

Transcript - Go Global ED Podcast: Episode 6 – Tanyelle Richardson, Senior Program Officer at the U.S. Department of Education; Bill Phelan, Program Manager at Cornell University – Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program | Einaudi Center

[Intro/Amy] Welcome to the Go Global ED Podcast. Brought to you by the International and Foreign Language Education Office also known as, IFLE, at U.S. Department of Education. On the Go Global ED Podcast, we speak with IFLE grant and fellowship recipients to highlight their experiences, discuss issues in international and foreign language education, share advice on the application process, and explore the long-term value and impact of IFLE programs.

In our continuing celebration of International Education Week 2021, today on the podcast I speak to Tanyelle Richardson, a member of the IFLE team, about the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program also known as “UISFL” UISFL is a Title VI grant administered by the IFLE Office at U.S. Department of Education. We'll also hear from Bill Phelan, a Program Manager at Cornell University in their Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. While speaking with Bill, he shares the experience of Cornell and their community college consortia partners on their 2018 UISFL grant featuring many examples of how they've utilized the UISFL funding to support and expand opportunities for undergraduate international and language studies. I'll get the conversation started with Tanyelle to get some more background on the UISFL grant, and then we'll hear from Bill about Cornell's UISFL grant several times throughout the conversation.

[Amy] Welcome to the podcast, Tanyelle.

[Tanyelle] Thank you, Amy.

[Amy] Could you tell us what is a UISFL grant, who's eligible, and what kind of projects can these grants support?

[Tanyelle] So the purpose of the UISFL program is to assist institutions and consortia in higher education to actually do a deep dive in building capacity for international undergraduate education. We fund two-year schools, four-year schools who are looking to build international programming. And so it's designed for those who have very little or those who want to move into the second act of internationalization on campus

[Amy] OK great. So, are there any regional or language requirements UISFL grant?

[Tanyelle] Although we do encourage foreign language to be a major part of the program, it is not a major requirement. We do encourage it though, so we are looking for programs who are designing an international component with various studies, interdisciplinary programs as well as foreign language. Although it's a great thing to incorporate foreign language it does not make you ineligible if you choose not to at this time.

[Amy] OK so foreign language is definitely a plus, not necessarily required, but it would probably make a competitive application.

[Tanyelle] Absolutely.

[Amy] I understand that UISFL grants can support community colleges, their faculty, and their students, is that right?

[Tanyelle] You are correct. The majority of our grantees are doing some form or fashion of faculty development, professional development, student study abroad and building capacity in the curriculum, as well as in some cases conducting outreach to their local community, understanding world areas, incorporating cultural events, so the UISFL grant can do a lot, especially when you're looking at introduction of internationalization starting at undergraduate level.

[Amy] OK, yeah. I actually had the opportunity to speak to Bill Phelan at Cornell University which was a recipient of a UISFL grant and he told me all about their collaboration with their Community College consortium. So, let's listen to a little bit about how Cornell has used their UISFL grant.

[Amy speaking to Bill in previously recorded conversation] So, in the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Division, that is where the grant was awarded in 2018, I know that the name of the project is 'Building Bridges: Integrating the Sciences Humanities and Social Sciences in undergraduate Latin American Studies.' So maybe you could tell us a little bit more about your work on the program the last couple of years.

[Bill Phelan, Cornell] Ok, yeah. So the idea was to really help us, Cornell, do a lot more on working with undergraduates. We have been focused, like many area studies programs, on graduate students and have had an NRC (National Resource Center funding) in the past, but we wanted to get our program going with more activities and connections for undergraduates. This program, in terms, was you know, we're a huge university with lots of different parts and we do have New York state's College of agriculture and life sciences as part of us and so we wanted to bring together more of the humanities with the sciences. So, we did this in our proposal, we said that we would do a Latin American field course and research extension courses. So doing part of the course in the classroom and then taking students down to Latin America or the Caribbean on small short trip or during intercession in January. We also wanted to do internships in Latin America during the summer so we were able to do a few prior to COVID and then we flipped and did in virtual internships which worked surprisingly well. We also were trying to develop advanced Portuguese to start teaching that because we have basic Portuguese courses and we wanted to bring the advanced Portuguese courses in so that people could have the full spectrum language available them. We also wanted to engage undergraduates by bringing, by having, public issues forums at the university. So these were the lectures that would be more appealing to a general audience but focused on Latin America and the Caribbean. And of course, we had developed a strategic collaboration with our consortium

partner, Tompkins Cortland Community College, as well as three other community colleges in the area and that's worked out really well

[Amy] So they've really been working on a wide range of activities at Cornell with their Community College partners with their UISFL grant. In addition to the wide range of activities, I also gained some insight into an interesting study abroad course that included an international partnership and students doing lab work in Chile.

