Introduction by David Fleshler

- Globalization means a technologically borderless planet; a globally interactive economy; a distributed educational system and growing student mobility; a new balance between competition and cooperation—partners may also be competitors; competition from new sources; and a need for people who are global citizens.
- The international planning process is sourced in the CWRU strategic plan, which focuses on promotion of an inclusive culture of global citizenship. The university has made a strategic decision to enhance its international character.
- The first phase of the planning process focuses on undergraduate education abroad, international undergraduate students, an infrastructure for the Office of International Affairs, development of technology to support internationalization, funding and resources to support internationalization and global strategy.
- Subsequent planning efforts will focus on graduate education and post-doctoral researchers, and international research; it also will include continuing work on global strategy.

Presentation by Rick Bischoff and Gary Previts, Co-chairs of the International Undergraduate Student Recruitment, Retention and Campus Life Working Group

The working group includes members who have significant experience working with international students at CWRU and elsewhere. They include Rick Bischoff (Enrollment Management), Co-Chair; Gary Previts (WSOM), Co-Chair; Julie Amon (Undergraduate Studies); Jessica Gerard (CAS); Samira Hussney (FPB-SON); Trista Li (Undergraduate Student Government); Elise Lindsay (ISS); Dean Patterson (Student Affairs); Jennifer Reimer (PE & Athletics) (FSCUE); David Zeng (CSE); David Fleshler (OIA), ex officio; Jim Kazura (SOM), ex officio; Janet McGrath (CAS), ex officio.

The charge to the working group includes addressing admissions policies for international students and support for a campus culture that includes students from all over the world. The presumption in the charge is that international students should have retention rates and campus experiences equal to that of domestic students.

Specific issues to be addressed by the working group include English proficiency requirements, SAT requirements, ELS/conditional admission, breadth of international enrollment, international representation, need-based financial aid, merit-based scholarships, use of agents in recruitment, dual degree programs with foreign universities, transfer enrollment, orientation, first-year experience and providing an open and inviting community.

The working group has looked at a variety of information available on campus including enrollment data, programs for international students, financial aid, admissions requirements and English proficiency.
TOEFL: CWRU’s relatively low TOEFL standards may be negatively impacting admissions—we want to establish a message that highly-qualified students will want to apply. The standard has been a score of 100 for admission to top universities for many years. The working group recommends that CWRU raise its required score to 100 in two steps—90 for fall 2012 and 100 for fall 2013.

Why not go to a score of 100 right away? In raising the TOEFL requirements, we don’t want to move too quickly and negatively impact enrollment. Our admission policies, in effect, impose a higher standard in our choice of students who are admitted. We are concerned that, if we move too quickly, we would lose good students in the 90-100 range before we have sufficiently built the pool of students with scores over 100. As we raise requirements, we also need to maintain good relationships with the schools who often send their students; we need to give them fair warning about raising the bar.

SAT: It is standard practice at top US universities to require the SAT for international students. International students are taking the SAT and have the scores available. The SAT provides varying levels of reliability in all admissions decisions, whether domestic or international, but CWRU should ask for it so that it can be used as one more tool available in making admissions decisions. The working group recommends requiring the SAT for the class entering fall 2012.

Conditional admissions: This is a process where international students are admitted conditioned on their satisfaction by a certain date (usually mid-June) of English proficiency requirements. This has been historically a significant basis of CWRU’s relationship with ELS. The working group recommends that conditional admissions be discontinued beginning with the class entering fall 2012. None of the institutions benchmarked have conditional admissions, and good admissions decisions for any student usually do not separate language and writing from the rest of the applicant’s characteristics. In moving to require a 100 TOEFL and an SAT, it is unlikely that conditional admissions would work in any event.

Why not stop conditional admissions right away? Our contractual obligations with ELS require some time to withdraw. As a practical matter, the number of students admitted conditionally has shrunk dramatically in the last few years because of our de facto admissions standards.

Breadth in enrollment: Currently, there is no financial aid available for international students. In the future, there likely will be only limited financial aid available. Although we don’t want to be dependent on any particular country as a pipeline, China, India and South Korea are likely to continue to be the countries most often represented. Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan and Canada may also be promising markets.
Why these countries? These are the top-producing countries for international students according to the Institute for International Education. It also depends on where we travel. We travel to places where we can reach large numbers of students who will be competitive in our admission process. We are looking into additional ways to recruit international students, including new ways to communicate about international travel across the university.

We also need to focus on the distribution of international students across majors. Engineering and business have tended to be huge magnets for international students.

**International representation in the student body:** The working group’s current thinking is that we should target 8-12% of the places in the entering class for international students. The last two classes have had around 7.5% international students. These figures assume that requiring higher TOEFL scores and the SAT will not adversely impact our admissions pool.

**Financial aid:** Currently there is no financial aid for international students. The working group is leaning toward recommending limited need-based aid.

Why differentiate international students? International students do not have access to US federal and state financial aid programs. International students also tend to cluster at the ends of the financial spectrum—some are able to fairly easily afford education in the US, and others are not able to afford it at all. As a result, providing financial aid for an international student often requires supporting the full cost of the student’s education for four years, representing a far higher expense to the university than the typical domestic student.

Is funding from home country governments available to sponsor students? Occasionally. Are any of our students receiving that kind of support? About three. Would there be individuals who might be interested in sponsoring international students? Possibly—this will be investigated.

Benchmarking revealed that a very small number of very wealthy institutions are need-blind in admissions and then meet full cost of attendance. Others who provide financial aid to international students provide grant funding far in excess of what is provided for US students. In most cases, institutions that say they offer need-based aid do so to only a few students, and dollars are usually targeted toward increasing diversity within the international student population.

The working group is moving toward consensus that we should not offer merit-based aid, but rather put our limited resources toward need-based aid.

**Use of agents in recruiting:** The working group likely will recommend against the use of agents in international recruiting. Use of agents is frowned on by competitive institutions and would prevent us from travelling with them for recruiting. It also would prevent us from using the Common Application, since the organization that owns the Common Application prohibits use of agents and requires user institutions to agree. We feel our prestige as a university will allow us to be successful without the use of agents. We will continue to monitor the situation.
Transfer students: Timing issues for transfer students are very important; the current May deadline is too late for some students. We will start to offer two deadlines, one earlier.

Dual degree programs: These are usually set up to allow qualified students to transfer, but may be commonly understood as binary. Now all dual degree options at CWRU must be approved by FSCUE. Dual degree programs are not important to meeting international student enrollment goals, but making them more difficult to access may be detrimental to the university in other ways. The process needs to be examined further.

International student orientation, first-year experience and campus culture: Orientation for international students was held for the first time this year and by all accounts was very successful. Orientation, the first-year experience and campus culture are still to be addressed by the working group. A new host family program for international students was inaugurated this year, and almost 50 matches have been made.

The International Club also has sponsored a student mentoring program in the last two years.

Our retention rate for international students from their first to second years currently is a little better than the retention rate for domestic students.

What else should the working group consider?

Internships and job placement for international students.

Connections to resources outside the university, e.g., the Global Cleveland Initiative.

Use of alumni for recruiting, orientation and financial support. Use of current students for recruiting and orientation.