

INTERNATIONALIZATION LAB

PEER REVIEW REPORT FOR SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION INTERNATIONALIZATION LABORATORY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August, 2020, San Diego State University (SDSU) adopted a new 5-year strategic plan entitled “We Rise We Defy: Transcending Borders, Transforming Lives.” In addition to highlighting internationalization generally, a Global Strategy Action Plan was identified as a specific outcome of the university’s strategic plan. SDSU joined the 18th cohort of the American Council on Education (ACE)’s Internationalization Laboratory (the Internationalization Lab) shortly after the adoption of the strategic plan for the express purpose of creating the Global Strategy Action Plan.

Through its participation in the Internationalization Lab, SDSU engaged in an extensive multi-year process, involving hundreds of stakeholders and conducted almost entirely during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Led deftly throughout by SDSU’s Internationalization Lab leadership team, the end result was a document entitled the “ACE Internationalization Lab Comprehensive Report”, which fulfills the mandate of the university’s strategic plan to create a Global Strategy Action Plan. By participating in the Internationalization Lab, SDSU’s goals, as enumerated in the ACE Internationalization Lab Report, were to build broad consensus around campus internationalization and to better align the global strategy objectives with the overarching strategic plan. The SDSU Lab process was guided by the institution’s four global strategic priorities: (i) International Access, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; (ii) Global and Transborder Engagement; (iii) International Environmental, Social, and Financial Sustainability; and, (iv) International Innovation.

From 2020- 2022, SDSU engaged in campus-wide conversations and data collection in order to inventory its current level of internationalization, establish effective quality controls, identify areas of strength, and develop a plan for growth that would both build upon and coordinate with existing global activities.

Throughout this time, the campus-wide ACE Internationalization Lab Committee was able to meet - and overcome - the unique and numerous challenges presented by the pandemic.

The final report includes:

- a comprehensive review of SDSU’s internationalization accomplishments;
- an enumeration of the four global strategic priorities that emerged from the global strategic research and planning process (which also run through the university Strategic Plan); and
- a list of actionable goals, activities, key performance indicators (KPIs), accountability and resources.

The forward-looking section on goals, activities, KPIs, accountability and resources is organized under each of five international goals: (i) Strategic Internationalization Alignment; (ii) Internationalization through Meaningful Partnerships; (iii) Students as Globally Conscious Leaders; (iv) Faculty as Global Education Leaders; and, (v) SDSU’s International Identity.

As a final step in the Internationalization Lab process, this peer review report summarizes the recommendations from the three-person peer review team that visited SDSU in September 2022. The report identifies SDSU’s areas of strength as related to its internationalization goals, which build on SDSU’s foundational attributes of access, equity, diversity and inclusion, sustainability, and transborder engagement.

This review is a confidential document intended only for San Diego State University. The contents will not be published or made public unless the university chooses to do so or gives ACE permission to do so. However, we encourage internal distribution of this document so that it can assist the SDSU community in its continued international work and planning.

SDSU AND THE ACE INTERNATIONALIZATION LAB

San Diego State University participated in the 18th cohort of the ACE Internationalization Laboratory, an invitational learning community that helps higher education institutions develop their strategies for comprehensive internationalization. ACE defines comprehensive internationalization as “a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate policies, programs, and initiatives to position colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected.”

ACE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization



In addition to **SDSU**, other institutions participating in the 18th cohort were:

- Albizu University (Puerto Rico)**
- Ball State University**
- Baylor University**
- California Lutheran University**
- Fort Valley State University**
- Pratt Institute**
- Southern Illinois University**
- University of Kansas**

The [ACE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization](#) demonstrates how internationalization can and should be fully embedded in the teaching, research, and service mission of an institution through its institutional commitment and policy, leadership structures, curriculum and co-curriculum, support for faculty and staff, inbound and outbound mobility of students and scholars, and partnerships. The model applies three lenses through which institutions should examine and build an internationalization strategy: data-informed decision making, agility and transformation, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

SDSU joined the Internationalization Lab shortly after the university adopted a new 5-year strategic plan entitled “We Rise We Defy: Transcending Borders, Transforming Lives”. A Global Strategy Action Plan was identified as a specific outcome of the university’s strategic plan. Fulfilling the mandate of the university’s strategic plan to create a Global Strategy Action Plan, the resulting ACE Internationalization Lab Comprehensive Report was organized under four global strategic priorities: (i) International Access, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; (ii) Global and Transborder Engagement; (iii) International Environmental, Social, and Financial Sustainability; and, (iv) International Innovation. SDSU’s goals for joining the Internationalization Lab were to assess its current level of internationalization, establish effective quality controls, identify its areas of strength, and develop a plan for growth that would both build from and coordinate with existing activities. SDSU’s Internationalization Lab process was led by a three-person Lab leadership team:

