



NEW INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA: CROSS CULTURAL PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION COLLABORATIONS

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Abstract

The present report describes new international student and faculty exchange programs between Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH's) public universities in Sarajevo and Tuzla, the University of Dubrovnik (Croatia) and America's public University of Missouri- St. Louis. Building the program from the ground up, challenges and successes are reviewed associated with creating the student and faculty exchanges between the United States and BiH and Croatia after the end of the 1990s Balkan wars. Decades of communist central planning (1945-1992) immediately after World War II needed to be

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reformed in former Yugoslavia, amounting to a regional revolution in higher education. The present article summarizes recent developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina's and Croatia's Bologna-compatible, educational and civil institutions after the 1990s Balkan war of aggression, and the role of the United States in that process.

Keywords: international student and faculty exchange program, higher education

Global literacy and internalization of higher education have become priorities for some institutions while developing organizational changes, and “academic and professional competencies for their graduates” (Agnew & VanBalkom, 2009, p. 451) guided by political, economic, cultural and environmental factors (Bartell, 2003; Knight, 2003; Qiang, 2003; Stier, 2004). Exchange programs can have a more profound effect on a university community since they can involve both faculty and students, and have components that are cultural as well as academic (Lang, 1997).

Although there are differences between initiating foreign exchange programs and study abroad in international higher education, for the purposes of this article they will be discussed together. Since neither the University of Sarajevo nor the University of Dubrovnik have on-going student exchange agreements or study abroad programs with American universities both aspects of internalization strategy will be covered. This article will also discuss the multiplier effect of cultural exchange on these university exchange programs.

History of Higher Education in the Region

“Behind hundreds of veils, nothing can be seen although each of them is transparent. Only two or three break the light, deceive the spectator. Not a lot, only to unable discerning whether it is dawn or noon...” (Risojevic, 1995, p. 73).

It is important to put the history of South Central Europe and the former Yugoslavia in context as it is impossible to separate recent events in the region from the long struggles of war, empire, and religion. Prior to the 40 years of communism following the Second World War, the region was occupied by two powerful empires, the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Forty years of socialism also left a legacy. Many credit Marshall Tito with a both enlightened and benign leadership, and no one disputes that he was able to keep a lid on the powerful forces of nationalism that erupted after his death. However, socialism and the “Titoist” state centralized power in Belgrade leading to many of the problems that characterized the post-communist era. With the fall of communism, Yugoslavia was left with the 4th largest army in Europe. This was at a time when member states were preparing to secede from the union and establish independent countries (Glenny, 1994).

The issue of centralization of institutions during the years of communism had very serious consequences for the newly emerging countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. The post-WWII, communist period created laws that regulated, centralized, but also strengthened the education system of ex-Yugoslavia. Both the Universities in Sarajevo and Dubrovnik were prominent educational institutions in previous centuries. The first established and institutionalized education in Bosnia and Herzegovina happened during the Ottoman Empire in 1531 as a law college - the Ottoman Medresa of Sarajevo. Its influence was recognized throughout the Ottoman Empire and in Europe until the 19th Century and the rise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was not until the end of WWII in 1949 that the University in Sarajevo was reestablished as a public university. It is now the largest university in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a population of over 55,000 students (University of Web-site, URL:<http://www.unsa.ba/s/index.php?lang+=english>).

The city of Dubrovnik was established in the 7th century and was the only city- state on the coast of the Adriatic from the 14th to the 19th centuries. The University of Dubrovnik was founded by the Jesuit Order in 1624. Then called “Collegium Ragusinum” the University trained students in the arts, sciences, maritime studies, and diplomacy. During the Middle Ages diplomats from the all over Europe and the Mediterranean studied in Dubrovnik. This long tradition of educational excellence went into decline during the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the world wars that followed. After 1945 during the socialist period under Tito education was centralized in Zagreb and Belgrade. Under General Tito the universities on the coast of the Adriatic (Rijeka, Split, Zadar, and Dubrovnik) were downsized and reduced to marine trade schools specializing in aqua culture and other maritime subjects (University of Dubrovnik Web site, URL: http://www.unidu.hr/index_eng.php).

