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**Considering the Vocabulary of  
Internationalization:  
A Content Analysis at One University**

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## **Considering the Vocabulary of Internationalization: A Content Analysis at One University**

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*Employers report they value global experiences in their employees. Global awareness, global competencies, and global experiences are encouraged at many universities including in the strategic plan of one American University. “Core Goals” articulated in this University’s plan declare a key element of “Student Success” is to be “a student development model that...broadens their horizons through...international travel, service, and study.” Under the goal of “Community Engagement,” the plan suggests the University “proudly message ...contributions made...globally...through service and engagement.” While this plan is specific to one University, it is emblematic of many institutions both within and external to academe. In the current study, the researchers sought to determine specifically how global awareness, competencies, and experiences were encouraged in faculty members and students across the institution. Adopting a content analysis approach, researchers accessed departmental and college documents utilizing terms such as “global”, “international” and “foreign.” A spectrum of official documents was analyzed, including Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure standards at both Departmental level and College levels. An analysis revealed a significant variation of the use of the “vocabulary of internationalization” across documents. The researchers concluded that additional effort should be devoted to standardizing approaches to global issues.*

**Keywords:** *global, international, reappointment, promotion, tenure*

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## Introduction

Employers report they value global experiences in their employees. Global awareness, global competencies, and global experiences are encouraged at many universities including in the strategic plan of one American University. “Core Goals” articulated in this University’s plan declare a key element of “Student Success” is to be “a student development model that...broadens their horizons through...international travel, service, and study...” (Oklahoma State University Strategic Plan, p. 14). Under the goal of “Community Engagement,” the plan suggests the University “proudly message ...contributions made... globally through service and innovation.” (Oklahoma State University Strategic Plan, p. 15). While this plan is specific to one University, it is emblematic of many institutions both within and external to academe. In the current study, the researchers sought to determine specifically how global awareness, competencies, and experiences were encouraged in faculty members and students across their own institution.

## Literature Review

Schroeter and Anders (2017) utilized a perception survey of academics to determine “What It Takes to Get Tenure” (p. 1) as they wanted to determine if tenure requirements had changed over time. Although they did not ask about internationalization, they found some variation as to the specifics of tenure requirements in those they queried, especially across age and experience levels (Schroeter & Anders, 2017). Others have looked at University trends and motivations in hiring international faculty (Altbach & Yudkevich, 2016).

Since it is often a consideration for faculty members, in their quest to become tenured and/or promoted, some authors have attempted to identify “What is a Global Experience?” (Gaudelli & Laverty, 2015). The desire for global experiences starts early in academic careers, even with students, and “University presidents are known to boast of their ‘percentage,’ or the proportion of undergraduates who study abroad” (Guadelli & Laverty, 2015, p. 15.) One wonders, if students are encouraged to have global experiences, then shouldn’t global experiences be a requirement for faculty members? Altbach & de Wit (2018) wrote that although internationalization has had its challenges, especially since Brexit and the election of U.S. President Donald Trump, most higher education institutions still value the growth of global citizen students.

“At least part of the rationale is a cosmopolitan one: an essential part of being acknowledged as educated derives in part from an appreciation of different cultures and development of worldliness. The expectation is that a global experience will stand out as an enduring memorial of an encounter with others. These experiences are edified in resumes and narrated with veneration, further illuminating their cultural importance as coming-of-age rituals, particularly among a striding upper middle class (Guadelli & Laverty, 2015, p. 15).

In 2010, Bogotch and Maslin-Ostrowski examined how internationalization may occur when encouraged at the academic Department level. Bogotch and Maslin-Ostrowski (2010) also noted that there are various meanings associated with international terms. Helms (2015) studied globally focused institutions and sought “references and criteria in the codes according to the areas of faculty work... teaching, research, service, reputation, and broader contributions to internationalization”. Helms found that “research and service” are the most cited internationalization efforts contributions of faculty members (p. 1). Helms (2015) advocated the need for research regarding institutions’ “policies and practices” (p. 2) designed to successfully internationalize faculty who want to successfully progress on a tenure track.