- Cristina Alfaro, Associate Vice President for International Affairs
- Maria Keckler, Director, International Affairs Strategy & Communications
- Ricky Paniagua, Assistant Director, International Student Center

When the university joined the Lab in August 2020, the global pandemic was in full swing and both SDSU and ACE were conducting fully remote operations. In September and October, 2020, ACE convened the Internationalization Lab opening meetings, via Zoom, during which time the Lab leadership teams from participating institutions met virtually with ACE staff and their respective Lab Advisors, including David Fleshler, Lab Advisor to SDSU. Subsequently, during Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, Mr. Fleshler met remotely with many separate campus groups and university leadership, in addition to one or two meetings per month with Dr. Alfaro and the Lab leadership. Mr. Fleshler first visited campus in November 2021 for meetings with the Lab leadership team and to address SDSU’s inaugural Faculty Global Engagement Awards and Symposium. Mr. Fleshler returned to campus in March 2022 for a subsequent set of presentations and meetings with leadership, administrators, and faculty.

The final phase of the ACE Internationalization Lab is the peer review visit, which is led by the institution’s Lab Advisor and includes two external colleagues with diverse expertise in international higher education. SDSU’s peer review team met with the SDSU campus community (including university leadership, the Lab leadership team, faculty, administrators, and students) to better understand internationalization at SDSU, advise on issues identified in the SDSU self-study, and provide feedback on strategies that will most effectively implement recommendations in the final report. The remainder of this peer review report summarizes the observations and recommendations from the members of the peer review team.

PEER REVIEW TEAM OBSERVATIONS

Internal and External Challenges

SDSU’s experience with the Internationalization Lab was marked by a number of major external and internal challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic made the Lab process and logistics more complicated. The demands of remote classes and meetings required additional attention and time for both faculty and

administrators, which impacted the momentum and timeline of the subcommittees as well as the overall process. Russia's invasion of Ukraine posed threats to future planning for internationalization, given the unpredictability of the outcome. For SDSU, the war in Ukraine was particularly unsettling, as its largest international relationship - certainly in terms of monetary investment - is with three universities in Georgia, which borders Russia.

Two additional external challenges which SDSU feels particularly acutely are the global climate crisis and the persistently rising cost of higher education. While dealing with the effects of climate change is a challenge for all universities, SDSU's geographic location on the border with Mexico means San Diego will continue to see more climate refugees from Central and South America than many other U.S. institutions. Many climate refugees will inevitably need or seek access to higher education, meaning that SDSU will need to determine how best to admit and absorb these additional students into its community and address their specific, varying needs. Relatedly, as a public university and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), SDSU is especially committed to access, equity, diversity, and inclusion (AEDI). The rising cost of higher education is exacerbating economic inequities within and between countries, which in turn poses a threat to SDSU's commitment to AEDI principles and practices.

During the Internationalization Lab process, SDSU also faced several internal challenges, primary among them being reductions in staff. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the International Affairs staff was cut by 31% due to unfilled vacancies and temporary staff layoffs. Conducting a sweeping and time-consuming strategic planning process with significantly fewer staff members, already over-extended and under-resourced, made persevering with the Lab process much more challenging. Decentralization posed another challenge, though not one uniquely faced by SDSU. The spread of international activities and resources across many different units increases the difficulty of establishing a unified strategy.

KEY STRENGTHS

A commitment to internationalization is part of the SDSU's core mission, as expressed in its mission statement, a portion of which reads, "The university strives to impart an appreciation and broad understanding of the human experience throughout the world." Recognizing the challenges identified in the prior section, the peer review team was impressed by SDSU's internationalization efforts. Many in the campus community showed real enthusiasm for the Internationalization Lab process, which is notable as faculty, staff, and leadership were deeply entrenched in managing the COVID-19 pandemic throughout SDSU's Lab participation. Summarized below are areas of strength identified by the peer review team.

SDSU Has Made Significant Progress Toward Internationalization

The peer review team was impressed by the extent of SDSU's international engagement over time, noting that because of this, the university's work with the Internationalization Lab began from a position of strength. Many initiatives and programs demonstrate that, prior to the Lab, the university was already moving towards its goal of comprehensive internationalization. The following are several examples of such initiatives and programs:

- SDSU has been consistently recognized in *Open Doors* (Institute of International Education) as one of the top universities in the U.S. for study abroad participation;
- the university is furthering its already significant engagement with Mexico by establishing a deeper presence in Oaxaca, Mexico;

- over the past seven years, the university has received more than \$30 million to create a partnership with three universities in Tbilisi, Georgia in order to deliver SDSU STEM undergraduate degree programs and to develop personnel and infrastructure capacities; and
- the Re:Border Conference, first held four years ago, is a nationally recognized forum organized by SDSU to foster transdisciplinary transborder and bi-national engagement and collaboration with institutions of higher education and community partners in Baja California, Mexico.