In 2003, a critical decision was made in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, to build the University of Dubrovnik back to its former glory as a full, independent university. In particular, since Croatia is in line to join the European Union (EU) it must build up its faculty in a number of areas. The EU has standards that Croatia must meet in order to join. UD's current priorities are: nursing, music and arts, economics, political science, and communication.

The European Union and the Bologna Process

The European Union was established gradually after 1945 and the end of WWII. The first partners were: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The objective was to strengthen ties among nations and thus diminish the possibility of another world war on European soil. As the EU was enlarged to admit countries of the former East Bloc (Hungary, the Czech Republic etc.) and transition to the single currency the Euro in 1999, Europe developed a standardization of practices and institutions. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia are not yet officially part of the EU the process has begun to bring their societies up to the standards that will allow them to enter the EU in the next few years. This process involves reform of the educational system at all levels from K-12 and higher education as well (Europa, Web site http://europa.eu/about-eu/index_en.htm).

In Europe this process was driven by the Bologna Agreement. The aim of Bologna was to create a standardized zone of higher education in greater Europe and the European Union. With the dissolution of borders, adoption of a single currency, and work opportunities for citizens of all EU member states, educational standardization became an absolute necessity. The Bologna Agreement set out to increase transparency, competitiveness, quality, and options for students in all countries in the European Union in part to allow Europe to compete with graduates of higher education in the United States, Canada, Asia and other parts of the world (Council of Europe. Higher Education and Research, Website). Although neither Bosnia and Herzegovina nor Croatia is part of the European Union both countries have reformed their curriculum to be a part of the Bologna Process. This has standardized higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia at the undergraduate, master, and doctoral levels thus enabling significant increases in academic exchange programs with countries throughout Europe. All three universities, the University of Dubrovnik, the University of Sarajevo and the University of

Tuzla have active and comprehensive educational exchange programs in all disciplines with European universities.

Context

Prior to the international agreements described here, neither the University of Sarajevo (UNSA) nor the University of Dubrovnik (UD) had formal student exchange programs with universities in the United States. The new connections between BiH and Greater St. Louis are especially significant because the St. Louis municipal region is home to the largest group of former refugee Bosnians outside of BiH. During and following intervention by President Bill Clinton's administration in the war of aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1990s, the United States government settled over 60,000 Bosnian refugees in St. Louis, and throughout the state of Missouri.

The university faculty-student exchange initiative in BiH and Croatia was built upon decades of Csapó-Sweet's work in Eastern Europe in the areas of media, culture and education since 1973. In 2006, with partial support from the Center for International Studies (UMSL), Csapó-Sweet visited the Universities of Dubrovnik (Croatia), Tuzla and Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) to explore the feasibility of student/faculty educational exchange programs. This report describes highlights of meetings with faculty, administration, government officials (Bosnian and American) and students in both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Agreements finalizing the student/faculty exchange programs with these universities were signed in the fall of 2007. Also, three successive Educational and Cultural Attachés at the United States Embassy in Sarajevo were involved in this process (they are on three year terms). From the first visit, the Office of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina through Dr. Lejla Panjeta, the Expert Associate for Culture and Education to President Haris Silajdžić, moved the project forward. Dr. Panjeta's position of professor of Directing in Theater and Film in the Academy of Drama at the University of Tuzla and professor of Film Theory at the Academy of Performing Arts at the University of Sarajevo has been an important factor in facilitating this program.

Bosnians in BiH are very aware of the significance of St. Louis in the recent history of the Bosnian Diaspora. The new St. Louis Bosnian community soon became active in local business, culture, and education. Initially settled in the intensely urban Tower Grove section of St. Louis, many Bosnians had

problems adjusting to the schools in that area. Over time, many migrated further south to the Bayless School district. Currently, the Bayless School District in South St. Louis is composed of families roughly 50% of who came from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

New University Agreements

In the fall of 2007, UMSL Chancellor Tom George signed memoranda of understanding for establishing student and faculty exchange programs with the University of Sarajevo (USNA), the University of Tuzla (UT), and also the University of Dubrovnik (UD). Following external and internal university negotiations and universal administrative reviews and approvals, exchange agreements were signed within six months.