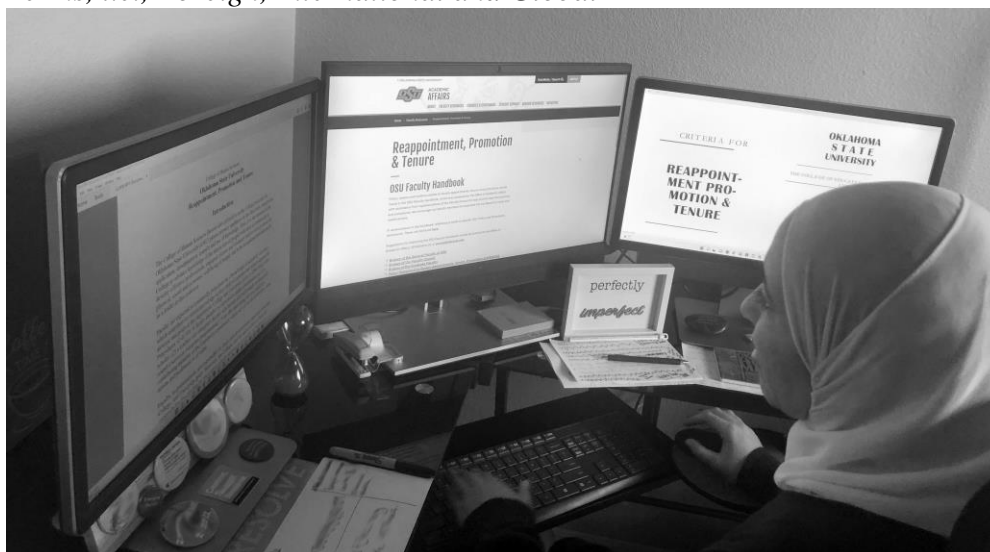
Previous researchers have examined individual and organizational factors that impact faculty work activities (Finkelstein et al., 2013). For example, Blackburn and Lawrence built on the motivation theory and explained how motivation, expectation, and satisfaction influence faculty performance in teaching, research, and service. They describe individual characteristics and social knowledge, which is the faculty’s perception of the institution’s expectations and rewards of what represents acceptable performance, drive faculty behavior (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995).

Currently, there is a dearth of publications which examine specific re-appointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) documents at the Department as well as college levels at universities desirous of encouraging internationalization in their faculty.

### **Methodology/Materials and Methods**

Adopting a content analysis approach, researchers accessed University, College and Department documents over a 4-week study period from a large, public University located in the southern mid-west of the United States of America (refer to Figure 1). They utilized the key search terms: “abroad”, “far-reaching”, “foreign”, “global”, “international”, “intercontinental”, “multi-national”, “multi-cultural”, “universal”, “worldwide” and “world-class”. A spectrum of official documents was analyzed, including the University’s strategic plan; and websites and Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) standards at the Departmental level and College levels.

**Figure 1.** *Researchers Accessed Departmental and College Documents Utilizing Terms, i.e., Foreign, International and Global*



## Results

An analysis revealed a significant variation of the use of the “vocabulary of internationalization” across documents reviewed at the academic Department and College levels (refer to Tables 1-8). A total of N=72 total manifestations of key words was found.

In the examined University-level strategic plan, some general statements were found regarding the importance of internationalization for students and faculty members. “Core Goals” were articulated which declared a key element of “Student Success” to be “a student development model that...broadens their horizons through...international travel, service, and study...” (Oklahoma State University Strategic Plan, p. 14) Under the goal of “Community Engagement,” the plan suggests the University “proudly message ...contributions made... globally through service and innovation.” (Oklahoma State University Strategic Plan, p. 15).

