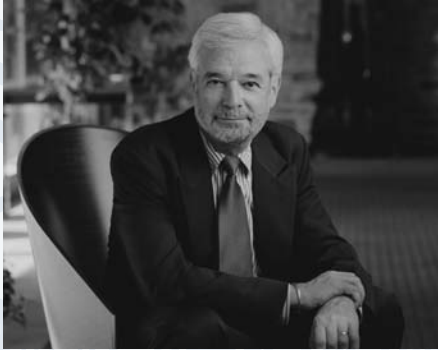


*Dear friends and colleagues, alumnae/i, and other members of Goucher's extended family,*



**The President's Letter  
September 2005**

The President's Letter is published on an occasional basis by Goucher College.

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*Our bold new study-abroad initiative has the potential to stir things up in a big way.*

In the fall of 2006, Goucher College will launch a new curriculum that articulates our vision for the future of liberal arts education. At its center will be a strengthened set of requirements designed to elucidate and underscore the traditions and institutional values we hold dear. And at its fore will be a bold new initiative that we believe has the potential to stir things up in a big way. We hope it will be noticed throughout American higher education.

Beginning next academic year, Goucher will require all entering undergraduate students to study abroad at least once before they graduate. We will give every one of them a voucher of \$1,200 to offset travel expenses, and they may fulfill the requirement either by studying overseas for a full semester or academic year or by participating in one of our many three-week intensive courses abroad during January or in the summer.

**As far as we can tell, we are among the very first institutions in the nation to institute a collegewide study-abroad requirement, and we are the first traditional liberal arts college to do so.** It's an audacious, groundbreaking move, perhaps, but we believe it's high time that somebody made it. The fact is that we live in a world that requires real international awareness beyond the bits and pieces one may pick up by listening to the radio, watching television news, or reading a daily newspaper or weekly magazine. It is simply not possible anymore to maintain the illusion that our lives, our learning, and our work somehow take place independently of what's going on elsewhere on the planet. We in higher education have a responsibility to our students to equip them with the knowledge and experience they will need to engage this world, to participate in it fully and responsibly, and to succeed both as individuals and as citizens of an increasingly interconnected global community.

And we at Goucher College believe that there is no better way to do so than to complement the outstanding majors and rigorous liberal arts curriculum we already offer with firsthand international experience for every student.

**The importance of leading the way**

I am a small-town boy from Pennsylvania. Aside from a brief foray into Canada when I was 12 years old and a quick vacation in the Bahamas a few years later, I did not travel abroad until I was 21, to spend a summer in Paris as an intern with the old weekly *Life* magazine. I followed that with a year studying at the London School of Economics on a Rotary Fellowship, and I have traveled frequently and broadly ever since. I've been to about 25 countries in Africa, and many in Latin America, Europe, and Asia. I've written, broadcast, and lectured as a result of these travels for work or recreation. Nevertheless, I wish I had begun exploring the world sooner. I know of few travelers who don't share this sentiment, and I know of no one who wishes he or she had seen less of the world.

As those of you who have traveled or studied abroad can attest, the mere fact of being in an unfamiliar land changes you almost immediately in palpable and powerful ways. The world seems instantly less



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vast, more under your control, and within your reach. The similarities and differences among people, cultures, languages, and ways of life are thrown into sharp relief. You realize how close you are to the most amazing things the world has to offer—and how close the world's problems are to you. You may see your own country and community more clearly from afar. Most important, your conception of your own place in the world begins to change. Your imagination of the possibilities it holds for you begins to broaden, and your sense of confidence that your actions have consequence and meaning within it begins to grow.

This is exactly the kind of experience we want all of our students to share. They are going to graduate into a world whose borders have become irrevocably blurred by cultural cross-pollination, radical changes in global politics and economics, and rapid technological innovation—particularly in the means by which we communicate and share information. A mere glance at any news website illustrates the point precisely. There, one may read stories about any number of global events that have direct bearing on our lives—from breakthroughs in biotechnology in South Korea to the war in Iraq—all delivered to our screens instantaneously via electronic networks that span the planet. There is not a single discipline our students can study at Goucher without acknowledging the global context in which it takes place. And when our students graduate, they will compete for jobs in a global marketplace where employers use technology to connect with talent across borders worldwide. We want our students not to be overwhelmed by this world, but to embrace it. We want them to be fluent in the spoken and unspoken languages of the global community, and to feel comfortable and confident participating in its many dialogues and debates. We want them not only to remain competitive with their counterparts around the world, but also to emerge as leaders of the global enterprises, organizations, and movements now taking shape.

**Equally important, we want our students to remain open and receptive to ideas and innovations generated in places other than those with which they are familiar. No one has a monopoly on fresh thinking about persistent challenges.** We may look, for example, to European systems of health care as a model for curing the ills that beset our own, or to the tsunami relief efforts in Southeast Asia in developing strategies for recovering from the devastation that Hurricane Katrina has wrought. And even if we look across the global landscape and find that no one has developed a solution that quite fits the problem we're trying to address and we still must invent our own, the process of searching in and of itself may stimulate new thinking. We want our students to develop deep and detailed knowledge of their particular fields of study, to be sure, but we also want them to develop a broad capacity for inspiration so that their own thinking knows few boundaries and their approaches to the challenges they face in their lives and work draw on the best ideas the whole world has to offer.