The process began with Csapó-Sweet and Panjeta meeting with Rector Dr. Faruk Čaklovica, in the Office of the Rector of the University of Sarajevo. Present were: the Vice-Rector; the Director for International Relations; the Dean of the Music Academy; Vice-Dean of Performing Arts; Vice Dean of Fine Arts. All the Deans agreed to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with UMSL after which it went to the Faculty Senate for an unusually quick final approval. There is a very real sense of the historic nature of the Agreement for Mutual Understanding that the universities have undertaken.

Role of Cultural Programs in Strengthening Educational Exchange

The Academy of Music at UNSA is just developing their jazz and contemporary music courses. Both UNSA and the University of Dubrovnik (UD) are in the process of expanding, and in the case of UD, creating a music program from the ground up. Partnering with UMSL will allow both universities to share faculty expertise, share curriculum, investigate the use of distance learning through video courses, and most significantly offer opportunities for their students to perform with musical organizations in each city. Discussions are underway for performances in Sarajevo of faculty from UMSL to perform with the Sarajevo Philharmonic Orchestra.

A delegation to Sarajevo from UMSL (spring 2012) will include Chancellor Dr. Tom George who is also a physicist and has a passion for jazz piano. He will perform and consult with the universities regarding American jazz as well as physics. In the past, Chancellor George has given performances to raise money for student scholarships. Plans are underway to hold such

benefit concerts in Sarajevo and Dubrovnik. This modality for fundraising has never been attempted at either UNSA or UD. It represents an experiment in American style creativity in providing scholarship money in a region of the world not accustomed to financing education beyond subsidy from the state. The delegation will also include Professor Dr. Barbara Harbach, composer and internationally recognized harpsichordist who will perform at UNSA and UD in 2012.

Plans are also underway for the Ariana Quartet, Quartet-in-Residence at UMSL to perform in Sarajevo and Dubrovnik in the near future. According to the director of the Quartet, while there the quartet would offer master classes and lessons to high school and university string students. The Arianna String Quartet offers public performances wherever they perform. This will elevate the role of UMSL as a unique cultural venue for exchange students from these universities, and also will serve to encourage talented young musicians by sharing ideas and inspiring students to travel and collaborate abroad. The Arianna String Quartet has a growing international reputation as artists and educators. They were appointed as the String Quartet-in-Residence at the FEMUSC Festival in Jaragua, Brazil, in January 2011, and visited South Africa as part of the University of Missouri's South African Education Program. There they performed and taught extensively in daily sessions with the Cape Town Youth symphony, and collaborated in a special concert at the University of the Western Cape. They look forward to helping establish this new program of exchange and collaboration between UMSL and UNSA and UD. These partnerships will afford opportunities for music students at each of these institutions to intern with these groups, perform with world class musical institutions, participate in master's classes, and do so while living and studying in a foreign country.

One of the most exciting aspects of this exchange process will be collaboration in the areas of music, theater and dance. Universities in Bosnia (and throughout Central and Eastern Europe) have very sophisticated theater and drama programs. In many cases they have been influenced by the Stanislavski "Method" approach to acting as well as by the work of Bertholdt Brecht. However, there is no university in Bosnia that teaches modern dance. What that means is that UMSL has the opportunity to develop the curriculum for dance pedagogy for an entire nation.

BiH President Željko Komšić visited St. Louis in the fall of 2008, and made a special visit to UMSL to be briefed on and discuss opportunities for Bosnian students to study at UMSL. He visited the Touhill Performing Arts Center at UMSL and toured the facilities where students from Bosnia and Croatia would study and perform while in St. Louis. He remarked on the uniqueness of this project to the Bosnian Diaspora, expressing special interest in the development of curricula and art programs aimed at addressing issues of tolerance and diversity.

