CCSU: Educating Global Citizens
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Readers may be surprised to learn that President Jack Miller’s first piece of advice to incoming CCSU students is to start planning for their first international experience. Miller’s advice reflects CCSU’s distinctive emphasis on international education. To further that mission, CCSU has invested in a new program, “Passport to Global Citizenship,” that will enable first-year students to spend a week in England studying the history of London and British culture. These students, many of whom have never been outside of the U.S., are the most recent beneficiaries of CCSU’s commitment to educate students for global citizenship.

During the past year, over 400 CCSU students took courses in another country. Our goal is to increase that number to 1,000 annually. The courses took students to Belize, Brazil, England, France, Ghana, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, and Japan. Earlier this summer, New Britain’s sister city in Greece, Giannitsa, hosted a group of CCSU students who took part in an archeological dig at the site of Alexander the Great’s first capital. In another class, students performed community service on a coffee plantation in Costa Rica. More than 80 students studied at one of 25 foreign universities with which we have exchange agreements. Over the coming year, we expect more than 400 CCSU students to participate in faculty-led courses abroad. They might, for example, travel to the United Arab Emirates to learn about the Persian Gulf in the 21st century; they might study globalization in Nicaragua; they might get a first-hand glimpse of educational practices in China; they might learn about indigenous cultures in Brazil and study climate change and alternative energy in Iceland; and they might take part in a social work field school in Peru. The CCSU University Singers will also conduct a performance tour in China.

Hosting international students is also integral to CCSU’s identity as a globally oriented university. Last year, over 200 foreign students were enrolled in courses at Central. Each summer, CCSU welcomes Jamaican teachers pursuing a master’s in education and Chinese government officials enrolled in a public management program. CCSU’s global commitment extends to our faculty, many of whom conduct international research. Recent examples include helping the Nepalese government explore snow leopard tourism and studying retirees expatriating to Mexico. CCSU’s popular International Festival annually draws on the resources of its international students and faculty to celebrate the rich diversity of our community.

CCSU’s commitment to international education is anchored in its Center for International Education (CIE), one of the university’s three Centers of Excellence. Under the leadership of a new CIE director, CCSU has enrolled in the American Council on Education’s prestigious “Internationalization Laboratory,” which will help the university establish its unique commitment to international education among the state’s public universities. CCSU will also host in fall 2009 an important International Education Conference to showcase efforts throughout the Connecticut State University System to prepare college graduates for the demands of our global economy and of our increasingly diverse communities.