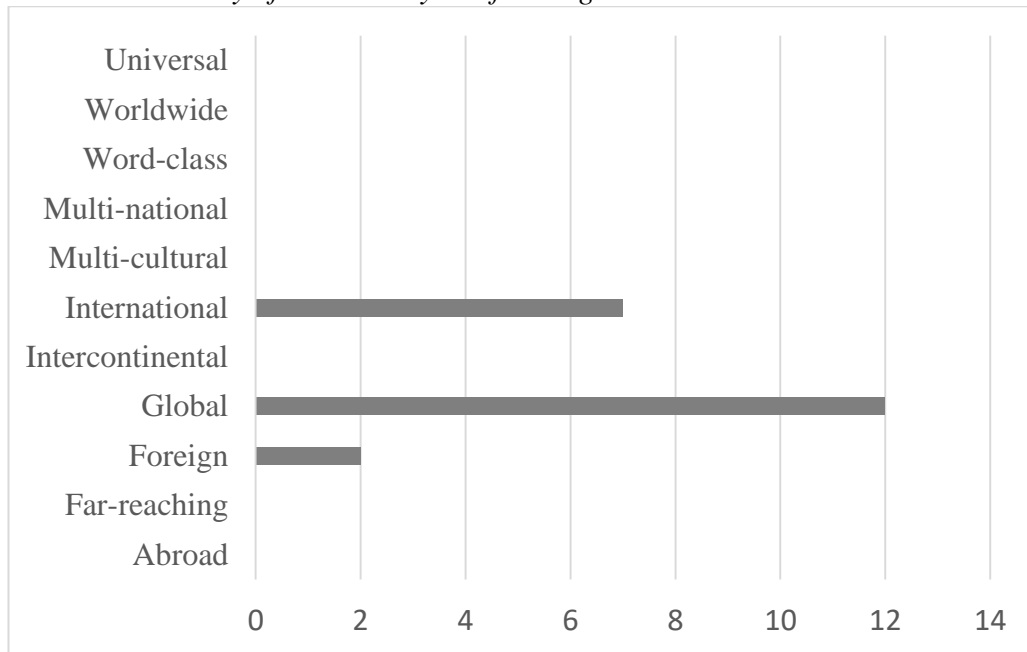
On the College website, researchers found a total of n=21 (29%) specific manifestations of the vocabulary of internationalization. Three different key terms were found. The search term, “global”, was found to have 12 instances (16.6%), which had the most manifestations of a term on the College website. The term, “international”, was found exhibited in seven instances (9.7%). The term, “foreign”, had two manifestations (2.7%). Refer to Tables 1 and 2. The contexts for these 21 instances varied and included: advocate for higher education, community, competencies, education, educational partnerships, engagement, health, impact, language, perspectives, sourcing and production, studies, travel courses, travel and learning and well-being.

**Table 1. College Website**

<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Context</b>
Global	1	A <b>Global</b> Impact in Health, Well-Being and Education
	1	we are making a <b>global</b> impact
	1	building <b>global</b> educational partnerships
	1	Preparing professional educators across Oklahoma State University who lead in the <b>global</b> community and advocate for high-quality education for all.
	1	Broadening your <b>global</b> perspective
	1	Earn academic credit while developing <b>global</b> competencies
	1	<b>Global</b> Engagement
	2	We offer a variety of programs aimed at strengthening our <b>global</b> partnerships and highlighting the importance of a <b>global</b> perspective.
	1	Engaging in <b>global</b> sourcing and production
	1	<b>Global</b> Competency Development
	1	<b>Global</b> competencies are the soft skills employers are seeking in today's competitive job markets.
International	1	<b>International</b> Studies
	1	<b>International</b> travel and learning opportunities
	1	Comparative and <b>International</b> Education
	1	Explore how historical, philosophical, socio-cultural, political, economic and <b>international</b> elements shape educational research in this interdisciplinary field.
	1	<b>International</b> Studies
	1	Gaining <b>international</b> experiences specific to your chosen career path.
	1	<b>International</b> Travel Courses
Foreign	1	Secondary Education ( <b>Foreign</b> Language)
	1	Empower lives through teaching grades 6-12 in the subject areas of English, social studies, <b>foreign</b> language (K-12), math or science.

Source: Created by authors.

**Table 2.** *Summary of Data Analysis of College Websites*



Source: Created by authors.

On the Departmental website, n=27 instances of the vocabulary of internationalization were found. “International” and “global” each had 12 manifestation instances (16.7%, 16.7% totaling 33/3%). The search term, “abroad”, was found to have three instances (4.2%) of the vocabulary of internationalization (refer to Tables 3 and 4).

