Performance Narrative
Grantee: P116J080019 University of Denver
2012 Annual Report

GLOBAL CITIES/CITIZENSHIP:
TRANSFORMATIONS OF URBAN AREAS IN EUROPE AND THE USA

Objectives. What were the original objectives of the project? For each objective list the activities that have taken place. Discuss the reasons for any setbacks or shortcomings and describe any significant changes that occurred (changes in leadership, staffing patterns, strategies, activities).

The primary objective of the project is to develop, with partner institutions Portland State University (PSU), the University of Bologna (UNIBO), and the University of Nottingham, an undergraduate curriculum dealing with the social (cultural) and natural (ecological) problems and challenges facing European and American cities in the new “Metro Millennium.” The idea is to integrate courses from the partnering institutions into a shared curriculum that is broader and stronger than any one institution could offer on its own. The grant money supports student and faculty exchanges between partners. Students go to a European partner institution to study for the fall term, and faculty visit for shorter periods throughout the academic year to provide lectures or seminars on specific topics. The project is intended to promote multiple disciplinary perspectives on urban problems in hopes of achieving better—and perhaps novel—interdisciplinary solutions. The resulting shared curriculum will integrate not only the sciences and humanities, but also European and American approaches to understanding the city. We anticipate that exchanges will produce new courses, new student research initiatives, collaborative grant-writing, and joint research projects on urban life and sustainability.

The 2011-2012 grant year was the third and final year of student exchanges between partner institutions. Portland State University sent 5 students to the University of
Bologna and none to the University of Nottingham. Over the course of the project PSU sent 9 students to Bologna and 3 to Nottingham. In 2011-12 the University of Denver (DU) sent 6 students to the University of Bologna, and none to the University of Nottingham. Over the course of the project DU sent 9 students to Bologna and none to Nottingham.

In 2011 PSU received 3 students from Bologna and 2 from Nottingham. DU received 3 students from Bologna and 2 from Nottingham. Over course of the project PSU received 5 students from Bologna and 2 from Nottingham. DU received 7 students from Bologna and 2 from Nottingham.

Portland State University sent no faculty abroad in 2011-12. In 2011-12 DU sent 2 faculty members to Bologna. The US partner institutions are behind in their faculty exchanges because of difficulties in scheduling the trips. Accordingly, we have requested a no-cost extension of the grant to August 31, 2013. This will allow 3 additional faculty exchanges, including two from PSU to Bologna and one from DU to a European partner.

When completed, a total of 10 faculty will have journeyed to Europe, five from PSU and 5 from DU. Seven will have journeyed to Bologna, and 3 to Nottingham.

Institutional Resources. Describe how the project is being implemented at each institution. Describe the work of the faculty in carrying out the project. What institutional contributions are being made to the project?

At the University of Denver faculty from several departments across the Arts and Sciences once again offered up an excellent array of courses and internship opportunities for visiting EU students.

Portland State is also getting excellent contributions from faculty and staff, most notably in the form of a “Portland Seminar” specially designed for Atlantis students. The university is making in-kind contributions to match effort expended on the project by
campus coordinator Kathi Ketcheson and by faculty and staff in Italian Studies, University Honors, and the Office of International Studies.

**Student Selection and Recruitment.** *What strategies for student recruitment are the most effective? If you did not meet your annual target for student mobility, please explain why. Please explain how your consortium is making plans to continue to support student mobility when federal funding runs out.*

The University of Denver sent 6 students to UNIBO in 2011. This will bring its total for the grant period to nine. Portland State in 2011 sent 5 students to UNIBO, which will bring its total for the grant period to twelve.

The University of Denver recruited students for the Bologna exchange through a variety of means including: 1) participation of project staff in the annual Study Abroad Fair; 2) announcing the grant and emailing application forms to students enrolled in the Italian program and Urban Studies minor; 3) distributing flyers advertising the grant opportunity to Italian professors and Italian classes, as well as to Urban Studies professors and classes; 4) visiting Italian classes and classes having urban studies themes; and 5) promoting the opportunity in conjunction with the Study Abroad Advisors for Italy and England in the Office of Internationalization.

Colleagues at PSU recruited on the university’s Education Abroad web page, through the Education Abroad Fair held annually in Winter Quarter, and through contact with faculty in departments across the university, especially International Studies, Foreign Languages, University Honors, University Studies, and Sociology. The best strategy at PSU is to ask individual faculty to nominate students for the program.

To support mobility when the funding runs out faculty from PSU and DU will continue to cultivate formal exchange agreements with UNIBO and the University of Nottingham. A scholarship fund has been established at PSU, called the “Giovanna Franci
Fund for Italian Studies” in honor of our project’s original European side project director. The fund is very close to its goal of $25,000. Once endowed, the scholarship will provide funds to support continuing student exchanges between PSU and UNIBO. PSU’s Kathi Ketcheson spoke about the scholarship at the international “Contours of the City” conference held in honor of Dr. Franci in Bologna on May 3-5, 2012. PSU and Bologna are waiting for final signatures on a Memorandum of Understanding to continue student exchanges after the expiration of the grant. PSU will have a separate MOU for faculty exchanges. DU faculty will discuss the possibilities for continuing exchanges with Bologna when the current European side director Franco Minganti visits Denver in October 2012.

