

## TASK FORCE ON PEACE AND JUSTICE IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Final Report – December 2008

Following on our interim report of September 2008, the Task Force on Peace and Justice in International Education is pleased to present its final recommendations to the NAFSA Board of Directors, pursuant to the charge issued by President Everett Egginton in March 2008. As was noted in September, the principal finding of the first phase of our work is that while there has been demonstrated interest among the NAFSA membership and leadership in advancing international education as a tool for promoting peace and justice, the Association has not yet been intentional about charting a path in that direction. This report then lays out recommendations to address that challenge.

### **Process**

The Task Force met in Washington, DC at the Annual Conference and again in Los Angeles at the September Board Meeting, in addition to holding a series of conference calls. Several contacts were made at the annual meeting of the Peace and Justice Studies Association, including with the U.S. Institute of Peace and the Peace Education Center at Teachers College, Columbia University. The Task Force also sought the input of NAFSA's Peace and Justice Special Interest Group. The Task Force charge and list of members is included as an appendix to this report.

### **Defining how international education can support peace and justice**

Since their emergence shortly after the Second World War, the fields of peace and justice studies and conflict resolution have grappled with the same definitional dilemmas that this Task Force has encountered over the course of its work. For our purposes, we have used a definition of peace known to academics as "positive peace," which can be seen as coexistence that embodies socioeconomic and political justice, acknowledgement of basic equality, and mutual respect for human rights and dignity. This is more than simply an absence of violence, or "negative peace," and is instead represents a social system wherein structural violence against particular groups is reduced or eliminated and where there are socially accepted, non-violent means to resolve intergroup and interpersonal conflicts.

Yet given the enormous scope of that definition, the Task Force determined that in order for international education to support a peace and justice agenda, we must lay out a strategic direction for both the Association and the field of international education and exchange. We propose the following such language:

We believe that the field of international education was founded out of the belief that international educational exchange promotes peace, justice and well-being in the world. Yet as the field has grown in complexity and scope, it has become increasingly difficult for individual international educators to keep that broad charge in mind. We believe that NAFSA, as the leading association in international exchange, should play a leadership role in reconnecting international educators to our core value that international education is a force for promoting peace and justice in the world.

### **How NAFSA's activities are already advancing a peace and justice agenda**

As was mentioned in the Task Force's Interim Report, there has been growing member interest in addressing issues of peace and justice in the field of international education. At the same time, we have seen these issues touched upon in conference sessions, publications, and professional development workshops, usually through member-driven initiatives. Further, the Task Force strongly believes that NAFSA's robust public policy advocacy efforts further the cause of peace by actively seeking to increase access to exchange programs – both for U.S. citizens going abroad and international students and scholars coming to the United States.

### **Concrete actions for the short-term**

The Task Force was pleased to learn that the focus on peace and justice at the 2009 Annual Conference will continue to grow. At the 2008 conference, approximately 5 percent of the 200 sessions addressed these issues, as did exceptional plenary sessions, particularly by Ishmael Beah. For 2009, this ratio appears to have been maintained. Of particular note for the 2009 conference is a 3-hour training seminar conducted by staff from the U.S. Institute of Peace on making study abroad a peacebuilding experience, as well as a "mini-plenary" featuring Barbara Wien, one of the founders of a group known as Peace Brigades International. These developments represent a continuing growth trend that we hope will continue in the following ways:

- The Annual Conference Committee should seek to grow the number of sessions addressing issues of peace, social and economic justice, and human rights, up to 15 percent of conference offerings each year.
- Successful peace and justice sessions at the Annual Conference should be replicated, where feasible, at the regional level, so that these themes are emphasized in a different setting and with a different audience.
- As the above example of working with the U.S. Institute of Peace demonstrates, NAFSA can and should provide a venue for organizations with deep background in providing training and education on peace and justice issues, especially in the near-term, as we do not expect to be able to integrate these themes into NAFSA's regular offerings for a few years.
- In addition, NAFSA should encourage the distribution of relevant information regarding connections between peace and justice and international education through the professional networks and *International Educator* including pointing out opportunities for our members to gain information through offerings by other organizations.