The peer review team was likewise impressed by the university's internationalization progress during the period of its engagement with the Lab, especially since this engagement took place entirely during the COVID-19 pandemic. While we do not extensively list the accomplishments here, as they are detailed on pages 6-9 of the SDSU's ACE Internationalization Lab Report, this document does highlight the following as particularly noteworthy:

- the appointment of a permanent AVP of International Affairs;
- the creation of a Risk Management Committee, with cross-divisional participation, leading to the hiring of SDSU's first Assistant Director of International Safety, Security and Risk - the first position of its kind in the CSU system; and
- the creation and Faculty Senate approval of SDSU Global Learning Outcomes (GLOs), which will help drive internationalization of the curriculum.

All of the accomplishments listed in SDSU's report, and in particular those highlighted here, send a strong signal to the campus community that internationalization is a core focus of the university, and is well-supported by leadership.

Senior Leadership Supports Internationalization at SDSU

SDSU is attempting to broaden and deepen its internationalization efforts at a time of uncertainty and change. The United States, alongside much of the rest of the world, is confronting a number of geopolitical challenges, including rising tensions with China, the war in Ukraine, climate change, and systemic racism. Many of these challenges can only be successfully addressed through international collaboration, as people around the world continue to work together to find solutions. Universities have an important role in engaging in the research, education, understanding, and knowledge that will help determine how we solve these geopolitical issues.

SDSU's engagement with the Internationalization Lab indicated the institution's desire to work toward finding solutions to these grand challenges. As noted above, the university already has significant levels of international activity and a solid foundation from which to build. Internationalization has received strong and engaged support from the current senior leadership. Both President de la Torre and Provost Ochoa have deep personal backgrounds and experience with many cultures and countries, which underscores the importance they place on internationalization at SDSU. President de la Torre readily shared her support for the Internationalization Lab process and the next phases of implementation with the peer review team.

The Lab Report Aligns with University-wide Goals; the Lab Process was Successful

SDSU's participation in the Lab was aligned with university-wide goals, including the foundational attributes of access, equity, diversity and inclusion; sustainability; and, transborder engagement. A particular focus of the Lab process was on the international contributions to the university's goal of achieving R1 status. The university, through its strategic plan, provided the Internationalization Lab Steering Committee an ambitious charge. Due to the dedication and excellent leadership of its chairs, the committee gave strong, balanced, and thoughtful direction throughout the Lab process. The subcommittees were designed with a diversity of membership across the schools to ensure broad faculty

and administrative engagement. The group produced strong recommendations with focused goals. We particularly want to acknowledge the cross-campus participation of many academic units, leading to strong engagement among university stakeholders.

Early in the Internationalization Lab process, SDSU recognized that its model for comprehensive internationalization needed to be particular to its history, geography, population, and future aspirations. Based on the ACE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization, SDSU created its own model.

SDSU Model for Comprehensive Internationalization



A key focal point of the Lab process is the institutional self-study, led by six subcommittees and organized around the major components of the SDSU Model for Comprehensive Internationalization, which are:

- articulated institutional commitment and administrative structure;
- curriculum, co-curriculum, and learning outcomes;
- faculty policies and practices;
- global education and opportunities;
- international students and scholar experience; and
- collaboration and partnerships.

In addition, SDSU's self-study included three additional subcommittees that worked alongside the other six subcommittees to assure alignment with cross-cutting institutional priorities: access, equity, diversity and inclusion; transborder engagement; and sustainability. Each subcommittee was led by two co-chairs and facilitated data collection, guided by a general list of questions. The subcommittees were generally charged with examining history, documents, databases, programs, guidelines, and requirements, reviewing processes and procedures, developing specific questions, conducting SWOT analyses, surveys, and focus groups, and making recommendations regarding their particular area of focus. The final report included 12 recommendations, identified as sub-goals, together with recommended activities, key performance indicators (KPIs), accountability, and resources. The recommendations were organized in order to accomplish five overarching goals: (i) Strategic Internationalization Alignment; (ii) Internationalization through Meaningful Partnerships; (iii) Students as Globally Conscious Leaders; (iv) Faculty as Global Education Leaders; and (v) SDSU's International Identity.

The peer review team congratulates the many faculty members and administrators who were integral to the work of the subcommittees. In our review, each of the subcommittees identified important issues which informed the recommendations contained in the ACE Internationalization Lab Report. By moving from general goals to specific plans for implementation, together with identified resources, the Lab report presented a detailed outline that helped significantly advance internationalization during the Lab process and should drive SDSU's future internationalization goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The Internationalization Lab Report articulated a global strategy with the five overarching goals detailed above, to serve as the university's commitment to and roadmap for comprehensive internationalization. The goals are further enumerated with recommended activities, KPIs, accountability, and resources. The peer review team endorses all five goals. We believe that, if SDSU is able to carry through on the listed activities, comprehensive internationalization will be significantly enhanced and embedded through the institution.

