

# Expanding Globally with International Awareness

Carlos G. Olivares  
Guest Writer

What do the reunification of East and West Germany, the air and sea blockade of Iraq and the talks of a free-trade agreement between Mexico and the United States have in common? Besides the fact that all are current events, they all revolve around a central them... global interdependence.

East and West Germany need to interact in order to survive a more global market; the United Nations wants to block Iraq's interaction (isolate) with other countries in order to hurt its economy; finally, Mexico and the United States want to increase their interaction in order to strengthen their economies. Today, we all have to come together in order to grow.

Global interdependence also means that we have to get to know each other in order to be prepared to face the future. International awareness is one of the key elements to a more effective and efficient interaction between people of different countries, different languages, and different cultures.

It is not enough to be well-informed on current world events: we have to know and understand the people behind those events. If we could know or understand how people from different countries react to specific actions, we could foresee the drawbacks of those actions and correct them beforehand.

I firmly believe that by knowing the people of a country, we can get a sense of the way people in that country behave, the traditions they have and some of their reactions to situations. It is true that every person is different; however, people from the same culture have to share some common trends. Therefore, by interacting with a few people from other cultures, one can get a feeling of the culture that each one of those people represent.

Did you know that, in the Guilford community, there are students from at least 30 different countries?

In fact, there are around 127 international students (58 percent of them are Interlink students) that walk through the Guilford campus. There are students from

places as far away as South Africa, Thailand, Hong Kong, India; or as close as Mexico, Canada, El Salvador and Chile.

Each international student brings the language, the customs and the traditions of his/her country to Guilford. These "things" are imprinted in his/her character and form a crucial part of his/her being. International students may adapt to a different environment, but their roots are always at home.

Guilford College also has study programs for people interested in going abroad for a semester (or a year). Guilford College students have the opportunity to study in Germany, France, Mexico and other places. Hundreds of Guilford students have taken advantage of these programs, and the experiences they have gathered are invaluable.

With all these opportunities, what are you waiting for in order to enter the global interdependence game? How many languages can you speak? How many people from other countries do you know? Would you know how to greet a person from Chile, Japan, or Italy? Do you know the polite way to address an older person in Japan or

in Mexico?

If you have responded positively to most of these questions, you are on the right track. If you do not know the answers, or would like to know more, I invite you to get involved in activities that will increase your international awareness. Take advantage of the studies abroad program, study a foreign language, and participate in international activities.

There is a student organization at Guilford College called the International Relations Club which, among other things, organizes activities that can help foreign students adapt better to their new environment. IRC also promotes interaction between international and American students, so that both sides can benefit from the differences in language and customs.

IRC hopes to increase international awareness among Guilford students by organizing several activities throughout the year. I hope that we can help international students adjust to this new country, as well as promote international awareness among all Guilford students.

## Negative Survey Given to IDS Common Hour Students

Chris Ward  
Staff Writer

On October 2, freshmen IDS students were given a questionnaire concerning relationships and sexuality. The survey, entitled "College Dating Expectations," consists of eight questions, six of which could be considered offensive. The entire

questionnaire has negative undertones, and assumes that every college relationship must be grounded in mistrust and falsehood.

Question #2 asks, "When a person leads me on sexually, I have the right to..." The student is expected to fill in the blank and then use his/her answers as discussion material for the next week's class meet-

ing. This single probing question assumes that a majority of college students (presumably male) feel "led on" in their relationships.

Question #3 almost encourages rape by saying, "When a person in a relationship with me sends conflicting messages where behavior says 'yes' and words say 'no,' I believe..." The only two possible answers

are, "I should have sex anyway" or "I should leave." Such a question should not even be asked because only the second answer should even be considered.

A final example of the negative tone of the entire survey can be found in question #7, which reads, "I feel most degraded in a relationship when..." This question makes the observation that being insulted is a vital part of dating while love and understanding are not.

In general, the questions are worded in ways that allow any answer, however cruel or stupid, to be used. In an informal survey of several IDS students, I found that almost all of them either thought that the questions were funny, or that the college or whoever was responsible for these questions had no business knowing the answers. Whoever thought of using this survey to reveal student attitudes about relationships was unsuccessful.

Another outrage occurred the following week when students were given a Dater's Bill of Rights, on the back of which was printed another attempt to probe into the dating relations of Guilford students. The exact questions from the previous week had been divided into men's and women's categories.

The point of this entire discussion is the reason why these questions were used in the first place. Although the idea of discussing in a group setting such important issues as sexuality and relationships is admirable, the way in which the topic was handled is very unsatisfactory. The next time the administration plans to delve into student's lives, they should "use" better questions with less negative language.



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