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# International Education







**O**n June 15, 1990 the Board of Regents of Missouri Southern State College approved a recommendation to pursue an international approach to undergraduate education.

The move to an international approach to our educational mission was prompted by a realization that the truly successful citizens of the 21st century will need much greater knowledge and awareness of the people, languages and cultures of other countries of the world if true communication among the world's citizens is to take place. Dramatic changes in the economic and political systems of Russia and Eastern European countries as well as challenges by Asian and European countries to American economic leadership made self-evident in the 1990s the need for a new kind of college education, one with a strong global perspective.

In July of 1995, Governor Mel Carnahan signed into law House Bill No. 442 in which Section 1 reads as follows: *"The Missouri Southern State College located in Joplin, Jasper County, is hereby designated a moderately selective institution which shall provide programs which meet the needs of the citizens, businesses, and industries of its service area as defined in section 174.010, RSMo, as well as counties contiguous to Jasper County. The institution shall develop such academic support programs and public service activities it deems necessary and appropriate to establish international or global education as a distinctive theme of its mission."*

Thus, with a stroke of a pen, the Governor of Missouri provided MSSC and its students a distinctive status among colleges and universities in Missouri. With it came the official state funding support for new, exciting initiatives that have enabled Missouri Southern State College to institute for its students daringly new international programs and activities to prepare them well for the challenges of this new century.

Missouri Southern State College has phased in different programs and activities designed to internationalize the college. Among these are:

-  Infusing the entire college curriculum with a global perspective.
-  Expanding the teaching of foreign languages to include new majors, new approaches, and new opportunities for language usage.
-  Increasing opportunities for Missouri Southern students to study abroad for varying periods of time.
-  Staging conferences and lectures on world affairs, and cultural and artistic programs with international performers as well as emphasizing one particular country or continent each year.
-  Creation of dynamic majors in international studies and international business with uniquely designed courses.
-  Increasing the participation of international students in campus activities.

Missouri Southern is beginning to receive national attention for its efforts in internationalizing the campus. The American Council on Education selected the College and seven other institutions from a pool of 57 applicants in October 2000 to participate in an 18-month project to document their internationalization strategies and design a self-assessment instrument that other institutions can use to document and expand their international capacity. Missouri Southern also was one of only four U.S. colleges or universities to receive a Certificate of Excellence for the 2001 Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Faculty Development to Enhance Undergraduate Teaching and Learning. Missouri Southern's entry, entitled "Bringing the World to the Midwest," highlighted the College's international mission.