SDSU conducted a robust internationalization strategic planning process which has engaged the campus community. The leadership displayed throughout this process has been outstanding and the Lab report is a comprehensive roadmap to further and deepen internationalization at SDSU. As noted above and in the report, SDSU made significant strides to bolster internationalization as a result of its participation in the Internationalization Lab.

Given all the success and momentum outlined above, SDSU now enters a phase of implementation that is critical to advancing its internationalization strategy. The following are the peer review team's observations and recommendations regarding how to build upon SDSU's impressive foundation.

Recommendation 1: Ensure that internationalization is intentionally embedded in the university's strategic plan

It is significant that the SDSU's mission statement includes a reference to human experiences throughout the world. The peer review team noted, however, that internationalization appears as only one of 54 discreet activities to implement the university's strategic plan.¹ Even this activity is, as written, limited to "global program infrastructure, international student recruitment, yield and retention". It does not address the broader issues of internationalization, as outlined in the ACE Model of Comprehensive Internationalization.²

While Activity 29 does ensure that internationalization advances SDSU's strategic priorities, it also risks putting these initiatives into a silo separate from the rest of the strategy. If indeed internationalization is one of the key areas of focus for the university, it should be clear how it advances and is embedded in the five strategic priorities in the strategic plan. In reviewing the various materials that we received, and in our conversations with President de la Torre, faculty members and administrators, the peer review team came

¹ Activity 29: Creating a Global Strategy Action Plan to address global program infrastructure, international student recruitment, yield, and retention. The implementation plan does list a separate activity for SDSU's Georgia campus (Activity 27: Establishing a plan for continued collaborations for SDSU Georgia by June 2021). The two initiatives appear not tied together in any formal way.

² As previously stated, the ACE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization views internationalization as fully embedded in the teaching, research, and service mission of an institution through its institutional commitment and policy, leadership structures, curriculum and co-curriculum, support for faculty and staff, inbound and outbound mobility of students and scholars, and partnerships.

away with the distinct understanding that comprehensive internationalization is generally understood and accepted throughout SDSU and therefore that it must be aligned with all parts of the university. In fact, the SDSU Model of Internationalization, which has been the foundation for the work in the Internationalization Lab, clearly represents the ideal of comprehensive internationalization.

This widely accepted support for internationalization and transborder engagement is, unfortunately, not communicated through the strategic plan. Repositioning internationalization in the context of the full strategic plan creates an opportunity to highlight and even stimulate new areas of inquiry and to further reinforce the global influence of SDSU as it works to become an R1 institution. The peer review team recognizes that the current strategic plan is a final document and that a new strategic plan will not be adopted until 2025. We assume that the next strategic planning process will begin within the next two years and recommend that the 2025 university strategic planning committee make internationalization one of SDSU's articulated strategic priorities. In addition, several of the following recommendations will help assure that internationalization is more quickly embedded in all areas of the university.

Recommendation 2: Create appropriate administrative and reporting structures to achieve comprehensive internationalization

Universities that have an international focus intentionally create appropriate administrative and reporting structures that help internationalization to flourish on campus. These structures usually involve an office that is designated to coordinate campus-wide global engagement, international student and scholar services and off-campus learning experiences; and units that are responsible for research, faculty development, student support services (e.g., academic advising, counseling, career exploration), enrollment management, institutional research, finance, community and alumni relations, and advancement.

SDSU has many of the overall structural components but has not yet provided senior direction for campus-wide comprehensive internationalization. As noted above, the appointment of a permanent AVP/SIO for International Affairs, and the restructuring of multiple units that now report to AVP/SIO, is one of the significant achievements of the Internationalization Lab process. In addition to naming an AVP/SIO, we would note it is also important where the SIO sits in the organizational hierarchy. Many of SDSU's peer institutions have a central international office led by an AVP/ SIO who reports directly to their university's Provost or President. For instance, at UC-Davis, the Vice Provost & Dean - Global Affairs reports directly to the Provost; at CSU-Long Beach, the Associate Vice President, International Education and Global Engagement also reports directly to the Provost. By reporting to the Provost (in some cases the SIO reports directly to the President), the AVP/SIO achieves a status equal with others who report to the Provost - both senior administrators and deans. The elevated position sends a signal to the university community that internationalization is a priority of the leadership, which in turn makes internationalization a more focused effort by all units. Such a reporting structure also signals the critical duality of internationalization to the academic realm and to the administrative provision of services. As previously noted, there is great enthusiasm throughout the university for international programs and initiatives - including in units such as research, the library, and development. To assure that this enthusiasm translates to real accomplishment, the peer review team recommends that International Affairs and the SIO report directly to either the Provost or President.