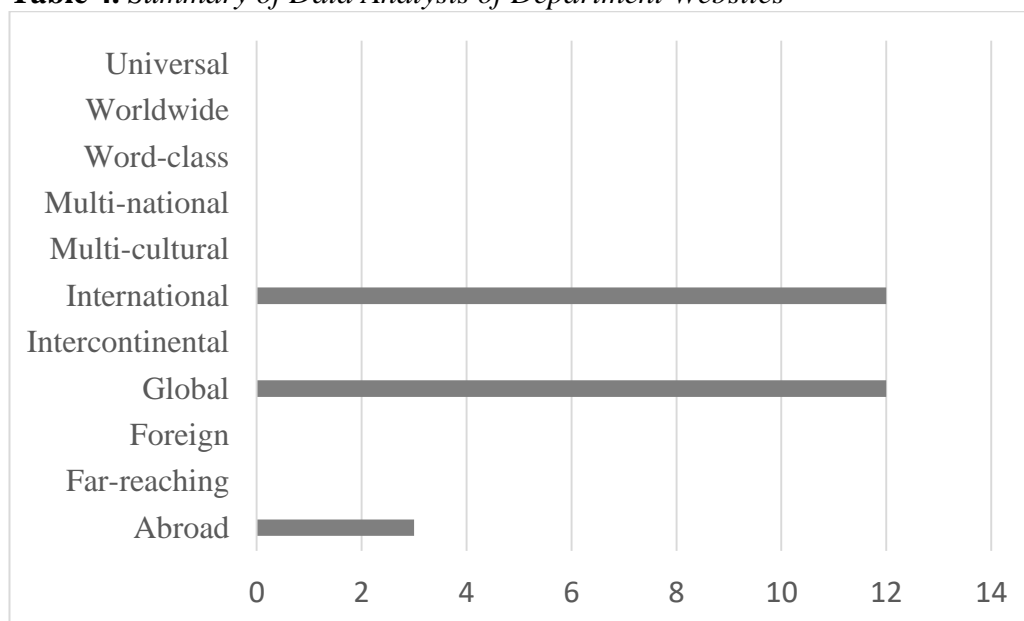


**Table 3. Department Website**

Keywords	Frequency	Context
Global	1	Take advantage of <b>global</b> learning
	1	Work with local, national and <b>global</b> partners to gain valuable industry experience and secure your dream career.
	1	Develop expertise in pattern making, including 2D and 3D design, garment construction, textile design, fabric sourcing and more as you prepare for a career in the <b>global</b> fashion industry.
	1	Pursue employment across many sectors of the <b>global</b> fashion industry
	1	DHM 4993 <b>Global</b> Sourcing Strategies
	1	Our nationally ranked program offers a curriculum shaped and supported by an advisory board of active business owners and corporate leaders. Professors have extensive retail experience in the <b>global</b> marketplace.
	1	See your advisor to discuss ways you can increase your <b>global</b> competency by studying abroad.
	1	<b>Global</b> Experience
	1	Typically, these are two-week study tours to cultural sites and <b>global</b> fashion and merchandising companies.
	1	<b>Global</b> Purchasing Group – New York City
	1	Currently, I am the director of product development at <b>Global</b> Brands Group for Calvin Klein footwear.
	1	We prepare educators who lead in the <b>global</b> community and advocate for high-quality education for all.
	International	1
1		<a href="#">OSU students win national Fashion Group <b>International</b> scholarships</a>
1		Our nationally ranked program offers domestic and <b>international</b> study travel experiences, access to state-of-the-art equipment and technology and curriculum in <a href="#">sustainable design</a> .
1		The event brought <b>international</b> attention to Dr. Smith as well as the <a href="#">OSU curriculum studies program</a> , which addresses fundamental issues in education through an interdisciplinary lens.
International	1	"The <b>international</b> book launch underscored for me how essential it is for us to open spaces in which we can imagine together new possibilities for experiencing togetherness as we grapple with the continuing realities of the pandemic, the unfinished social and political events from the past year and other human experiences where community is yet unrealized."
	1	Diversity (D) & <b>International</b> Dimension (I)
	1	DHM 4040 <b>International</b> Studies in Design, Housing and Merchandising
	1	LSB 4633 Legal Aspects of <b>International</b> Business Transactions (I)
	1	Equipping Design, Housing and Merchandising students with domestic and <b>international</b> travel opportunities is essential for their professional development. You will be exposed to diverse industry experiences and immersed in new cultures, broadening your career opportunities.
	1	Take an adventure and experience something new. <b>International</b> trip opportunities may include Milan, Venice, Florence, Paris, Berlin, London, Madrid, Barcelona, Prague and Copenhagen.
Abroad	1	study <b>abroad</b> trips.
	1	study <b>abroad</b> courses and internship placements with top industry professionals
	1	Electives can be met with any additional courses providing student meets required prerequisites. It is highly recommended students take advantage of off-campus study programs and study <b>abroad</b> opportunities.

Source: Created by authors.

**Table 4.** *Summary of Data Analysis of Department Websites*



Source: Created by authors.

The contexts for these 21 instances on the Department website varied and included: attention, book launch, brands, business, community, companies, competency, dimensions, fashion industry, learning, marketplace, opportunities, partners, purchasing, scholarship, sourcing, study experiences, study travel and travel courses.

For the RPT Documents, refer to Tables 5 and 6 for Departmental instances and Tables 6 for college instances of the vocabulary of internationalization.