[Amy speaking to Bill in previously recorded conversation] Could you tell me about the program, I know some students and a faculty member went to Chile, and I know up in Ithaca you are in a rural area and Cornell has a school of agriculture and there was a really interesting project that students were able to work on both in New York and down in Chile.

[Bill] Yes, we're really lucky because there was a researcher working at Cornell in viticulture and New York State prides itself on its wines (don't tell California) but we do have very active research going on at Cornell in that in that area of the viticulture so this researcher also taught lab courses. He also has strong connections with Chile. Very good connections with Catolica University in Chile so he developed a course where he would in the fall teach the students there as part of our project he would teach the students how to do all the lab work because he had come up with a test that could find and identify whether a plant a great plant had a specific virus disease and so he taught the students how to use how to do that testing in the lab here at Cornell during the fall. We also required the students to take either if they had zero Spanish they would take what we call a 'jumpstart' course in Spanish they would learn some basic phrases in Spanish and be able to at least show that they were interested in the language and when they got down to Chile and then those who had a good level of Spanish they would take what we call FLAC courses FLAC 'foreign language across the curriculum' and there they would have topics related to the course and they be doing readings and discussions in Spanish so that's to get them used to using the language of the scientific language the laboratory language that they need so that when they're down in Chile and working with Chilean students from Catolica University that they'd be able to have the language necessary to communicate. Then in the winter we provided funding to those students who had additional need and a group of them went down to Chile during the winter break and they went around and visited the wineries and the fields and they took samples from the different wineries that they visited and then they went back to the university labs and did their tests that they've been taught how to make. And they did this in collaboration with university students from Chile so there was, you know, a peer-to-peer interaction. They had to use their Spanish as much as they could and then of course we took them on some more of the humanities tours such as the Museum of the Memory talking about the violence that occurred following the overthrow of Allende then when they came back they would do follow-up writeups about their experience

[Amy] Bill also shared some insights into how they've developed partnerships with faculty within the Community College consortia as part of their UISFL grant so let's hear that.

[Bill] So we call it “CCIF” Community College Internationalization Fellows and the grant funds a number of fellows each year. We are in the area and Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies so we also have NRC (National Resource Center) programs and we have a Postsecondary Outreach Coordinator. So she relates to each of the community colleges that we're working with and we put out a call for fellows and then each person who applies from the community colleges each faculty member is supposed to provide us with a proposed project that they would work on. Now the coordinator of postsecondary outreach is very key in this because then she works with them to develop and tweak and help them get a project. If it's doable and then we're able to provide professors that can talk with library resources that they can come and use it Cornell that can use electronic library resources we have a way of setting them up so they can have a access to those and then they work on the project over the year. And this is all with the aim of internationalizing their curriculum. Their classes can be an entire new class but we it tends to be more how to integrate more international content into their existing classes. We funded one of our Tompkins Cortland Community College professors who teaches history, he went down to see if there were options for either bringing students down there but mainly just to reinforce his knowledge about what happened during the Allende period. And to learn more about Chilean history so he was able to do that and then unfortunately with COVID and some budget crunches they weren't able to take students down but he developed ways of integrating the information he gathered while he was down there into his global history courses and even into his American history courses when you talk about American intervention and Chile during that time in the 70s.

[Amy to Tanyelle] So shifting gears a little bit, as we know the pandemic has impacted nearly every part of our lives and most notably for international education that would be the impact it's had on international travel. So Tanyelle, are you familiar with any ways that schools have utilized their UISFL funding despite the pandemic which has obviously limited the ability to travel?