The peer review team further recommends that the AVP of International Affairs, together with Provost Ochoa, have a regularly scheduled meeting with President de la Torre. In our meeting, President de la Torre was clearly enthusiastic about internationalization and had many thoughts on how the university can advance internationally in coordination with other units on campus. A regularly scheduled meeting among

the President, Provost and AVP for International Affairs will allow these leaders to take their combined ideas and determine how best to implement SDSU's internationalization strategy.

The peer review team has two additional structural recommendations. First, consider moving services for international scholars from the Office of Faculty Advancement to the Office International Affairs. Nationally, most universities have unified offices of international student and scholar services (ISSS), rather than dividing visa services between scholars and students. Such a structure will allow cross training of professionals, and additional communication and advising for both students and scholars (on such issues as housing, transportation, cultural issues, cost-efficiency, better service provision, etc.). During the peer review, we heard the unfortunate story of a recent international scholar who had to return home shortly after arriving because he did not have sufficient funds to pay for the cost of housing in San Diego and had not been informed of the cost in advance. The resources of a combined ISSS office would allow for more holistic and streamlined communication with scholars, preventing such situations in the future. Relatedly, a combined office would minimize confusion on many fronts, so International Affairs (IA) would be the entry point for all international persons at SDSU.

The second additional recommendation is to engage in a discussion among senior leadership on ways to avoid confusion between the SDSU Global Campus and International Affairs. While the two units have distinct missions and roles, their similar names lead to confusion for students and anyone trying to access information about the international programs at the university. We understand that the College of Extended Studies only recently changed its name to Global Campus, so it is unlikely its name will again be changed in the near future. The peer review team does not have a specific recommendation on how to address the issue. We only note that the issue exists - in fact, we also did not understand why there were two offices named global/international - and recommend that a process be put in place to determine how to eliminate the confusion.

Recommendation 3: Amplify communications to improve campus-wide engagement with internationalization

As the Lab report is the first comprehensive, strategic assessment of internationalization at SDSU, it will be important to spread the insights of the Lab broadly across the institution. The peer review team suggests writing a brief framing document that summarizes the work of the Lab and draws out the importance of its findings for the university. As referenced above, it is particularly important to establish the awareness developed by the Internationalization Lab that comprehensive internationalization: (i) is more than study abroad and attracting international students; (ii) needs to be threaded throughout the university to be effective; (iii) is important for SDSU's future - and explain why; and, (iv) can be done distinctively at SDSU - and explain how. A framing document of this nature would also clarify that the recommendations stemming from the Lab broadly address all areas of the university. Sub-Goal 1(a) or the Lab Report provides the basis for such a document.³ We also recommend articulating the importance of individual parts of the Lab recommendations in other SDSU documents, statements, and online platforms more generally. For instance, by demonstrating that research conducted with international partners is cited at rates significantly greater than research with domestic partners, faculty will inevitably think more seriously both about international collaborators and publication in international journals.

³ Sub-Goal 1(a) states that "The Global Strategy Action Plan (GSAP) will serve as a living document to guide comprehensive internationalization and funding of priorities including: 1) international student recruitment, yield and retention; 2) administrative structure; curriculum, co-curriculum, and learning outcomes; 3) faculty policies; 4) global education opportunities; 5) international student experience; 5) partnerships; 6) access, equity, diversity, and inclusion; 7) transborder engagement, and 8) international research."

Additionally, we suggest that SDSU be creative in how it communicates the importance of internationalization. Communications can and should be tailored to different audiences. Students will respond much more readily to certain types of communication; faculty and staff will respond to other communication styles. We also suggest experimenting with video - an example is the video created by [George Mason University](#), which was created at the conclusion of its ACE Lab process. Much can be gained by making internationalization more front-of-mind across the university, especially since placing greater emphasis on global learning and engagement, research, and the international student experience is a culture change for many faculty, staff, and students.

Recommendation 4: Build strategic and tactical international partnerships to enhance SDSU's global footprint

SDSU has a significant, wide-ranging portfolio of international and transborder partnerships. These linkages give SDSU an advantage in achieving the level of international collaboration now deemed essential to effective global learning, advanced research, and civic engagement. Partnerships have many advantages, including supporting mobility for education abroad, recruitment, dual degrees, and international research collaborations. As SDSU further refines its development of international partnerships, the university will need additional planning to address the question of why the university chooses to engage with certain institutions in certain countries or regions, and how such partnerships align with the university's mission.

