pictures, videos, written blogs, and student testimony on VA's social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). Frequent, fun, and quality materials uploaded on the school's social media can help promote these global programs, increasing their visibility and popularity. In summary, Vermont Academy should keep delivering its existing global programs while improving the financial and marketing pieces to further enhance the programs' quality.

### **Recommendation # 4: Encourage and support faculty-student collaboration on short-term international travels**

Not every student wants to spend an entire trimester studying and living in China, Chile or Spain when they must continue their classes while adapting to the hosting nation's cultural shocks. Not all course offerings, program features, and timing, are ideal to a VA student. Therefore, adding short-term faculty-led educational trips abroad during the 17-day winter break, 18-day spring break or the 3-month summer vacation, would give flexibility and choice to interested faculty and students. This initiative would spark different geographic and learning interests among students and faculty beyond the three trimester-abroad programs VA currently offers. Moreover, it would give students and faculty a sense of creativity and ownership to think, interact and design their own short-term study abroad programs based on their common learning interests. Furthermore, granting this international experience would serve as a hands-on

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professional development for VA's faculty, to gain experience in international program design and management, broaden their global-teaching perspective. Ultimately, the professional development could lead better faculty retention and promote teaching globally-focused courses on the VA home campus. This approach shares the same view of promoting "faculty participation in outside programs" and helping them acquire "international background, experience and interests" that are recommended in the CIGE Model as "faculty policies and practices" (American Council on Education, 2016).

For a successful start to the short-term international travel programs, the Global Programs Office needs to introduce this idea to the faculty and administration team for feedback and approval. Then, the Global team needs to discuss with the Head of School and the Advancement Office to determine the sources of funding this project, the number of awards each year and how much each trip will be awarded. The Board of Trustees, current student families, and alumni are all potential funding sources. Once the funding and award details are finalized, the Global team should deliver an all-school presentation to market among the students and open the application process. I can anticipate the opening of such a project during the 2018-19 academic year, which gives VA roughly 17 months to prepare. The short-term international travel initiative would encourage student-faculty collaboration, give them flexibility and ownership to creatively design various global-study topics beyond the existing trimester programs, and provide international professional development opportunities for better faculty retention.

### **Recommendation # 5: Further increase diversity among the faculty and students**

As previously discussed, the current population of faculty does not accurately reflect the student population in which more than 30% students are international. Without a more proportional representation in the faculty, it could be difficult to have sufficient advocates who

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share similar demographic and cultural attributes with the international students and connect to the global world through different perspectives and experiences, slowing down VA's internationalization effort. I recommend the Board and the Administration team make a conscious effort to diversify the faculty populations. Similarly, the Admissions team should continue to work with the Global team to develop new strategies recruiting students from different countries, states, and other cultural backgrounds to enrich student diversity. Hosting information sessions in countries new to VA and communicating with current families about this campaign are two possible action steps. In short, as VA continues to increase its student and faculty diversity.

### **Recommendation # 6: Increase international funding and alternative funding sources**

While the previous recommendations provide guidelines and strategies to increase VA's internationalization effort, sustaining and increasing funding would support these recommendations and turn them into realities. For instance, financial aid and scholarships are important for future VA students and faculty to participate in the trimester-abroad programs and the short-term international travel programs. Expanding the Global Programs Office with new programs such as the Jumpstart New International Student Orientation Program and the Global Leadership Summer Program, will also require funding to pay additional staff members. Keeping the existing foreign languages (Spanish, French, Chinese and Russian) while potentially adding more language classes such as Arabic and Japanese, also demands extra funding to pay for teachers' salaries and classroom teaching materials. Without healthy growth in funding, the current and future internationalization effort would be difficult to deliver.

Educating and engaging with the international families regarding the culture and tradition of donation in independent schools is important for generating international funding. Compared



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to its domestic families, VA's international families have not been well explained, engaged, communicated, and educated regarding the importance of contributing to the annual fund. International families who send full-paid students, have the financial ability to contribute but often lack understanding about donation. The Head of School needs to collaborate with the Global Programs Office and the Advancement Office to create educational brochures about giving gifts to VA as an important resource to support the growth of the school and the students. In addition, the new Head should travel to several major countries, such as China, South Korea, and Spain, where most of VA's international students and alumni come from, to host receptions to engage this special group. The Head should share stories of educational success of VA and report current and future development projects of the school while inviting international students, parents, and alumni to share their personal impressions, experiences, and suggestions for VA. At the end of each reception, the Head should speak to all the attendees about the annual fund in terms of where the fund comes from, how it has been spent, and why contributing to the annual fund is important to VA and to the international students. With advanced planning and honest conversations, VA could more effectively engage with the current international families and alumni by making them feel included and respected as important members of the great VA community, which could lead to more active family and alumni donations to the annual fund.

Whereas receiving donations depends on other people's generosity, creating new quality educational programs and projects gives VA the ownership to generate source of new revenue to better support its internationalization effort. Since each trimester-abroad program on average, takes 8 boarders of campus, VA's dorms are capable of housing 8 new boarding students without building new dorms. If the Admissions and the Global Programs could enroll 8 additional full-

pay students, the school would receive an additional of \$452,400 and part of this could be reserved as the internationalization fund.