These are high standards, but I know that this college and its students are more than capable of living up to them. When it comes to broad civic engagement in the world, Goucher's roots run very deep. Its founder and namesake, John Franklin Goucher, was also a major benefactor of institutions of higher learning in China, Korea, and Japan, and he believed very strongly in the power of education as an impetus for meaningful change in communities far and wide. Goucher's students and alumnae/i maintain a long and distinguished tradition of public service and leadership in lives and careers that take them to points across the globe. And our current students have demonstrated a genuine thirst for international experience that we are finding new and innovative ways to satisfy. Currently, about 225 Goucher students study abroad each year, and, even without a study-abroad requirement, about half of our students do so before they graduate. Last year, participation in our three-week intensive courses abroad jumped 15 percent over the

previous academic year. **And this year, all available sections of our new International Scholars Program—available to students in any field—filled up immediately after we launched it.** What we are talking about here is a multi-year series of linked seminars on world history, cultural identity, and globalization, plus intensive language study and a required study abroad—not the kind of thing that’s likely to appeal to anyone who’s unsure of the relevance of international experience to his or her life and education.

At least among the students who come to Goucher, attitudes seem to be shifting away from the old notion of study abroad as something one might do as a lark during the junior year, an experience apart from one’s “real” curriculum, and toward the idea of international experience as something that could and should be woven throughout one’s entire academic career. The importance of this idea cannot be overstated, and we aim to spread it as far as we can.

### **An ongoing infusion of energy and fresh perspectives**


Certainly the announcement of this new requirement will raise some questions and concerns, and I would like to address a few of them directly.

First and foremost, I want to assure our students and their parents that safety is on everyone’s mind. We wish neither to overstate the risks of travel abroad nor to be cavalier about them. We will pay very close attention to careful professional judgments about what is safe and what is not, and we will make every possible effort to ensure that our study-abroad programs put none of our students in harm’s way.

We also recognize that in certain rare instances, some students will be unable to participate in our study-abroad programs due to health, academic, or other issues. This will not preclude them from completing their undergraduate education at Goucher, and we will accommodate them by developing alternate opportunities around international themes that take place closer to home.

By and large, however, students who come to Goucher can expect to find themselves on foreign soil at some point during their undergraduate careers. And they will fulfill their study-abroad requirement not at the expense of their majors and general academics, but in support of them. **We would not institute this requirement if we were not confident that we could provide opportunities to complete any major—and that students of all majors can benefit tremendously from the experience.** Furthermore, we introduce this new requirement concurrently with a strengthened general education curriculum designed not only to provide a rich foundation for overseas explorations, but also to articulate even more clearly the institutional values and ideals we hope to pass on to them. All of our students will be required to demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language, and they will fulfill additional requirements through courses emphasizing the concepts, principles, and modes of thinking and expression we consider fundamental: writing; history; abstract reasoning; the scientific method; the creative process; and issues of culture, diversity, and ecological sustainability.

Goucher College has always been and will remain a liberal arts academic institution above all else. But we believe that international study has become an indispensable component of a comprehensive liberal arts curriculum, and that is why we are taking this step to establish it as a permanent and prominent aspect of our own. But international study cannot function independently, and it must always be based upon a solid foundation of first-rate academics. Our strengthened emphasis on study abroad does not portend the weakening of any other part of our educational program on campus.



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It also does not mean that we are focusing our attention on the rest of the world at the expense of communities closer to home. On the contrary, we believe that our students' experiences abroad will only strengthen their engagement on and near the Goucher campus, and especially in Baltimore and Washington. Study-abroad participants come back to Goucher refreshed, re-energized, and full of ideas they cannot wait to share—and put into action in their own lives and academic careers. Their enthusiasm and evolving perspectives infuse and inform the classes they take, the community service projects they participate in, the papers they write, the research they do, and the other projects they mount.

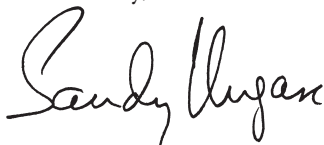
### **Going global: distinguishing ourselves as an institution and as individuals**

In the end, what distinguishes the greatest among us is not their knowledge, their experience, their unique points of view, or the resources they possess. What distinguishes them is what they do with all of the above, and with the opportunities they have. **As we launch our new curriculum, Goucher College will distinguish itself as an institution by using its resources to guarantee every one of its students a chance to engage the world.** Our students will distinguish themselves by going forth into the world and using the knowledge, experience, and unique points of view they gain to inform both their studies here at Goucher and their lives afterward as thoughtful, enthusiastic, creative, and compassionate participants in all of the communities they encounter—as global citizens in the fullest sense of the term.

We intend this as a promise, and as a challenge. We will always be the first institution to have initiated a collegewide program that guarantees every student the opportunity to study abroad, but we hope not to be the only one for very long. I firmly believe that study-abroad programs like ours will eventually become standard among colleges and universities across the United States. In the meantime, I encourage students, parents, and educators alike to ask themselves what they believe is important to learn in order to function successfully and contribute meaningfully in the world we live in today—and whether it is possible to learn it without the kind of firsthand experience we're offering at Goucher College.

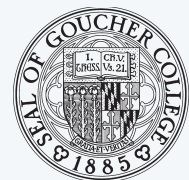
There are, doubtless, considerable risks in making a decision like this, and some may think we are going too far. But I hope that many will join us on the trail that we are blazing, to the great benefit of our students, our nation, and our world. I sincerely hope we can count on you to go global with us.

Sincerely,



Sanford J. Ungar  
President

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