**Table 5.** *Department RPT Documents*

Keywords	Location	Frequency	Context
Global	Introduction	1	Program focus on the person(s)- environment interaction, are <b>globally</b> oriented and scientifically based, and enhance quality of life by encouraging social responsibility.
	Introduction	1	Provide scientifically based graduate programs that produce professionals...for effective leadership in a society that is <b>globally</b> oriented...
	Introduction	1	Department Head must recognize that a faculty member’s assignment should not limit a faculty member’s potential to develop a national and <b>global</b> reputation in the faculty member’s expertise.
	Sample Letter	1	Programs focus on the person(s)- environment interaction, are <b>globally</b> oriented and scientifically based, and enhance quality of life by encouraging social responsibility.

International	National Reputation Documentation	2	A candidate for promotion needs to provide evidence of their national or <b>international</b> reputation in at least one of the four domains reviewed including: research, instruction, extension, outreach or community engagement. Service...related efforts may contribute to the national or <b>international</b> reputation of the faculty member.
	Academic Rank Descriptions		
	Continuing Assistant Professor	1	Continuing assistant professors (post-reappointment) demonstrate a capacity to publish refereed research, seek external funds to support their scholarship, and establish and build networks—including professional presentations at regional/state/national/ <b>international</b> conferences and various levels of interdisciplinary collaboration with their peer scholars
	Associate Professor	2	Evidence of emerging stature as a national or <b>international</b> authority within their academic discipline is part of associate professors' records...A associate professors will exhibit increased contributions in professional service at the program/school/college/ university as well as state/regional/national/ <b>international</b> levels.
	Professor	1	Maintain a national/ <b>international</b> reputation based on scholarly activities (i.e., prestigious publications/shows/exhibits, editorships, accreditation review panels, grant review boards).
International	Scholarship	1	Demonstrated national and/or <b>international</b> visibility in one's focused area(s) of scholarship.
	Service and Outreach	1	Newspaper articles, newsletters, trade magazines, brochures, program agenda, etc., that show outreach activities have and are continuing to attract recognition at the local, state, regional, national, and/or <b>international</b> level.
		1	Election or appointment to leadership positions in state, regional, national and/or <b>international</b> professional associations;
		1	Editorship or editorial board election/selection to state, regional, national and <b>international</b> professional/scholarly journals.
International	Providing evidence of service to the Profession		
	Assistant Professor	1	Participation in double-blind peer review for state, regional, national and <b>international</b> professional/scholarly journals including evidence of work.

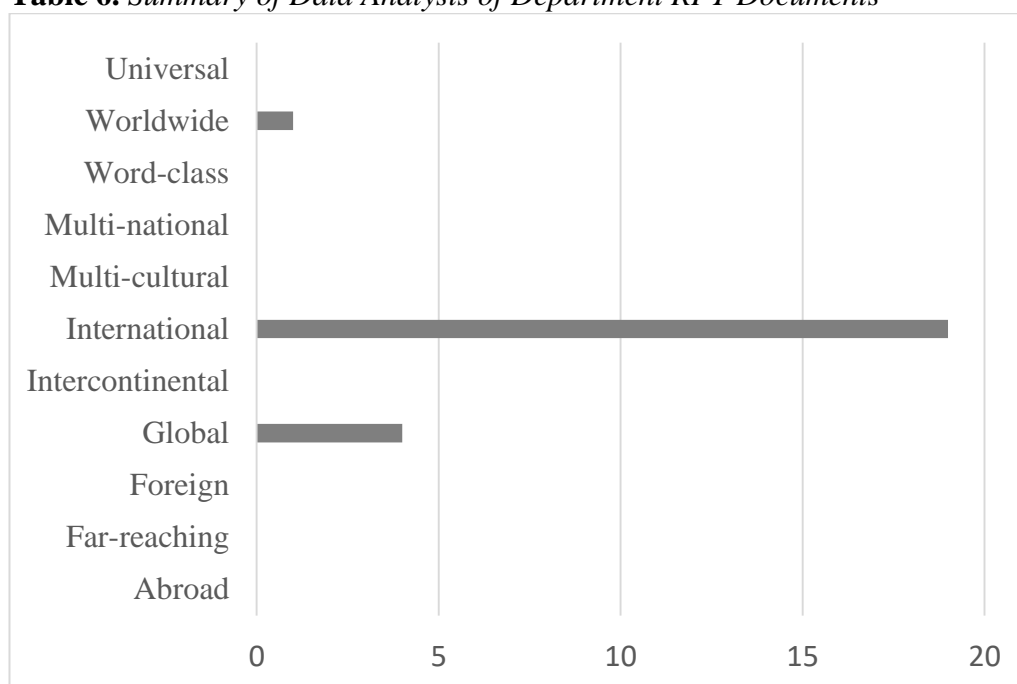
		1	Application for appointment to leadership positions in state, regional, national and/or <b>international</b> professional associations.
	Associate Professor	1	Editorial board election/selection to state, regional, national and <b>international</b> professional/scholarly journals including evidence of work. Some consideration will be given for review work.
		1	Election or appointment to leadership positions in state, regional, national and/or <b>international</b> professional associations.
	Professor	1	Editor, or editing special issues for state, regional, national and/or <b>international</b> professional scholarly journals including evidence of work. Some consideration will be given for reviewer and editorial board work.
International	Service to the Local, State, National or International Community		
	Assistant Professor	1	Applications for honors, awards, and other recognition for service to the local, state, national, or <b>international</b> community.
	Associate Professor	1	Evidence of honors, awards, and other recognition for service to the local, state, national, or <b>international</b> community.
International	Professor	1	Consistent funding of research projects at the state, national or <b>international</b> level.
		1	Exemplary honors, awards, and other recognition for service to the local, state, national, or <b>international</b> community.
World-class	Introduction	1	Developing a world-class reputation for designing, executing and disseminating research that through effective inquiry helps to shape the future of academic and industry opportunities and solving real world problems.