Since January 2007, Csapó-Sweet had been working with the U.S. Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Universities of Tuzla and Sarajevo to bring Professor Rob Scoggins and Stacy West, Co-Artistic Director of the Modern American Dance Company (MADCO) to the Sarajevo Winter Festival to perform and conduct master classes at the high schools and universities. This would formally initiate the process of UMSL assisting with the development of dance pedagogy at the post secondary level in Bosnia and Herzegovina. MADCO is the resident dance company at UMSL and works closely with the newly formed dance program at UMSL. This is an unprecedented opportunity for UMSL to shape and mentor modern dance education. The UMSL Dance Program has also been invited to perform in Dubrovnik. Plans are underway to bring Professor Rob Scoggins to the region to begin this process.

The performing arts concerts and masterclasses will coincide with an exhibition of photographs and mixed media by Professor Dr. Rita Csapó-Sweet at the Gallery in the Academy of Fine Arts, UNSA. As part of the cultural exchange an exhibition of prints made by students and faculty at UNSA during the siege of Sarajevo (1992-1993) will be shown in St. Louis. This collection of woodcuts has already traveled to several Western European countries but has not been exhibited in the United States before. The woodcut prints are beautiful and deeply moving.

The Universities of Sarajevo, Tuzla and Dubrovnik continued to teach throughout the course of the war. The university communities understood that closing their institutions would be capitulation in the face of the siege. In Sarajevo, there was no heat and in many cases there were no windows. They barely had food, much less art supplies. In spite of losing both faculty and students as casualties of the war, the University remained open (Čaklovica,

2010). Two students from the University of Sarajevo will be the first students to come to UMSL from Bosnia during 2012.

The first cultural exchange of the UMSL/Bosnian Universities program took place in November 2009. With the assistance of a grant from the CEC ArtsLink Foundation Csapó-Sweet curated a Bosnian Film Side-Bar at the St. Louis International Film Festival (SLIFF). Several award winning recent Bosnian films were presented at SLIFF. The films “Grbavica”, “Snow” won multiple awards at the best international festivals and dealt with the vestiges of war on the women and children of Bosnia and Herzegovina. “Snow” won the Critics Prize at the Cannes Film Festival and also received an award from the St. Louis Critics Association.

The two-day side-bar also included an interactive video pod-cast with one of Bosnia’s best young film animators and a lecture/screening with Edward Serotta. Serotta presented two of his documentary films: “The Search for the Sarajevo Haggadah,” and “Survival in Sarajevo” which chronicles the role that the Sarajevo Jewish community played in feeding the hungry (of all religions) during the war. Both were created for ABC’s “Nightline.” Serotta is currently Director of the Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation (Centropa). Based in Vienna and Budapest, Centropa is an NGO that uses advanced technologies to preserve Jewish memory in Central and Eastern Europe.

The First Steps – Building Educational Exchange Programs

In the spring semester of 2008, Csapó-Sweet and Panjeta jointly taught a distance learning video tele-course class of American Cinema with the University of Tuzla. It was a tremendous success as there were many more students in Tuzla who wanted to take the class than there were spaces for them. The final lecture for the class took place in Tuzla. Following that Dr.(s) Csapó-Sweet, Panjeta, and Rector Tufekcic, gave each student who took the class a certificate signed by UMSL’s Dr. Joel Glassman, Director of the Center for International Studies (CIS), and Chancellor Tom George, to inaugurate the first official joint program of the UMSL/Tuzla exchange program. The University of Sarajevo is anxious to teach the same course for them and they have a list of students waiting to enroll.

It remains a priority to identify funds that allow us to assist all the universities in the program to update their technology to better conduct tele-

courses in realtime. It would be important to build both synchronous and non-synchronous distance-learning programs to compliment and augment our faculty/student exchanges. With a population of 60,000 Bosnians in St. Louis these facilities could be used for a broad spectrum of educational/cultural and business applications. They can be used for classes but they can also be used for business conferences in an educational setting. The Bosnian Chamber of Commerce in St. Louis expressed support for this initiative.

