

# International Education

In July 1995, Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan signed into law House Bill No. 442, which directed that Missouri Southern "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." That legislation was enacted as part of Missouri's "Blueprint for Higher Education," adopted by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education.

The faculty and administration of Missouri Southern developed over the next year the outline of a comprehensive plan of international education. Included was the establishment of the Institute of International Studies, charged with overseeing the internationalizing of the campus.

The most distinctive aspect of Missouri Southern's effort to internationalize the curriculum, and the one with the most tangible effect throughout the campus community, has been the designation of "themed semesters." Each fall, a particular country or region of the world is selected to become the focus of intensive study. Past semesters have highlighted Mexico, Russia, Cuba, India, Japan, Hong Kong and China, Latin America, Africa, and the United States. In the fall 2006, the focus will be on "The France Semester" and in fall 2007, "The China Semester".

Study abroad programs also provide Missouri Southern students with additional opportunities to gain an understanding of other cultures and international issues. Students have traveled to Mexico, Italy, Greece, Sweden, Costa Rica, Germany, Russia, Spain, Canada, France, England, India, Australia, Ireland, Austria, and Cuba under faculty supervision. Individually, students have spent entire semesters in Chile, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Denmark, Spain, Germany, Costa Rica, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Australia, Fuji Islands, and England through the International Student Exchange Program or Missouri Southern's bilateral agreements with universities around the world.

- Other programs and activities designed to internationalize the university include:
- Infusing the entire curriculum with a global perspective.
- Expanding the teaching of foreign languages to include new majors in French and German, new approaches, and new opportunities for language usage.
- 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 was one of 13 higher education institutions to be spotlighted in the *Internationalizing the Campus Report 2004: Profiles of Success at Colleges and Universities*, sponsored by NAFSA: Association of International Educators. Others included Duke University, the University of North Carolina, Notre Dame, the University of Florida, and the University of Oregon. NAFSA believed MSSU's themed semesters to be unique and having the potential as a model for other campuses.

The University also has received the Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Faculty Development to Enhance Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, and an Andrew Heiskell Award for Innovation in International Education. In 2000, the American Council on Education selected Missouri Southern as one of eight institutions from 57 applicants for an assessment project called "Promising Practices: Institutional Models of Comprehensive Internationalization." More national recognition came from *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, which published an article about the effects of MSSU's study abroad program in a 2002 issue.