In our meetings with leadership, faculty, and administrators, we found that stakeholders understand the importance, and support the further development, of strategic and tactical international partnerships.⁴ While we discussed many international relationships, two were most prominent: SDSU Georgia and the SDSU Mesoamerican Studies Center in Oaxaca, Mexico. The Peer Review Team endorses the idea of focusing on a limited number of strategic university partnerships. We encourage the continued deepening of these relationships to include all facets of internationalization as articulated in Sub-Goal 1(a) of the Lab Report, including: (i) international student recruitment; (ii) curriculum, co-curriculum, and learning outcomes; (iii) global education opportunities; (iv) international student experience; (v) partnerships; (vi) access, equity, diversity, and inclusion; (vii) transborder engagement; and, (viii) international research.

The peer review team notes that development of partnerships is a major component of the Lab report and endorses the partnership recommendations contained in that report.⁵ The university will need to prioritize the recommended activities. The key activities that the peer review team believes will lead to "wins" that quickly enhance international partnership development include: (i) create a Steering Committee - that could comprise of faculty, staff, students, and ex-officio members - and that brings campus stakeholders together to address and implement an international partnership plan (see Sub-Goal 2(a), Activity I); (ii) create an internal and external communications plan and guide (see Sub-Goal 2(a), Activity II and Sub-Goal 2(b), Activity II); and, (iii) implement new database software to highlight existing and promote further international research (see Sub-Goal 4(b), Activity III). The Peer Review Team additionally recommends that International Affairs be the lead unit to manage international agreements and the partnership

⁴ The following resources provide further understanding regarding the role and value of international partnerships:

- Sutton, Susan Buck. 2010. "Transforming Internationalization through Partnerships." *International Educator* 19 (1): 60–6. <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/4593/sutton-2010-transforming.pdf>.
- ACE. 2015. *International Higher Education Partnerships: A Global Review of Standards and Practices*. <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/CIGE-Insights-Intl-Higher-Ed-Partnerships.pdf>.
- Clare Banks, Birgit Siege-Herbig, and Karin Norton. Eds. *Global Perspectives on Strategic International Partnerships: A Guide to Building Sustainable Academic Linkages*. Institute for International Education, 2016.
- Strategic Partners. NC State. <https://global.ncsu.edu/partnerships/strategic-partners/>.

⁵ In particular, see Goal 2: *Internationalization through Meaningful Partnerships* and Sub-Goal 4(b): *Increase and Support International Research*.

database, and have well designed procedures for developing and maintaining both the database and partnerships. Charging the AVP for International Affairs with overall oversight of the international partnerships/agreements, together with some level of signatory authority, is consistent with best practice. The SIO will need to work closely with other offices - particularly the Division of Research and Innovation - to determine precisely which office has responsibility for approving types of international agreements, and that agreements adhere to university policies and Federal, State, and local regulations.

Recommendation 5: Continue to look for opportunities for alignment between internationalization and access, equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives

Internationalization and access, equity, diversity and inclusion (AEDI) are inherently connected. Our particular historical moment has thrown into bold relief the need to explore and build on this connection. Global events from pandemics to wars reshape our lives on a daily basis. The U.S. is in the midst of a much needed reckoning with systemic racism and injustice. In the SDSU Model of Comprehensive Internationalization, AEDI was one of three foundational principles, part of all facets of internationalization. The peer review team was impressed with the university's commitment to its diverse community of students. As SDSU moves forward, we encourage the university to ensure that access, equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives remain at the forefront of its internationalization goals.⁶

In several of our meetings, the peer review team heard concerns about the marginalization of international students.⁷ These concerns should encourage a closer alignment among the units directly responsible for both internationalization and AEDI. In addition, as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with a foundational commitment to AEDI, International Affairs should continue to prioritize its alignment with the units specifically charged to oversee AEDI, particularly the Division of Student Affairs and Campus Diversity, including the Office of HSI and Regional Affairs. Such alignment will also encourage the development of creative programs to take advantage of the experiences and innovative viewpoints provided by international students to enhance the educational experience of domestic students.

Recommendation 6: Engage faculty more deeply in the operation of International Affairs, work to assure that more faculty incorporate internationalization in their classrooms, and encourage faculty to participate in international programs

Robin Matross Helms, the former Assistant Vice President for Programs and Global Initiatives at ACE, provided a well-researched [analysis](#), using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the ACE Mapping of Campus Internationalization, which quantitatively shows that, while universities have traditionally focused on increasing student mobility (inbound and outbound), the largest internationalization impacts actually occur when the institution focuses on internationalizing curriculum and engaging faculty. SDSU has begun to recognize the importance of making faculty a focus of its internationalization efforts. In Fall 2022, International Affairs hired two faculty members, each at half-time, to work in the area of faculty engagement. These faculty members are currently part of a pilot program which does not have on-going funding. The peer review team strongly recommends that these positions

⁶ There are several resources that may be helpful as the university further aligns internationalization and AEDI. The first is ACE's landmark publication [At Home in the World](#), and the recently developed [Intersections of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Internationalization: A Framing Guide](#), developed by a community of practice.. Other resources that may be useful include: [A House Where All Belong: Redesigning Education Abroad for Inclusive Excellence](#), published by The Forum on Education Abroad; and, [Diversity Abroad](#), whose mission is to create equitable access to the benefits of global education by empowering educators, engaging stakeholders, and connecting diverse students to resources and opportunity, and is considered a leading resource with training and assessment tools.

