The Reputation and Outreach Working Group is charged with understanding and enhancing how Ohio State builds its brand through international communication; how it attracts excellent international minds and student scholars; how we can be internationally diverse and inclusive and internationally renowned.

Members of the committee include:

- Chair, Fernando Unzueta, associate vice provost for global strategies and international affairs and professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese
- Co-chair, Maureen Miller, director of communications, Office of International Affairs
- Jacquie Aberegg, senior director, enterprise brand and marketing strategy, University Marketing
- Carol Anelli, professor of entomology, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
- J. Mark Erbaugh, director, International Programs in Agriculture, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
- Dawn Larzelere, director of communications and marketing, Office of Research
- Dianne Morrison-Beedy, centennial professor of nursing, chief talent and strategy officer, College of Nursing
- Erik Nisbet, associate professor, School of Communications, co-director Eurasian Security and Governance Program, Mershon Center for International Security Studies
- Matt Schutte, director of communications, College of Engineering
- Don Stenta, assistant vice president alumni experiences, Alumni Association
- Walter Zinn, professor of logistics, associate dean for graduate students and programs, Fisher College of Business

OVERVIEW

We engage in an international strategy planning process during a time where some believe the “golden age” of internationalization is behind us (perhaps simplistically reducing internationalization to student mobility and, in particular, when enrollment of new international students in U.S. universities peaked in 2015). Supporting this narrative are the economic shifts resulting in international trade disputes and conflicts, hostility towards some migrant populations and growing pockets of xenophobia around the world; in addition, we now have “intense and increasing competition” from other countries and regions (Europe, Australia, Canada, China) for the recruitment of international students. At the same time, we now live in an era when internationalization, more broadly defined, is becoming more and not less central to higher education; international inter-dependence continues to increase; and we are catering to a “global generation” of students, both domestically and around the world, who literally and figuratively, have access to the world in the palm of their hands by way of new technologies, the internet and social media.
In this context of increased competition in higher education and other underlying factors, in 2019 institutions in the United States suffered their worst global rankings since 2003. Ohio State also experienced declining international rankings in certain categories as well. While rankings are important, and more so in an international context – and they are often used as a proxy for reputation – our institution’s brand and its global footprint are much broader and more complex than being defined by a number.

It is well documented that Ohio State has a rich and vibrant history of international engagement and recognizes that the success of its graduates is enhanced by its global reach. Through innovative approaches, Ohio State prepares its students and supports its faculty to be actively involved and contribute in knowledge-based collaborations around the world. It is our goal to solve problems of global significance, educate the leaders of tomorrow and practice a culture of inclusivity, inquiry and engagement.

The good news is that, at least until recently, more students are studying internationally, conducting research, participating in service learning and internships, and the number of international students enrolled at Ohio State has remained steady, creating opportunities for innovative, cross cultural programming and a convergence of diverse perspectives. Students can choose from a multitude of courses with international themes or graduate with the “Global Option,” a curriculum enhancement through which students gain global competencies. Further strengthening our international curricula will be the new General Education program, which includes educating global citizens as one of its goals.

Implementation of Ohio State’s Discovery Themes have enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration in research and engagement both locally and globally. We are improving health, building capacity and making progress in water and food security in Africa. Students are working with communities, contributing to socioeconomic development in Central America. And, we are connecting locally and globally on climate change. Ohio State invests in new resources and recognizes faculty and student engagement success across the globe.

Ohio State is well known as one of the most comprehensive, land-grant public institutions of higher education in the nation and is home to one of the largest academic medical centers with a dedicated cancer and research center. Fifteen graduate programs are ranked in the top 10 by U.S. News and World Report and Ohio State is highly ranked in international student enrollment (top 20), the number of students studying abroad (top 10), for volunteers in the Peace Corps (top five), and is consistently ranked as a top producer of Fulbright scholars. The university and its faculty also have been recognized with numerous international awards for its research and global engagement.

The Global Gateways provide a physical presence in key parts of the world and a distinct set of opportunities unmatched by other institutions. The Gateways, Ohio State’s representative offices in Shanghai (2010), Mumbai (2012) and São Paulo (2014), enable the university to forge new partnerships, recruit international students, facilitate faculty research, serve as a portal for education abroad, and provide a way to reconnect with a growing international alumni base. Ohio State’s innovative choice not to build satellite campuses has proven more flexible in serving a wide variety of stakeholders in-country and can be positioned as a catalyst to enhance the university’s global reach.

