

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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After more than a decade of internationalizing the institution, UBC is now positioned to educate global citizens (Piper, 2002). Just as there has not been a shared vision, rationale or expectations among advocates of internationalization in Canada (Knight, 1996), there also is no consensus reported yet on the concept of global citizenship in existing literature (Dower & Williams, 2003).

Meanwhile, in Canada, research done on international learning outcomes and competencies has been conducted mainly from the perspective of employers (Wilson, 1998; Vulpe, Kealley, Protheroe & MacDonald, 2001); little has been reported from students' perspective. Hence, a pilot project was launched at UBC in early 2004 to find out from students what international competencies they expect to acquire from their university education. This project quickly became known as the Global Citizenship Project. Twenty-five students and young alumni were recruited to lead small group discussions with students from diverse backgrounds, disciplines and study levels. Over a period of six weeks, approximately 180 participants contemplated, debated and shared their views and experiences relating to global citizenship at UBC.

The purpose of this report is to present and discuss the findings from these dialogues.

### The meaning of global citizenship

Most participants had not given much thought to global citizenship prior to joining the project. There was no apparent agreement on the definitions culled from the literature or put forth by participants. The notion itself was also questioned and challenged by some students. There was a marked difference in approach between the undergraduate and graduate students: many of the former were excited by the idea and were ready to promote it at UBC, while quite a few of the latter were suspicious of the agenda behind this emerging movement. Whether they were in favour of or critical of the notion, all demonstrated a high level of commitment to the project and showed respect in listening to views very different from their own. All agreed that UBC should demonstrate leadership by fostering a shared understanding and definition of global citizenship, especially if this concept is going to be a major theme in the University's new strategic plan, *Trek 2010*.

### Elements of global citizenship

In developing this project, the group leaders were adamant that merely identifying global competencies, i.e., "attitudes, knowledge, skills and abilities" (Senyshyn R, 2002), would not be sufficient. Values and actions had to be included in the inventory of important elements of global citizenship. These elements must then inform the development and delivery of the curriculum and other activities at UBC. The resultant inventory is not too different from the one culled from the literature, except for the new sections for values and actions (see Appendix B, p.55). The interplay of perspectives, especially between international and domestic students, contributed to the richness of the discussions.

### Best practices at UBC

Students found the discussion about educating global citizens through curriculum and extracurricular activities informative. Some also saw it as an opportunity to acknowledge what UBC is doing well in this area. Frequently quoted best practices included both specific academic courses and extracurricular activities. It is clear that there are many courses, programs or activities that contribute to the education of global citizens at UBC, but information on them is not readily accessible.

### What else UBC should do?

Participants offered a long list of recommendations and urged the University to conduct business as a responsible global citizen. Participants suggested many changes to the curriculum. There was an expectation that faculty and staff had to learn to become global citizens as well. Participants also made concrete recommendations to improve student services. Participants recommended better recognition of University members who are contributing to global citizenship education, including publishing success stories to inspire change in others. Finally, they reiterated the importance for the University to "walk the talk" in promoting responsible global citizenship.

### Next steps

The report concludes with additional impressions and recommendations. Participants were keen to see the University follow up on the many suggestions they made. These included involving faculty and staff members in similar discussions; establishing a committee of experts on global citizenship to help define the concept and integrate it into the curriculum and other activities on campus; and publishing findings from this project to educate more students and to help shape the University's new vision and mission.