In addition, the Global Programs Office can work with its Chinese partner schools and education consultants to design and market a 3-week "VA Try-Out" program during the Chinese New Year for prospective Chinese students when they are on a four-week vacation. This program would be designed to give interested Chinese students an authentic experience of taking VA classes, joining a sports team, and living in the dorms with non-Chinese VA buddies. Within that 3-week period, the interested students will gain a real and personal feeling about how life will be as international students at VA and if VA is the right school for them. The "VA Try-Out" program can take some pressure off from the Admissions' enrollment and generate another source of steady income for VA's internationalization fund. If it proves successful, Global Programs can expand this program to accommodate to both domestic and other international students during the academic year. Participating students receive an authentic VA experience, helping them make better decisions in choosing a boarding school. VA, likewise, can select qualified students and gain financial revenue.

### **Conclusion**

This capstone paper studies the existing research regarding internationalization among American secondary and higher education using the CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization as the research guideline. "Articulated institutional commitment; curriculum, co-curriculum, and planning outcomes; faculty policies and practices; student mobility; and collaboration and partnerships," are the specific components from the CIGE Model that provide related recommendations to VA's internationalization effort (American Council on Education, 2016). This capstone research first affirms that there are several strong examples of

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internationalization such as the trimester-abroad programs; international student support; and global partnerships exist and function well at VA. Moreover, this research suggests that Vermont Academy should change its mission statement to reflect a global focus; develop a global academic curriculum; continue to support and enhance its existing global programs; encourage and support faculty-student collaboration on short-term international travel; increase diversity among the faculty and students; and finally, increase and create alternative funding sources to support its internationalization effort. Future research should focus more on interviewing a broader stakeholder group such as the Board members, staff, and students' opinions and suggestions on this topic. Also, a follow up on how the internationalization recommendations suggested in the capstone, are received and implemented, would add more concrete values and reflections to refine VA's future internationalization endeavors.

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**Appendix A: Participant Consent Form**

Dear Study Participant,

You are being invited to participate in a research study about Vermont Academy's Internationalization Effort. This study is conducted by Jason Xiang Wang from the International Education Master's Program at The School for International Training Graduate Institute (SIT) in Brattleboro, Vermont. The research aims to use the collected data from this study to provide recommendations for Vermont Academy to increase its internationalization effort. You are eligible to participate in this research because you are either a faculty or an administrator of Vermont Academy and your area of responsibility and expertise is related and relevant to VA's internationalization. The process is simple and only requires that you are willing to give your time to answer questions regarding your experience, impressions, and suggestions on VA's current effort in internationalization and how to improve it. The data-collection method will take place in the forms of either an in-person interview or a short-answer survey via Word document. There are no known risks nor costs in participating in this study. The information that you provide will help Vermont Academy Global Programs to better serve its students, both domestic and international, from the perspectives of developing competent and engaging future global citizens.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you have the right to decline participation. If at any point in the process you may decide to withdraw your participation, your information will be deemed unpublishable and will be removed from the research. Finally, you have the right to waive the use of your legal name in research documents. On this form, you will circle whether you are comfortable with your name being published in the research documents or whether you choose to remain anonymous.

By signing this form, you recognize your willingness to participate in a study regarding providing recommendations for Vermont Academy to increase its internationalization effort. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact my advisor; Dr. Linda Drake Gobbo, Professor of International Education at the SIT Graduate Institute by email: [linda.gobbo@sit.edu](mailto:linda.gobbo@sit.edu).

Thank you so much for your participation and your time.

Participant:

Participant's Signature:

Researcher's Signature:

Name use preference (please circle one): Keep name in documents / Change name in documents

**Appendix B: Interview Questions for Administrators**

Interviewee:

Date:

1. What are your primary responsibilities at VA?
  
2. In what areas do you think the international students at VA are well supported? In what areas, do you think VA can do a better job?
  
3. Do you think VA is providing adequate global education experience for our students? Why or why not?
  
4. In what ways does VA support international and multicultural population and perspectives on campus?
  
5. How well does VA market itself as an institution that prepares students to become global citizens? What marketing and branding suggestions do you think would benefit this initiative?



**Appendix C: Interview Questions for Faculty**

Interviewee:

Date:

1. What are your primary responsibilities at VA?
  
2. What are some of the activities, programs, and partnerships you are aware of at VA that are considered as internationalization efforts?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. In what areas do you think the international students at VA are well supported? In what areas, do you think VA can do a better job?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Do you think VA is providing adequate global education experience for our students? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How does your class and VA's academic curriculum provide, if any, global perspective and education to our students?

**Appendix D: List of Interviewee's Job Titles from Vermont Academy**

Administrators:

- Director of Admissions and Financial Aid
- Dean of Students
- Business Manager

Teaching Faculty:

- Math Department Chair
- Director of Chile and Spain Programs
- History Instructor
- ESL and English Instructor
- Environmental Sustainability Coordinator and Science Instructor