[Tanyelle] Actually I am. We've had some grantees have been really innovative in this unfortunate time of the pandemic to pivot and do things like virtual study abroad programs. They've actually had been really successful with matching students with foreign institutions to do a virtual format although it's not the most, you know, it's not the most attractive way, to go about it but it's been able to meet the goals and accomplish the grant activities so that being one of them also doing more webinars doing more you know usually utilizing their virtual platforms to the best of their ability has been the biggest push for our grantees during the pandemic.

[Amy] That's great to hear. At Cornell University Bill was also telling me a little bit about what they've done so we're going to hear a little clip from him.

[Bill] We have a Brazilian student in music who was able to organize for a contact of his in Brazil who brought together an ensemble and they were able to do a live performance for all four of our community colleges. They did it twice, two different days to different community colleges

as well as undergraduate students here at Cornell. And they were able to listen to samba music and folk music and it was really a wonderful presentation and it was through Zoom, but the Brazilians took the initiative to find a really good studio where the sound would be good and had the support people doing the cameras and sound as well as the musicians play really came on the sound quality was great it was a wonderful experience for the Community Colleges.

[Amy to Tanyelle] So I can't recall if we already mentioned this, but do you UISFL grants include the opportunity to create internship programs?

[Tanyelle] Absolutely. That's one of the eligible activities that applicants actually can write into the grant. You can use a portion of the funds to support study abroad as well as international internships and domestic internships. So, there is a cap on the funding for UISFL for study abroad per say, it's a regulatory cap of 10% of the program funds can be used for study abroad. However, if you, if you award for students to do domestic internships with international flair of course that is a strong eligible activity you can engage in.

[Amy] Ah OK, great. Well, I actually already knew that internships could be included, and Bill told me a little bit about their internships as well which also went virtual during the pandemic so let's listen in.

[Bill] Some of the internships in Brazil were around the Cotinga area which is in northeast Brazil and they were, one of them was, to develop a mobile museum exhibit that could go community within the area and it was to show off the biodiverse richness of that dry area of Brazil and they were able to get an attentive student who was able to do graphic art and also spoke Portuguese. So we were really lucky there. In Ecuador there was a range of opportunities there some of the students were able to work with a local municipality where they would work with a youth group that was where the youth that were in that group actually work with tourists when they come to Ecuador and so they wanted to increase their knowledge and their ability to communicate in English so we've had that happen twice. The students from the Cornell side get really engaged and create really creative ways to engage the students in Ecuador, all of this over Zoom. It's amazing. There are times when some of the people can't make it because they don't have electricity, but most of the time it works. There's another one where there was a Cornell alumna who has a foundation that works on violence against women so they've help them with they have both a Spanish and English website so the Cornell student worked translating stuff from Spanish and rewriting it for the English website and we have done videos for one municipality who wanted an English tract on their video for attracting tourists and that video will be going up in regional and national airport around Ecuador. We had one student who this was like in the first summer, she actually, the pandemic had just started an so this municipality wanted her to work on a plan for how to reopen their market post-COVID and this was livestock market. So she worked we put her in touch with I veterinarian here at Cornell to get ideas who has a vast amount of experience internationally ,she herself is from West Africa and so that faculty member was able to give her ideas she did a lot of her own research and she

wrote a 40 page paper in Spanish detailing out the plan for how they could reopen safely and what protocols to do for their market post COVID.

[Amy] You know, it's been fascinating to hear about all the creative initiatives institutions have explored during this time so I also asked Bill, you know, as international travel does start to pick back up, what are his thoughts on the future of virtual and here's what he said.

[Bill] I think that this experience has proven that we should keep virtual in fact many of the students in their recorded videos at the end I asked them that question and they said definitely keep this. I think that's important particularly for students who would love to go you know abroad to Ecuador wherever, but you know, they have responsibilities in the summer at home and they have to have part time jobs. We had many who had part time jobs along with their internship in fact the internship was designed that way that they only were required to do 20 hours a week on the internship because we understand that there are students who need for the purposes of funding their education to be able to work during the summer. So I think this provides them that both opportunities and allows them to do both. Some of those students are you know supporting their families during those summer by working so this is important that they are able to get that international experience even if it's through a virtual. And they were very happy with it and felt it they really got to know their country and at some point we hope that they'll find a way to be able to travel and visit the country

[Amy] So I really enjoyed learning more about Cornell's UISFL grant in action and now I want to move on to how others might consider applying. So, is there anything you would want to share with Institutions schools that might be considering applying for a UISFL grant?