2008-2011 has been a period of building alliances for the exchange program both in St. Louis and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In February 2008, Dr. Lejla Panjeta visited St. Louis as a guest of the Center for International Studies, at UMSL. She gave a lecture about Bosnian film and culture on the UMSL campus to film/media students as well as to the faculty and academic community. In addition Panjeta met with members of the St. Louis Bosnian community to talk about the exchange program and was interviewed by the local media here about the program. She also met many of the members of the UMSL faculty at a dinner hosted by Chancellor Tom George and Dr. Barbara Harbach.

Dr. Panjeta's visit was followed by a visit by CIS Director, Dr. Joel Glassman to Sarajevo in April 2008. Dr. Glassman met with Rector Dr. Faruk Čaklović and members of the faculty, and administration at the University of Sarajevo. He also met with the Minister of the Sarajevo Canton government who promised to contribute funds for students to travel to St. Louis to study at UMSL. Dr. Glassman proposed that the CIS would fund a semester of research and teaching for a junior faculty member from USNA to come to UMSL. In addition to these financial commitments, the University of Tuzla Rector promised that UT will pay for two students to travel to UMSL for the exchange program.

Funding for Study Abroad Exchange Programs

In 2009, Csapó-Sweet met on the campus of the University of Sarajevo with students all of whom were eager to study at UM- St. Louis in the new exchange program. Csapó-Sweet also met with students from the University of Tuzla. The most critical aspect of funding for the program, involves the amount of money that the Bosnian students require for a semester of study at UMSL. Generally, foreign students need to have \$6,000 per semester that will cover room and board while they are here. Most of them live on campus in the

University Meadows Dormitories. This amount of money is prohibitive for students coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina where the university is almost free and most students live with their families or in affordable dormitories on campus. In order to facilitate this exchange program UMSL has waived tuition for the Bosnian students. But most important, if we can arrange host families for the students then they will only be required to post \$2,500, to cover incidentals while they are here.

Currently efforts are being made to identify families in St. Louis who will host a student for a semester. That includes families both from within the Bosnian community as well as those who have no prior connection to Bosnia and Herzegovina. At this point the exchange program cannot grow unless there is money to advertise and get the word out both in the St. Louis area and elsewhere in the United States where there are large numbers of Bosnians (Chicago, Louisville, New York), and in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself.

Award Recognition for UMSL-UNSA Program in 2010

In May 2010, the UMSL Bosnian Exchange Program played a very prominent role at the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the University of Sarajevo during a gala event at the Bosnian National Theater. Bosnian President Dr. Haris Silajdžić was in attendance for the celebration. Csapó-Sweet receiving a UNSA medal recognizing the UMSL-UNSA exchange program was in the company on stage of rectors and vice-rectors representing the other exchange universities: Urbana (Italy), Hamburg (Germany), Turkey, and United Arab Emirates among many others. UMSL was the only North American representative of an exchange program for the Bosnians of the diaspora, and also the only American university with a fully functioning study abroad program with UNSA having a seat at the table.

First American students at UNSA

In January 2010, two UMSL students spent a semester studying at the University of Sarajevo. One of them attended classes in UNSA's Department of Political Science, while also working for an NGO in Sarajevo. The other attended the Academy of Performing Arts at the UNSA. In this program, students are taught by international prize winning (e.g., Academy Awards, Cannes, Toronto Film Festivals) Bosnian filmmakers. Few American public universities can offer film students the experience of studying with such high

caliber professionals in the film industry. UMSL now makes that possible with the exchange program at UNSA in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Directing in Film Program at the Academy of Performing Arts at the University of Sarajevo, accepts up to six students annually and has educated almost all of Bosnia's most important directors. Director Danis Tanovic has taught at the Academy. His film "No Man's Land" won an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film in 2002, in addition to a Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Film and Best Screenplay at Cannes in 2001. Many other directors have been educated and still maintain professional relations with the educational process of the Academy, such as: Ademir Kenović, Srđan Vuletić, Pjer Žalica, Haris Pašović, Ahmed Imamović, and Aida Begić.

This student / faculty exchange is equivalent to setting students up with filmmakers in Los Angeles or New York. Perhaps it is even better since Bosnia and Herzegovina is a small country. Everyone in the film industry there knows everyone else. UMSL students will have much more intimate contact with the film world there than in Los Angeles or New York, where they might get lost and/or ignored. Instead of paying close to \$100,000 to study with world famous filmmakers at NYU or UCLA, students will spend less than the cost of a semester (or year's) tuition at UMSL.