The Task Force believes that these actions can be easily undertaken within the Association's current scope of work, and would be largely budget neutral. These steps have the added value of both increasing the Association's contacts with an increasingly diverse array of actors while simultaneously addressing a gap in our current offerings.

### **Longer-term issues to address**

Over the course of our deliberations, the Task Force identified several areas that need to be addressed over the next one to three years, which the Task Force feels would be more appropriately addressed by other parts of the Association. These issues can be broken into conceptual level and operational level concerns.

### *Conceptual issues*

In its Interim Report in September, the Task Force noted that certain questions needed to be addressed in order to strengthen our theoretical depth in how peace and justice issues and international education are related. These questions remain, with some refinement:

- What does global citizenship really mean, and how it can be defined for the field of international education?
- How can international educators do more to promote global civic awareness? Are students coming out of an international experience feeling a sense of responsibility for what is going on in the world and an understanding of their role in a broader social, political and economic context? If not, what remedies can be implemented? What best practices exist that can be used to guide others?
- How can/does NAFSA bring peace and justice issues to the forefront of international educators' thinking and practice? How do these issues define our work as international educators?

The Task Force has concluded that these issues are better addressed through the long-term work of the Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship Knowledge Community. The first question has already been dealt with to some extent by scholars in several disciplines, including international education. Our own research has demonstrated that this question may well be too broad to be addressed conclusively. However, the Task Force believes that the latter two questions could guide some useful analysis that would benefit the Association and its members. Here we do not mean to usurp or derail the good work already being undertaken by this KC, rather, we are merely pointing out the most logical home within the Association for this particular work, and encourage them to include these issues in their work plans as they move forward.

### *Operational issues*

Our initial deliberations were based upon a set of recommendations issued by President Everett Egginton at the January 2008 Washington Leadership Meeting. The Task Force agrees with many of the recommendations Egginton made at that time, and believes that these issues should be considered in greater detail by the appropriate bodies within the Association. There are three specific areas we believe merit further research and discussion:

- **Training services.** To add depth to offerings provided through conference sessions and seminars, the Knowledge Communities and the Training Coordination Subcommittee may wish to develop professional practice workshops on integrating peace and justice issues into international education programs. Whether or not to develop such workshops should remain at the discretion of the various Knowledge Communities and the Training Coordination Subcommittee.
- **Grants and scholarships.** Grants could be developed for either students conducting research in peace studies and international education, or for NAFSA members seeking to develop international education programs that intentionally address peace and justice issues. At this point in time, NAFSA does not issue grants of any variety, and given current economic constraints, the Task Force does not believe that now is the time to address this question. However, the Board may wish to consider the possibility of this program in future years, provided a stable source of funding can be identified to support such a program.

- **Awards.** An award could be created for either an international educator who has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting peace and justice through their work, or for a campus or program that has demonstrated success in integrating peace and justice themes into international education programs. As a third option, an award could be given to a non-academic organization that promotes peace, justice and human rights through educational and other programming. Such an award, in any of these forms, could potentially be named for Ron Moffatt or for an international luminary with whom NAFSA has some connection. We recommend the Board consider these options at a future date.

**Proposed modification of the Strategic Plan**

Finally, the Task Force was asked to propose modifications to the mission, vision, values, goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan for the Board to consider during the plan’s refreshing scheduled for March 2009. The Task Force considered modifications to Goal 1 (*Advocate for U.S. policies, laws, and regulations that promote and enhance international education*), Goal 2 (*Establish internationalization as an essential component of higher education*) and Goal 3 (*Advance NAFSA’s leadership position in key knowledge areas*). In each case, however, it was determined that these goals represent bold directions that can have dramatic impacts on the Association’s work.