⁷ For AEDI work and supporting international students specifically, we recommend ACE's [Toward Greater Inclusion and Success: A New Compact for International Students](#).

become permanent and that International Affairs be allocated additional operational funds in order to enhance faculty engagement.

The peer review team further recommends that International Affairs, through IA faculty members and other sources, continue to engage faculty in many dimensions of internationalization. Examples include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Workshops and other tools to inform the faculty of various international opportunities and how to apply for support. One particularly good way to increase faculty mobility and expertise is through a Fulbright experience. Faculty also have many other options for international experiences, such as leading study abroad programs and participating in research projects overseas.
- Workshops and other tools to provide faculty with an understanding of how to host international scholars. Bringing more international scholars to campus is an important part of internationalizing the institution.
- Workshops and other tools on campus and at local/regional/national/international forums - to help faculty - in any discipline - internationalize their curriculum.
- Other faculty development opportunities that International Affairs can help faculty to access.

All of the above activities will help ensure that the benefits of SDSU's internationalization efforts are realized by students.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS: ENDORSEMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND RESOURCES

At the risk of stating the obvious, internationalization will be unable to grow and flourish without additional resources. While the accomplishments over the course of the Internationalization Lab process have significantly advanced internationalization at SDSU, progress will inevitably stall without investment. The peer review team commends the Lab leadership team and steering committee for assuring that there is a well-articulated and specific set of required resources appended to each of the goals identified in the Lab report. The identified resources allow the university community to understand precisely what will be needed in order to implement the desired activities. We would note that funding is not a prerequisite for the majority of resources listed. Most of the resources identified call for a focus on particular sections of the Lab report by various university units or the formation of working groups or committees, requiring a commitment of time and effort by faculty members and administrators. Some of the needed resources, however, do require additional funding.

We understand that International Affairs (IA) is already engaged in entrepreneurial activities to create additional revenue for the office. The particular example mentioned in several of our meetings was the SDSU Passport Office, which we understand provides revenue to IA.

In many of our meetings, the peer review team heard about the loss of staff members at the beginning of the pandemic. Those staff members have not been fully replaced. As International Affairs has been doing more over the past two years with fewer staff, the unit is at the point it will not be able to implement the goals outlined in the Lab report without additional resources. To address the resource issue, the peer review team recommends that the university consider the following:

- Create a position focusing on internationalization within the development office - or add a development professional to serve IA. In the peer review team's meeting with the AVP for Development, we found receptivity and great interest to the idea of raising philanthropic funds for transborder initiatives and internationalization. The discussion centered around the understanding

that certain donors will only be interested in providing funds to the university for international programs or needs. These donations will not take away from donations to other parts or other priorities of the university but will add to overall philanthropic attainment.

- Encourage conversations between the AVP of International Affairs and the VP for Research and Innovation about ways the offices can work together to focus on funding for international research, especially additional grant funding from the arms of the U.S. government, funding from foundations and corporations, and funding from international sources. In our meeting with the VP of Research and Innovation, we noted that there is interest in doing more to encourage funding of international research. As part of the Internationalization Lab process, IA created a FY18 - FY23 Research Funding Spreadsheet, which details awards from international sponsors or awards which have an “international activity” designation. The Spreadsheet outlines the impressive number and funding of awards from international sources - fully 13% of all SDSU research funding (over \$107 million since FY18). The international research already underway provides the platform to significantly expand such research, helping the university towards its goal of achieving R-1 status.
- Devote a portion or more of an FTE to focus on grant funding for many of the university’s international programs. Administrators at peer universities have successfully approached foundation and other institutional funders to underwrite many aspects of the university’s international programs and activities, from study abroad to international students, as well as to name parts of the internalization infrastructure, such as the international office.⁸
- Provide start-up monies in order to hire staff or provide other resources to launch programs that are projected to produce revenue. The peer review team heard from many faculty members and administrators that there is not excess funding for programs and understands the budgetary pressure at SDSU. However, if the AVP of International Affairs can provide a compelling proposal that start-up funding from the university will result in an on-going revenue source, then we recommend that university leadership seriously consider approving expenditures for such funding.