Language and Cultural Instruction. Describe the language plan. How are students assessed for language skills? Summarize the results of the language testing.

The Italian Section in DU’s Department of Languages and Literatures develops Italian language proficiency across the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), and literary and cultural awareness in the Italian context. It fosters student engagement both inside the classroom and in Italian communities by providing service learning opportunities. Goal 3, Objective 3A of our Evaluation Plan states that students’ non-native language skills will improve and that students will increase their ability to communicate in a non-native language, both orally and in writing. In fall 2011 DU and PSU students bound for Bologna, both with and without Italian language background, enrolled in an intensive Italian language course at the University of Bologna’s language school (CILTA) before the beginning of the academic term. They were evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis through that program. In addition, prior to departure the three students in DU’s Italian Program were pre-tested to determine their linguistic skills and levels by completing (1) an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) with a professor of Italian; (2) an Italian writing sample
developed by the Italian Section of the Department of Languages & Literature; (3) a
grammar-based test developed by the Cultura Italiana in Bologna, Italy; and (4) the DU
Italian Language Placement Exam. Upon completion of the program, these four measures
of linguistic assessment are repeated to determine in which areas linguistic gains have
occurred. The scores are recorded in the project database. In addition the three students
who had no Italian language background were tested on two of these measures: (1) the OPI
and (2) the Cultura Italiana exam, to determine if they made any linguistic gains during the
period of the exchange. The scores are recorded in the project database. Portland State’s
Department of World Languages is similarly involved in assessing outgoing students’
abilities and in prepping them for their experience in Italy.

UNIBO students traveling to DU are required to take the TOEFL exam and
demonstrate their linguistic skills in English prior to acceptance into the program. The
TOEFL is waived for students traveling to Portland, but language competence is assured
through the application and interview process with UNIBO faculty. The 3 Italian students
studying at PSU in fall 2011 had strong written and oral communication skills in English
and performed at a high level in their courses. Intensive interaction with other
international students in residence hall and social circles helped advance their language
skills during the term. The students frequently commented on how much they liked the
PSU course format and the engagement they had with faculty and other students, and how
much they enjoyed the subject matter. The three UNIBO students attending DU
demonstrated similarly strong communication skills and equally high achievement in
coursework.
Curriculum Development. What progress is being made in curricular development? What new or modified courses or instructional materials are being developed and implemented?

Exchanges in fall 2011 once again used existing curricula plus the previously developed UNIBO “Exploring Bologna” course for American students and PSU’s “Portland Seminar” for EU students. Both courses serve to orient Atlantis students to their host city and are designed to be taught by different faculty. At DU, the “Culture and The City” course required for all Atlantis students continued to serve as an introduction to Denver and the various sustainability problems facing the city.

Project staff at DU and PSU have successfully worked with faculty at both institutions to provide a broad menu of course offerings having urban themes. Partners have established a similar, parallel structure for the student exchange experience. PSU and DU both provide an opening course that oriented students to their host city, a set of urban theory and method course options, and a final internship experience to complete the student’s education abroad. In 2012-13—assuming approval of a no-cost extension—we will take a closer look at the extent to which our collective work might inform curricular change at each participating institution.

Faculty Development. Describe in what ways the development and implementation of your project has been supported by the participating faculty members. What faculty development activities occurred and what faculty exchanges took place? Were there any programmatic, departmental, or institutional changes that occurred as a consequence of faculty involvement in the program?

Faculty teaching courses on the city at both DU and PSU have been very generous in submitting their courses to our curriculum list and working to accommodate the learning styles and other academic needs of European students traveling to the US.

With respect to faculty exchanges, in 2011-2012 the University of Denver sent two
faculty members to Bologna: Andrew Goetz from Geography and Joseph Szyliowicz from International Studies. Portland State sent no faculty to Bologna or Nottingham, but will send two faculty to Bologna in 2012-13 if our no-cost extension is approved.

The October 2011 DU visit of Gabriele Manella, a researcher in Bologna’s Department of Sociology, has led to an agreement between UNIBO Sociology and DU Anthropology departments to reciprocally support work on the city. American side co-director Dean Saitta met with members of the Bologna sociology department while in Bologna for the Contours of the City conference to discuss shared interests in the problem of urban sprawl and sustainability. In November 2011 UNIBO also sent, to DU, Aura Reggiani of the university's Department of Economics. Professor Reggiani has been working closely with Professor Andrew Goetz in DU’s Department of Geography on urban transportation issues.