[Tanyelle] So you know, I want to, you know, to say this as far as you know UISFL not being for everyone. UISFL is for all eligible applicant applications is for those schools who are looking just to build capacity an undergraduate internationalization, for helping their faculty become more rich to international education, as well as professional development and to certain degree study abroad. So you know it's a great opportunity for those schools who are looking to just you know do a jump in approach to international education. You don't have to have all of your ducks in a row per say but you have to have a need to want to engage undergraduate international education. So it is a great start to building your capacity at your institutions for internationalization so I'm just putting that out there cause you know for you know for schools across the nation there's funding available especially in the UISFL program.

[Amy] what are some qualities of a successful UISFL grant application?

[Tanyelle] I'm glad you asked me that, Amy. I see my most successful applications coming from those who are preparing to start now. Meaning that do not wait until the NIA (Notice Inviting Applications) or the Federal Register notice has been published. You want to have those crucial conversations on campus about exactly what your international education needs are is it to develop curriculum,, would it be to enhance already existing programs or actually develop new programs? All those things can be funded under the UISFL program. Now there is a matching

requirement so for every dollar you received from federal support from UISFL you must match with cash or in-kind. But to be honest that is coming from the resources are probably already established at your university or Community College so I highly recommend that that being something you work on early is looking at your need looking at how you can grow your capacity for internationalization whether it be with faculty professional development or students, or all three. And so that is one of the key aspects of a fundable or successful application is to start looking at the knees with that

[Amy] Those are all really great points and actually similar to what we heard from Bill at Cornell. And so we can also listen to some of his suggestions but it seems like one of the keys are starting the communication early, even if our competition has not opened yet. So let's hear from Bill and hear from their perspective well

[Bill] I think the thing that probably makes more successful grants is make sure that you're going to be able to do what you say you are doing and that it's adapted to your reality. So take into account what your university has to offer to your students how you might work with community colleges and also what will be your interactions with abroad. Tapping existing partnerships and building on those so that you have a stronger program for the undergraduates. I think that one thing we're able to do is to offer more opportunities for undergraduates to get abroad weather in the past in person or virtually in the current situation. Also, one of the things that's really important is that when you want to do the outreach with the community colleges, to have a dedicated person for that and that has been funded by the project and that's been really helpful for us it for now it's a lot of work to work with multiple community colleges and I think that that's really important to have that person dedicated to that work.

[Amy] Hopefully this information will be helpful to some of our listeners who might consider applying for a UISFL grant during a future competition. So, I think that's all we have for now so thank you, Tanyelle, for joining us here on the podcast. Thank you for connecting you with Bill at Cornell. It's been really wonderful learning more about the UISFL grant and how institutions can use this type of funding to support their internationalization goals

[Tanyelle] Thank you so much, Amy, for having me.

[Amy/Outro] Thanks for listening to the Go Global ED podcast a production of the international and foreign language education office at EU S Department of Education be sure to follow us on Twitter and Go Global ED Podcast and subscribe to our newsletter to learn more about upcoming podcast episodes and receive IFLE updates

Guest Biographies:

Bill Phelan is currently the Program Manager of the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program (or LACS) at Cornell University which has a 3-year UISFL project in consortium with Tompkins Cortland Community College that began in 2018. Prior to working for LACS he was in

the Manager for the Cornell University South Asia Program where he managed three US Dept of Ed projects, a South Asia National Resource Center, a and FLAS (or Foreign Language and Area Studies) project, and a U.S. Dept of Ed IRS project to create a series of new textbooks accompanied by DVDs, to teach the least commonly taught language from Sri Lanka, the Sinhala language. Prior to working at Cornell Bill had a career in relief and development work for 25 years in West Africa, starting there as a Peace Corps Volunteer and concluding with the management of USAID project awards for various U.S. not-for-profits in Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Sierra Leone.

Tanyelle Richardson is a Senior Program Officer in the International Studies Division of the International and Foreign Language Education Office at the U.S. Department of Education (ED). In this capacity, Tanyelle administers the Title VI Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language (UISFL) program, and the Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Advance Language long-term program (GPA-LT). Tanyelle has past experience overseeing the Title VI Business and International Education (BIE) program, National Resource Centers, and the Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowship program. She frequently represents ED at national conferences.