Thus it was determined that for the time being, we should focus on Goal 4 (*Achieve excellence in professional development and educational products and services*). We believe that this goal represents a logical starting point for becoming more proactive in advancing international education as a vehicle for promoting peace and justice. This goal encompasses a core part of NAFSA’s work, and we believe strongly that before we can be bolder in this area, we must first undertake expanding the knowledge base of international educators in the area of peace and justice. We therefore propose the addition of an eighth objective to Goal 4, underlined below:

<b><i>Goal 4: Achieve excellence in professional development and educational products and services.</i></b>	<b><i>Lead Accountability</i></b>
1. Identify emerging needs, prioritize potential product options, and test market viability to develop new products.	KCCC-TCS/SIM All KCs
2. Raise the quality of core training programs and explore new modes of delivery.	KCCC-TCS
3. Continue to increase accessibility to information beyond traditional publishing—emphasizing Web-based tools and adopting innovative, interactive technologies.	KCCC-SIM
4. Produce conferences that address a variety of learning styles, utilize state-of-the-art presentation methods, and promote networking.	ACC Regions
5. Implement new models for timely product development and delivery.	VP, E&PD
6. Emphasize theory-to-practice integration throughout the knowledge community areas.	All KCs
7. Serve as a resource to, and utilize the resources of, international educators based outside the U.S.	All KCs ACC
8. <u>Articulate and promote the ways in which international education serves as a vehicle for promoting peace, social and economic justice, and global civic awareness.</u>	<u>All KCs</u> <u>ACC</u>

### **Concluding thoughts**

The Task Force believes that the above recommendations, including the proposed additional objective for the Strategic Plan, can guide NAFSA's return to the roots upon which the field of international education was founded. NAFSA's founders articulated their peace promoting mission most recently in the video shown at the Washington conference, but as the field has grown, these guiding issues have been overshadowed by the complexities faced in the day-to-day work of international education professionals. As both Ron Moffatt and Everett Egginton have stressed, the time is right for the field of international education to regain sight of these values, and we hope that we have been helpful in laying out the first steps of this process.

We would like to thank the Board for the opportunity to work on this important project, and look forward to your feedback.

Robert Gosende  
Chair

## Appendix: Task Force Charge and Composition

### Charge to the Task Force

President Egginton asked the task force to present to the Board of Directors a recommendation covering the following elements:

1. Define what it will mean for international education to support a peace and justice agenda—what would characterize international education if this goal were met? What kinds of things would be occurring in international education?
2. Report on the extent to which NAFSA's activities—specifically its training, practice information, conference content, and advocacy—are already advancing a peace and justice agenda.
3. Identify opportunities within the current activities to increase the focus on peace and justice.
4. Identify opportunities for NAFSA to indirectly support others already working to infuse international education with a peace and justice agenda. (By indirect, meaning raising NAFSA members' awareness by referencing others' work our materials and Web site, inviting them to give conference sessions, articles about their activities in *International Educator*, etc.)
5. Identify opportunities NAFSA itself may have to initiate activities to serve students or faculty in this area.
6. Prioritize the opportunities from 3-5 above in terms of their impact on the goal of integrating a peace and justice agenda into international higher education.
7. For the highest priority items, indicate which can and should be accommodated within the operational budget in future years. Which of the highest priority items will require additional funding to be accomplished?
8. Propose changes, as needed, in the mission, values, goals or objectives of the strategic plan to accommodate a peace and justice agenda in the future—these to be considered in the refreshing of the strategic plan for 2009-2011.

### Composition

- Robert Gosende, Associate Vice Chancellor for International Programs, State University of New York, *Task Force Chair*
- Masume Assaf, Associate Director, International Programs, Pennsylvania State University
- James Cooney, Associate Provost for International Programs, Colorado State University
- Donald Dellow, Associate Professor of Higher Education, University of South Florida
- Ivor Emmanuel, Director, International Students and Scholars, University of California, Berkeley

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