**Impact on educational practice.** How has the project impacted teaching and learning at the partner schools? If the project involved internships or work placements, how successful are these? How are these experiences integrated into the program of study? What lessons are being learned from this experience? If the project involves the use of technology, Web-based learning, or other electronic resources, describe the development and implementation of this approach and the lessons learned. How does the evaluation inform decision-making among the partners?

Once again, the addition of European exchange students to host institution classes greatly enriched the learning experience. In DU's “Leading Community Change” course exchange students joined community change projects that allowed for strong interaction with American students and focus on urban American issues. These students integrated by choice into three different teams focusing on these issues: mental health in urban USA; leadership education and development of underrepresented youth; and municipal organizing of volunteer service through the American program “Cities of Service.” Each was
an active participant in their team research, stakeholder interviews and field visits, and final proposal presentations before a board of community leaders. The American teams then continued the work of the proposals through winter and spring. Several of the European students kept in touch with their teams throughout the remainder of the academic year providing support and encouragement. The European students reported that they had never been involved in such community organizing projects in their past and were glad to have an opportunity to create real projects that served community over a full year.

Internships continue to be a curricular highlight for the European exchange students. Two sites were utilized this year for the European student internships in Denver. The first was the Somali Community Center, which also provided internships two years ago. The three Bologna students were weekly interns at this site, providing tutoring, mentoring and refugee adjustment support for young Somali immigrants. All three students affirmed this site as reinforcing the principles taught in the Leading Community Change course. The Italian students had the opportunity to see community change enacted through local leaders. Each said they would definitely participate in something like this again and will seek such avenues when they return to their own communities.

The second internship site, which was visited by the Nottingham students, was less optimal. The students struggled to make consistent connections to the same clients at this site but still reported that they learned about the complexity of immigration issues in the U.S. These students needed more personal guidance for persevering through a more complex setting to serve. The Nottingham students had less experience in volunteer type work and unfortunately did not ask for help until it was less useful. Both reported learning
about themselves, their own fears in a new setting, and some of their biases toward certain populations that were culturally and linguistically different than themselves. They learned personally about themselves more than perhaps the community itself.

One change implemented by PSU this past year was to enroll European students in courses designated as “community-based learning courses,” rather than the more structured Senior Capstone (a service learning course that represents the fourth year of the University Studies general education program at Portland State). The 5 European students completed the "Portland Seminar," and prepared detailed power point presentations, synthesizing what they had learned in the urban-themed courses they completed at PSU and providing reflections on their home cities and the cities the visited while in the U.S. Of the 5 students who traveled from PSU to Bologna, three completed internships organized by European side director Franco Minganti. Based on her positive experience at UNIBO one of the visiting PSU students has applied for scholarships to spend 2012-2013 at a university in Italy. Additionally, we anticipate European students coming to the USA to further their studies. For example, one of the Bologna students is applying for graduate studies at Portland State either in 2012 or 2013.

Project outreach. Describe the outreach activities you and your partners are taking to make your project better known inside and outside your consortium. What is the current status of the project at your institution and the partner schools?

The partners have been disseminating information about the project via email and through university list serves. At both DU and PSU reports are regularly submitted to senior leadership and communication made with interested faculty via email. At PSU announcements are published in the university’s online newsletter.

At DU project leaders maintain a “Portfolio Community” webpage containing all
sorts of information relating to the project, including application forms, course descriptions, and student and faculty reports and testimonials. The site is located at: [http://portfolio.du.edu/atlant](http://portfolio.du.edu/atlant).

To the extent that the Global Cities project is intended to “promote multiple disciplinary perspectives on urban problems in hopes of achieving better—and perhaps novel—interdisciplinary solutions”, a significant achievement of the past year was the development of a website dedicated to Intercultural Urbanism ([http://www.interculturalurbanism.com/](http://www.interculturalurbanism.com/)). Intercultural Urbanism takes stock of the cultural values that shape how ethnically diverse groups of citizens create, use, and respond to the urban built environment. The site includes a couple of essays that summarize the work of students who attended classes at DU, specifically the core course “Culture and The City.” Intercultural Urbanism joins the Contemporary Urban Anthropology (CUA) website ([http://www.contemporaryurbananthropology.com/](http://www.contemporaryurbananthropology.com/)) that was described in last year’s Performance Narrative. Faculty involved with the CUA initiative received a 2011-12 research grant from DU’s Institute for Enterprise Ethics to work on water resources and urban sustainability along Colorado’s Front Range. Both of these web initiatives have brought attention to the Global Cities/Global Citizenship project and created opportunities for faculty to become involved in other efforts to understand the city. For example, American side co-director Dean Saitta travelled to Venice, Italy in June 2012 courtesy of the Council of Europe’s “Intercultural Cities” project to speak about American perspectives on intercultural place-making. Other opportunities to disseminate the results of our project will likely present themselves as project staff continue to collaborate beyond the life of this grant.