Finally, the peer review team recommends that AVP for International Affairs, on behalf of all the members of the Lab leadership and the committees that produced the ACE Internationalization Lab Report, ask the Faculty Senate to endorse the report. If endorsed by the Faculty Senate, the goals, activities, KPIs, accountability and resources will be approved by the body that represents the wider SDSU faculty. Then the faculty, in addition to the leadership and administrators, will have endorsed a report that lays out specific activities and resources necessary to achieve its stated internationalization goals.

CONCLUSION

SDSU is well positioned to continue as a leader in transborder and international education and research, and can do so in a way that brings measurable value to all university stakeholders, including SDSU students, faculty and administrators, SDSU alumni; community members in the City of San Diego and the southern California region, and the entire state of California. The peer review team was pleased to participate in the site visit and support SDSU’s strategic planning process. The team wishes to thank everyone at SDSU involved with organizing the visit, especially Cristina Alfaro, Associate Vice President for International Affairs. The peer review team is confident that by enacting the recommendations contained in the Internationalization Lab report, SDSU’s already vibrant international programs will continue to grow and flourish.

⁸ The Reves Center for International Studies is the hub of globalization at William & Mary, as well as the home of the associate provost for international Affairs, the Global Education Office and the Office of International Students, Scholars and Programs. The office was funded with an endowment from Wendy Reves.

APPENDICES
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY PEER REVIEW REPORT

Appendix I - Member Institutions of Cohort 18

Albizu University Puerto Rico
 Ball State University IN
 Baylor University TX
 California Lutheran University CA
 Fort Valley State University GA
 Jigjiga University Ethiopia
 Pratt Institute NY
 San Diego State University CA
 Southern Illinois University IL
 University of Kansas MO

Appendix II - Peer Review Visit Agenda

Date, Time & Location	ACE Visiting Team Meetings	Attendees
Wed 9/28 6pm-7:30pm	Dinner Meeting with Vice Provost and VP Wong	ACE Review Delegation Bill Tong, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs; Agnes Wong, Vice President Business and Financial Administration GS Co-Chairs: Cristina, Maria, Ricky, ISC Director, Noah
DAY 2		
Thu 9/29 1.5 hours 8-9:30am Susan K. Weber Conference Room	ACE Team and AVPs Breakfast Meeting	ACE Review Delegation GS Co-Chairs; Sasha Chizhik (AVP, Academic Labor Relations); Madhavi Mccall (Curriculum Assessment & Accreditation); Hala Madanat (VP, Research & Innovation); Mary Anne Kremecki, Mary Darling (AVP Development) - virtual
Thu 9/29 10-11:30am AL-110	IA Leadership Team Meeting	ACE Review Delegation IA Leadership Team: Cristina Alfaro, AVP, International Affairs; Noah Hansen, Director, International Affairs; Maria Keckler, Director of International Affairs Strategy and Communications; Ricky Paniagua, Assistant Director, International Student Center; Chris Kjonaas, Assistant Director, Global Education Office; Jessica Romero, Senior Program Development Specialist; Maybelline Arevalo-Lopez, Executive Assistant to AVP

Date, Time & Location	ACE Visiting Team Meetings	Attendees
Thu 9/29 12pm-1pm Susan K. Weber Conference Room Manchester Hall	ACE Team and President's Office	ACE Review Delegation SDSU President, Adela de la Torre GS Co-Chairs
Thu 9/29 1:15pm-2:30pm Faculty Staff Club	Senate Council and Deans Luncheon	ACE Review Delegation GS Co-Chairs Brandon Gamble (Dir, Black Resource Center); Kurt Lindemann (Associate Dean, College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts - PSFA); Noah Hansen (IA Director); Miriam Castanon (Dir, Latinx Ctr); Carlos Paternina Arboleda (Faculty Member); Erika Robb Larkins (Faculty); Mei Zhong (Faculty); Karen Myers-Bowman (Dean, Global Campus); Cristian Sterling Aquino (Faculty, Intl. Dir of Ed); Eddie West (Asst. Dean, Global Campus); Asfaw Beyene (Faculty); Joe Wolfman (Ass. Dean, Global Campus); Patricia Lozada-Santone (Asst. Dean); Patrick McCarthy (Asst. Dean, Library); Rhonda Schreiber (Ass. Dean, CAL); Sonja Pruitt-Lord (Ass. Dean, HHS); Yusuf Ozturk (Asst. Dean, Engineering); Andrew Bohonak, (Ass. Dean, Grad Studies)
Thu 9/29 1 hour 3-4:00pm International Student Center Lounge	SDSU International Affairs	ACE Review Delegation International Affairs Unit
Thu 9/29 5-7	ACE Team Private Dinner	ACE Review Delegation
DAY 3		
Fri 9/30 2 hours 8am-10:00am Breakfast Republic	Closing Breakfast Meeting with GS Co-Chairs	ACE Review Delegation GS Co-Chairs: Maria, Ricky, Cristina