During the 2011-2012 academic year, students in both directions will participate in the exchange program. However, the tight university budgets in both the United States and throughout the Balkans only permit a few students to participate in the program from Bosnia and Herzegovina and UMSL per semester during the next few years. UMSL's Center for International Studies had been assisting this project with approximately \$1,000 - \$4,000 a year. However, the impact of the current recession led to very limited support since 2009. Even marketing the exchange program to the St. Louis Bosnian community has been suspended. Nevertheless, students keep showing up in both the United States and BiH and Croatia hoping to become involved in the exchange program.

Establishing Exchange Curricula in St. Louis, BiH and Croatia

Plans are to develop a program that eventually can produce curricula specially tailored to the needs and interests of the Bosnian population in St. Louis and Bosnian students spending a semester or year at UMSL. The vision is to create a critical mass of the best young scholars and filmmakers from the

former Yugoslavia teaching courses at UMSL. A number of individuals have already been identified with tremendous teaching skills and years of experience, who are fluent in Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian, and who want to work on this project.

Learning and teaching take place in a variety of modalities. Students participate in courses taught in a classroom. They can also apprentice under the direction of teachers in such fields as theater, film and the arts. A third option is on-line instruction. Many, if not most, of the professors in the exchange program are bilingual leaders in their fields. They can teach in either Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian and/or in English. Some live in South Central Europe and could teach distance courses from their home institution. Other individuals who can teach in the program live and work in the U.S. but would teach workshops at UMSL and/or offer distance courses.

Just last year, UMSL initiated UMSL On-line a program to develop courses to be taught online. The University is developing courses designed to be taught by colleagues in Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, both in English and in Bosnian. For instance, by offering a Certificate in Film through UMSL to our partner universities we can offer an official UMSL recognition of study in the region of the former Yugoslavia. In the arts (film, music, dance, and the visual arts) artists can teach workshops and be contracted to participate in the program while not necessarily being on the faculty at any one university. One individual is currently developing a course on video production that could be taught over the Internet and integrated with a similar production course being taught at the University of Sarajevo. Through this class student teams could work on film/video projects simultaneously in St. Louis and in Sarajevo, Tuzla, or Dubrovnik. The technology of digital equipment and universally standardized software makes it possible for collaboration to take places in multiple locations. Also the Bosnian Diaspora includes many individuals who fled the former Yugoslavia at an age when their education was disrupted. Now settled in the United States many would like to complete their higher education but may not be able to get a college degree in English. If UMSL offered courses in Bosnian these individuals would be able to fulfill a life-long dream to have a university degree.

In addition to the programs available to the Bosnian students at the undergraduate level at the College of Fine Arts and Communication and at other colleges at UMSL there are also opportunities for study at the graduate

level in both directions. The Department of Economics at UMSL has expressed an interest in having students from Bosnia and Croatia apply to their Master's Program. The Department has had excellent experiences with Eastern European students since their language and computational skills are so strong.

With a population of 50,000 - 70,000 Bosnians in St. Louis (and over 350,000 in the greater Diaspora), aggressive marketing is necessary to get the word out about UMSL's program with Bosnia. This program has the potential to develop and have a significant impact on the St. Louis community. Over time this program will grow enough to support an international Center for Bosnian/Slavic/Balkan Studies at UMSL. That would raise the profile of Bosnians in our community and make a major impact on the scholarship of educational, cultural, and business progress in the Balkans.