Source: Created by authors.

In the Department RPT documents, n=24 instances of the vocabulary of internationalization were found. “Global” had four instances (5.5%) of the vocabulary of internationalization manifested. “International” had 19 (26%) and “World-Class” had one (1.4%) (refer to Tables 5 and 6).

The context of the manifestations of the vocabulary of internationalization in the Department RPT varied and included: introduction, sample letter, national reputation documentation, scholarship, service, outreach. Further, some manifestations in the RPT Documents were found under sections labeled by rank: Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and (Full) Professor. Further, within the Department RPT, the term “international” was found to have been associated with all three academic rank descriptions for, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor and with “regards to service to the profession” and “service to the international community”.

**Table 6.** Summary of Data Analysis of Department RPT Documents



Source: Created by authors.

**Table 7.** Data Analysis of College RPT Documents

Keywords	Location	Frequency	Context
International	Responsibilities of Professorial Ranks/ Tenure Track	1	Consistent with its mission, the College is committed to educating, both on and off campus, the citizens of Oklahoma, the nation, and the <b>international</b> community, and in expanding and applying knowledge.
	Professor	1	Maintain a national/ <b>international</b> reputation based on scholarly activities (i.e., prestigious publications/shows/exhibits, editorships, accreditation review panels, grant review boards);

Source: Created by authors.

Refer to Table 8 for a summary of all documents examined in the study including college and Department websites and RPT documents. The researchers found a total of N=72 instances (“international”, “global”, “abroad”, “foreign” and “world-class”) of the vocabulary of internationalization.

**Table 8.** Summary of Data Analysis of College and Department Websites and RPT Documents

Keywords	Frequency
International	38
Global	28
Abroad	3
Foreign	2
World-class	1

Source: Created by authors.

## Discussion

Since the University's strategic plan mentioned international goals, it was anticipated that researchers would also find evidence of internationalization at the College and Department levels at the same institution. The researchers found, however, that terms were inconsistently used at different academic levels across documents. The current study had limitations including that it examined documents at only one University, one College, and one Department. Researchers noticed that the terms "foreign" (mentioned two times in College website), "abroad" (mentioned three times in Department website) and "world-class" (mentioned one time in Department RPT) had limited evidence. Researchers speculated reasons why these terms were used sparingly. Within the College, the Education program offers foreign language courses and therefore the term "foreign" naturally followed. Within the Department, study abroad programs are offered and therefore the term "abroad" was appropriate. With the Department RPT, "world-class" may have been used because this less-than-academic term is often linked with references to the design and merchandising industries which are prominent attributes in the department.

## Conclusions

The researchers concluded that additional efforts should be devoted to standardizing approaches to the vocabulary of internationalization and global considerations across all University-level, College-level, and Department-level documents at the University in the current study and other institutions in the United States and beyond. Additional examinations of other academic units at a wide variety of institutions should be undertaken.

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