The Ohio State brand provides a springboard in which to frame the international strategic plan. Ohio State’s brand is the experience people have with our university, and at its core is a promise of what the institution stands for and what it offers to those who engage with it. A brand is earned rather than owned. It is the cumulative result of every experience, communication, and reference made by or about our institution over time as experienced by others. Simply put, a brand is not something we buy; a brand is something we build.
The Ohio State brand is rooted in our history, our identity and our achievements, all of which are inextricably linked to our core mission: To advance the well-being of the people of Ohio and the global community through the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Our brand looks to the future, too, ready for tomorrow's challenges and opportunities.

Ohio State is a dynamic community where opportunity thrives. Through our far-reaching network of diverse resources and perspectives, we foster the incisive thinking, spirit of collaboration, and depth of character you need to transform yourself and your world. Our organizational strengths lie in our people, culture, and depth and breadth of experience in teaching, research and interdisciplinary engagement.

At Ohio State we remain committed to empowering all students through global learning; seeking solutions to the world’s problems through collaboration; advancing an international culture; and evaluating and measuring the impact of our research, engagement, curriculum, programs and activities.

Based on our committee’s discussions, a situational analysis of today’s environment and key points of pride, the reputation and outreach working group developed the following definitions and recommendations.

**KEY FINDINGS AND INITIATIVES**

Reputation is the beliefs or opinions that are generally held about someone or something. Reputation is held in the minds (and hearts) of our audiences. It is not what we tell them Ohio State is; it is what they understand and believe Ohio State to be.

Enhancing reputation in a manner that inspires choice in Ohio State begins with understanding currently held perceptions, developing audience-specific strategies to build awareness, and consistently providing relevant and resonant experiences.

To enhance Ohio State’s international reputation, we strongly believe we need to improve how we project our brand around the globe and make all things international more central across the university. Comprehensive internationalization requires that it be at the core of everything Ohio State does – its research, teaching and engagement – and it should to be embraced by everyone. To take our international reputation to the next level, we suggest the institution commits to the following goals and recommendations.

**OVERARCHING GOALS**

**Goal:** The Ohio State University is recognized on a global scale for its excellence in teaching, research, engagement and collaborations.

**Goal:** The Ohio State University has established and sustained a diverse and inclusive campus environment that attracts and retains the best and brightest international students and scholars.

**SUPPORTING REPUTATION AND OUTREACH GOALS**

**Goal:** Enhance awareness of Ohio State’s excellence to inspire choice of Ohio State with international stakeholders and key audiences.
STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

Infrastructure / Resources:

Cultivate a multi-disciplinary, strategic approach to strengthen ways to collect, maintain and disseminate information relating to Ohio State’s global footprint internally and externally.

- Develop a cohort of practitioners who are strategic, data-informed and fluent in international business, higher education and audience intelligence
- Grow and deepen international audience perceptions, understanding of and preference for Ohio State in support of enterprise and unit goals
- Aggregation and analysis of audience insights and perceptions
- Assess global and intercultural student outcomes
- Identify target audiences and develop audience-centric strategies to foster awareness, engagement and collaborations
- Enhance and consolidate data-driven collection, management, and analytic approaches to measure Ohio State’s global outcomes
  - Develop an enterprise-wide view of Ohio State’s global footprint, including partnerships, research activities, student mobility [inbound & outbound], Gateways, Global One Health initiative, and other Ohio State international initiatives
  - Develop and define a dashboard of indicators specific to Ohio State that measure international efforts
  - Develop an international ecosystem for the university and include activities/initiatives/programs that best reflect Ohio State’s global footprint

Develop, implement, document and evolve work practices, procedures and processes that promote internationalization of our campuses.

