A primary goal that emerged from the SAC accreditation was to implement “Learning without Borders: Internationalizing the Gator Nation as a five-year Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) designed to further internationalize the … learning experience at the University of Florida (UF).” Last summer, I set myself the task of reporting on your UF faculty international activities to this Board. With the assistance of Leo Villalon and his staff at the International Center, we attempted to quantify the frequency and types of international teaching, research and service of the UF faculty. We discovered this was an impossible task! It became evident that the UF faculty assume they are members of a global scholarly community. Not only are all the continents represented by members of the faculty, most of your faculty have extensive collaborations throughout the world. As such, they rarely document all their “routine” international activities. Hence, it became impossible for us to numerically analyze your Global Gator Faculty. I am not exaggerating when I say that nearly all your UF faculty are involved in local, state, national and international academic activities. In order to provide a reasonable report on the international activities and reputation of your nearly 5,000 faculty within the 2 days of the Board meeting, I have distilled their international teaching, research and service to general categories and recommend you look for details in the unit’s website news.

Teaching throughout the international community is a 2 way process. Students come to UF from all the continents. This growing population of international students represent the best and brightest from the global undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral community that seek the expertise available at the University of Florida. For an example, listen to the international diversity of graduates in our ceremonies December 18 and 19. The faculty also go to various countries to teach through leading international study-abroad experiences for UF students and participating in reciprocal and cooperative agreements. UF faculty serve on PhD supervisory committees at many international institutions.

UF faculty research is extensively integrated into the international scholarly community. Again, UF attracts visiting scholars from around the world to take advantage of a resident research experience with the expertise and facilities available at UF. UF faculty regularly travel to international destinations for research and collaboration. As research collaborations blur international borders, your faculty are integrated into cross cultural exchanges of expertise that is fundamental to our preeminence. Faculty extensively participate in peer reviews of international scholarly publications. Another example is
the dedication of HyperGator 2.0 this week further illustrating the integration of your faculty into a rapidly expanding international research network.

UF faculty provide important and unique service throughout the world. Your UF faculty contribute their time and expertise to areas of international need. We are currently mourning the loss of our beloved UF faculty member, Dr. Richard Christensen, of the Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Christensen was in Zambia working with Habitat for Humanity. Service to the world is part of the UF faculty DNA.

I would like to provide an example of one translational international accomplishment. Jaime Chavez Leon, McKnight Doctoral Fellow, Chief of Party, Trilateral Cooperation - US - Honduras – Brazil and Walter Bowen, Director UF-IFAS-Global, are working with an international team to implement a new stove, the ECO-STOVE – Justa, in rural areas that rely on firewood as their energy source. This new stove will reduce the consumption of firewood by 70% and the emission smoke and soot by 90-100% within the home. This is translational because I know from personal observations that home fire smoke in rural impoverished communities causes chronic bronchitis, often referred to as hut disease. Individuals with this respiratory disease have a reduced ability to work contributing to the vicious cycle of poverty in rural communities. Further, the reduction of the amount of wood required for home energy prevents devastating rural deforestation. The combined efforts of UF faculty, students and their international colleagues are providing transformational changes the lives and environment of rural communities.

Thus, I am happy to report that your faculty are partnering with the international community to spread the Gator Good throughout the world.