Global Engagement Introduction: Anthony (Bud) Rock

Hi, my name is Bud Rock and I’m the new Vice-President for Global Engagement at ASU. I’d like to talk to you a little bit about the topic of global engagement during your academic at the university.

You’ll be on your academic career at ASU with large dreams and there is a large world out there to help you fulfill those dreams and to challenge you in some of those dreams. The world is not somewhere other than here. It may seem like it at times. It may seem that when you hear about wars in the Middle East or disasters in Africa that those are issues far away or even issues closer to home. Products coming from China or visits that you and your friends take to Europe, all of which seem to take you from here someplace else. It’s important to realize that that someplace else, that larger world is part of the world in which you live.

As a country we all are taking one approach to the way that we proceed in the world, whether it is our policies, our economics or our cultural orientation. We all collectively have American values, as diverse as they may be, but they are only one set of values mixed against a much larger set of values and a much larger set of approaches throughout the entire world. Those approaches are made meaningful when they are compared with others, when they are combined with others and when they are re-shaped by others.

Whether you are studying international affairs or nursing or education, business, environment, any discipline will involve global comparison and global engagement. Even if you’re undecided today, you can be assured that global issues will impact you in the future.

So, why should you become globally engaged? You will want to have the ability to solve problems, whether they are on a local scale or on a global scale and to work effectively with other cultures.

You’ll want to understand and appreciate the variety of contributions that people make from a range of societies in what is a globally dynamic, knowledge-based community.
You want to be able to achieve some base of appreciation, an experiential base by living and working in a global environment and to appreciate that there are diverse perspectives that are increasingly important to working through any new or creative solutions to the challenges that we all face.

You want to be able to make decisions about issues that blend advances in science and technology with policy issues all from a global perspective.

Through something as basic as cultural exchange, being introduced to other cultures, we celebrate through education and through research all things ranging from the origins of our human diversity, right on through to the richness of human talent from cultures throughout the world.

As you prepare to live and work in the world you may find that you will be engaged in activities where it is important to strengthen our economy and ensure the greatest opportunities for the U.S. and the world. You may be working cooperatively with other nations toward strengthening economic growth.

You may find yourself working in the scientific arena advancing the frontiers of knowledge where global engagement helps address science, innovation and entrepreneurship, where your activities may place an emphasis on applications that are in service to all of mankind and where you may through research and internship opportunities have a chance to experience what the world is learning and what the world is doing to innovate in ways that you would not otherwise see here in America.

We know from the news that all is not positive in the world today. Still you may find yourself with the opportunity to work in arenas that help us protect and promote everyone’s interests in the world today and hopefully to build positive and constructive relationships.

One strong example of global engagement is that of sustainability. Not simply a local concern, but a global imperative. It involves meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future world generations to meet their needs. In effect, it is about economic growth, but in balance with environmental stewardship and social development.

As you proceed through your career at ASU you may find yourself engaged in many different aspects of sustainability. It will be important to understand the
interrelationship of the issues that involve sustainability, but it will be even of greater importance to understand them on a global scale.

You will have a lot of choices in your academic career; courses to take, directions and programs of study to choose. Being globally engaged is really not an option at all. It’s a reality in your life. It will be a reality in your studies and it will be a reality in your careers.

In truth you won’t need to seek out global engagements. Global engagement will find you in every aspect of your life. Issues are increasingly inter-connected in the world today, whether we are speaking about the global impact of events political, economic, environmental or social, whether we’re talking about global business, both from the standpoint of opportunities and from the challenges or whether we’re speaking about the sheer cultural diversity in the world today that exists not only in foreign lands, but in our own backyard.

Start getting ready today for that global engagement experience. Get a passport and be ready to travel, whether for pleasure or for your academic pursuits. Attend our Study Abroad 101 course in order to get ready for the varying experiences that you might be able to have through ASU overseas. Take a language course, even if your major does not require it. It’s a valuable skill and an interesting one as well. Find a way to take a global course in your area of study. It’s amazing how many different overlapping interests there are out there that involve the global arena. Don’t assume that global courses are only in the international affairs arena. The international affairs arena is associated with almost every program of study.

Make connections wherever you can with the international students at ASU. We have over 3,000 international students right now. Please make sure that you make them welcome and that you learn from them as well.

Your opportunity to be globally engaged is not limited to your activities on the ASU campus. Look around outside the campus, into your community, attend cultural events, watch a foreign film now and again. You can always read the subtitles. Visit an international restaurant, volunteer for an international service organization. Become involved with the global community; even the global community in your backyard.

When you consider studying abroad, you will be joining many ASU students who have benefited tremendously from the experience. Most of those students come
back with stories about new things learned, about new opportunities for the future and about friends made along the way.

Learn more about global engagement and the opportunities available to you here at ASU by checking with the web site for the Office of the Vice President for Global Engagement and the links that derive from that site. There are many, many opportunities available to you.

Let me just say in conclusion that you will find the area of global activities and the global perspective on your programs of study to be tremendously interesting and tremendously rewarding. I spent an entire career in the global arena first as a diplomat and then here at ASU. I can say that most everything that I touch in my daily life, whether it is here in my local community or in the farthest reaches of the world have been fascinating and interesting and rewarding. In that sense you are planning now for your future. Please consider global perspectives in all of that.

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