- Incorporate international goals to achieve as part of the strategic plans within all 15 colleges
- Develop and provide infrastructure, recognition and reward systems for faculty (within promotion and tenure), student global engagement, collaborations and programming
- Encourage colleges to hire and enhance the role of international liaison position to manage international activities
- Conduct a needs assessment and encourage hiring of internationally focused faculty where gaps may exist
- Develop ways to leverage international faculty (recruiting, reputation building, international engagements, alumni relations)
- Maximize alignment, efficacy and efficiency by initiating and leading an international marketing and marketing communications efforts across the university
- Develop and nurture a best-in-class university-wide global marketing community.
- Enhance Ohio State’s international committees and advisory/governance structures
- Develop/enhance ways/incentives/funding/awards to recognize student and faculty international achievements
- Support student and faculty participation in international conferences/workshops and research activities and collaborations
Rationale: These recommendations will help centralize and make more strategic use of many international-related assets (activities, research, information, etc...) the university has throughout campus. Highlighting, analyzing and disseminating data will bring into focus many great initiatives that sometimes remain under the radar. The ability to showcase our global footprint both internally and around the globe, more importantly, will allow us to focus our energies toward continuous strategic improvement in our international goals.

Students:

Enhance the quality and diversity of the international student population.

- Support the development of an international student recruitment plan to enhance the quality and diversity of the international student population (identify specific countries/regions)
  - Involve Gateways in Brazil (even more) and India in recruitment efforts
  - Improve retention of international students by enhancing the quality of the student experience for those students – incorporate international student experiences into the marketing and recruitment efforts – (including content similar to those for domestic students, such as support services and resources for mental health, percentage of students on education abroad and research experiences; others more specific: English language preparation and academic support, Optional Practical Training and immigration advising)
- Develop/enhance ways/incentives/funding/awards to recognize student and faculty international achievements
- Assess global and intercultural student outcomes
- Identify ways to incorporate additional online, global learning opportunities
- Expand the Global Option (certificate-bearing curriculum enhancement) enabling students to incorporate international components into their academic program to all colleges at Ohio State, providing more opportunities and pathways for students to obtain global competencies

Rationale: Attracting the best and the brightest students from around the world and diversifying our international student population enriches the Ohio State community, and is central to the university’s values and goals (as defined in its Mission/Vision Statement). Engaging international students with domestic students facilitates a multicultural and educational experience for all students on campus.

Rankings:

Identify impactful criteria to focus efforts in order to improve international rankings.

- Support research that is impactful and in fields that are highly cited
- Support Ohio State initiatives, particularly in international research and collaborations, designed to improve international rankings (need to identify which criteria Ohio State wishes to focus)
- Leverage international rankings in specific fields

Rationale: International rankings are only one indicator of a university’s reputation and are mostly based on scholarly citations. Attracting the world’s best minds to Ohio State (as students, scholars/researchers and faculty members) will enhance its research profile as well as its rankings. Likewise, several institutions have demonstrated that publications with international collaborators have a higher citation impact than others.
Outreach:

Create and deliver impactful, intentional experiences to targeted international audiences.

- Steward Ohio State’s distinctive brand image globally
- Demonstrate our impact locally, nationally, and internationally on a global scale
- Create a comprehensive (university-wide) communication and marketing strategy highlighting Ohio State’s global initiatives to internal and external audiences
  - Complete a communications audit of international stories
  - Identify, promote and profile international awards that Ohio State students, staff, and faculty earn
  - Share international student experiences through the colleges and university marketing/communications
  - Highlight international programming at the university
  - Emphasize faculty research conducted abroad; impact and partnerships
  - Leverage international rankings in specific fields
  - Promote international research opportunities
- Establish and develop a core marketing community to serve as the center of excellence for international (global) audience and marketing
- Build and deploy modern marketing capabilities for global reach
- Support and strengthen engagement with alumni living abroad
  - Expand domestic regional engagement strategies to more effectively engage the international arena
  - Involve the Global Gateways and other Ohio State activities and programs (education abroad; leadership and faculty international travel, etc.) in these engagement efforts
  - Develop opportunities for alumni to support scholarships leveraging their affinity to Ohio State
  - Increase international alumni identification efforts through extensive name searching and database mining
- Create a dynamic online international presence
  - Prominently feature international activities on college websites; dedicated webpage of international activities
  - Revise and maintain osu.edu international webpage (a Global OSU page)
  - Incorporate Ohio State’s global engagement into student and faculty recruitment efforts as well as Advancement/fundraising strategies
- Identify, define, and gain a deeper understanding of target audiences; establish clear audience strategies (who is the primary audience: alumni, other universities, students...)

Rationale: Engagement with Ohio State’s international constituencies (alumni, academic and business/industry partners, potential students) is a largely under-developed area that is central to the university’s goal to expand its global footprint. There are many untapped opportunities around the globe for research and teaching collaborations, internships, and fundraising.