U.S. Embassy Participation

The United States Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia is an important partner in developing joint exchange programs. Its budget for English language proficiency can be used to assist students with expenses related to spending a semester or two abroad. The United States Embassy has a number of resources to enhance overseas exchange programs. Academic exchange programs can be augmented by the following programs offered through the State Department: the Fulbright Scholars Program (available to scholars at both the junior and senior faculty level); English language programs that bring foreign students to the United States for language training, the Junior Faculty Development Program for promising young faculty members to conduct research in the US, and the Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program which provides opportunities for young foreign English teachers to refine their teaching skills. Also, the Fulbright Specialist Program sends U.S. faculty and professionals to serve as expert consultants on curriculum, faculty development, institutional planning, and related subjects at overseas academic institutions for a period of 2 to 6 weeks. This can be very helpful in providing funds to support joint research between American universities and their counterparts abroad. In these times of diminishing resources at academic institutions everywhere having external support to assist with collaboration on projects of mutual interest can make the difference between having a program move forward or having it abruptly end.

Measuring the Outcomes of the International Exchange Program

Although the literature emphasizes the short-term impact and benefits of international exchange programs between countries in Eastern Europe and American partners, such as innovative curricula, teaching strategies and educational approaches, new programs or resource centers, fruitful partnerships and collaborations, most studies are descriptive and only a few have evaluated the outcomes of such programs (Kupchan, 2000; Patrick, Vontz, & Metcalf, 2002-2003; Rapoport, 2007) and the “immediate longer term educational and personal impact of an international exchange experience” (Hayden, 1981, p. 1). Besides the numerous variables that can contribute to the successes or challenges of such programs (“program goals, available resources, energy of staff, or time constraints”, Rapoport, 2007, p. 88), their impact, as perceived by their directly-involved participants, needs to be further explored in relation to their own cultural, curricular and educational backgrounds, differences and goals.

To assure that future cultural / educational exchanges yield the best possible results, Csapo-Sweet and Slapac are planning to measure the outcomes of such cultural exchange programs between UMSL faculty and UNSA. There is broad support for this collaboration with the College of Fine Arts and Communication from the College of Education at UMSL. This multi-disciplinary initiative represents innovative research opportunities in international higher education and creates a partnership between two powerful colleges at UMSL. We are planning to document the development of regular programs between the American and Balkan universities ultimately with curricula tailored based on the students’ and faculty needs at all three universities. Based on the preliminary work and the connections made with UMSL’s two Balkan partners, objectives of this phase of the research will primarily seek to evaluate the impact of the cultural programs produced in spring 2012. Csapó-Sweet and Slapac will test the hypothesis that cultural exchanges are among the best ways to expand the broad base of the faculty / student exchange program itself and that cultural events can have a multiplier effect that will raise awareness of the educational international exchange well beyond the academic community. Measuring outcomes and integrating a research component into the fabric of this educational partnership from the outset will address the question of programmatic impact. Our initial inquiry will focus on the cultural and artistic events taking place in spring 2012. As the

university exchange programs develop we plan to: (1) collect data from administrators, faculty and students to assess the priorities and needs regarding academic and cultural exchange programs with UNSA and UD; (2) assist in developing curricula as part of the exchange programs between departments (such as film, art, theater, modern dance and education), faculty and students; and (3) find ways in which we can make this research benefit the active Bosnian community living in Missouri and elsewhere in the Diaspora.

Conclusion

Building and strengthening sustainable student and faculty exchange programs between UMSL and public universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia is now a reality. The University of Missouri – St. Louis has established a presence in South Central Europe and the countries of the former Yugoslavia. UMSL is the only fully functioning active student exchange program with a public American university for the University of Sarajevo, and we similarly have a strong presence in Tuzla. In Croatia, the University of Dubrovnik designated UMSL its exclusive American university partner.

UMSL has an historic chance to fulfill its mission as a land grant state institution by offering educational opportunities to the more than 50,000 Bosnian citizens now living in Missouri. By partnering with these universities in their homeland UMSL can blaze an educational and cultural path with six countries once comprising the country of Yugoslavia. The countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Slovenia, Macedonia and Montenegro, share a common language (with some dialectical differences) and covers a significant landmass that is situated in the center of the European continent.

Through educational and cultural exchange of students/ faculty, and innovative courses using distance online learning, UMSL can use this program to truly “think globally, while acting locally”. It is a unique moment when history, geography, and technical possibilities have all converged at the same time. The potential outcomes for academics, culture, the arts, and business are extraordinary.

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