The worst pandemic in more than a century proved to be a testing ground for international collaboration as well as a stark reminder of global interdependence when it comes to tackling the wicked problems and grand challenges, of which COVID-19 was emblematic. But while the worldwide health crisis precipitated by the coronavirus drove unprecedented global knowledge creation and information sharing, it simultaneously fueled levels of nationalism and nativism. This retreat from globalization has emerged at a time when preparing students to address the complex problems of the future will, of necessity, entail explicit engagement with global contexts. Indeed, fulfilling the promise of American higher education in the twenty-first century demands renewed attention to catalyzing active forms of global learning and ensuring universal participation.

Mentored Undergraduate Research in Global Contexts offers a compelling framework for fostering the integration of global learning, mentoring, and undergraduate research, providing insights into how the merging of these high-impact practices (HIPs) leads to foundational student growth and development. By documenting what constitutes effective practice in each of the three components and showcasing the mutual and reinforcing benefits of interaction among them, the authors emphasize the ways in which the blending of these HIPs can produce a situated form of learning, inquiry, and relationship building that is greater than each of the constituent parts. These include increased skill development, opportunities for intercultural and civic learning, and democratic engagement essential to preparing students for success in work, citizenship, and life.

Building upon the results of evidence-based research, this pivotal report aims at advancing the profile and practice of mentored undergraduate research in global contexts (MUR-GC). In the process, it identifies and elucidates design principles that highlight the importance of full participation, positionality, ethical engagement, and relational accountability. Based on the core research values of reciprocity, interdependence, and trustworthiness, the analysis invites decentering the dominant norms around what constitutes knowledge, how it is produced, and the ways in which research and expertise are conceptualized. One result is that relationships formed through intentional, community-based scholarship; collaborative co-inquiry; and inclusive processes and practices are prioritized alongside the research results. And because community values, needs, and concerns necessarily inform the research design, the report contains suggestions for developing equity-minded programs that incorporate mentoring models and strategies, inclusive practices attentive to context and setting, and creating a culture of expectation and engagement. Achieving these objectives mandates faculty and staff professional development around mentoring in the global context, which includes immersion in the research experience, the identification of specific learning outcomes and mindsets tied to intercultural competence, knowledge of local contexts, and an understanding of the ways in which research is shaped by the communities in which it is taking place.

The models of MUR-GC showcased here make evident their potential for profoundly impacting students, faculty, and institutions. Taken together, they compose a guide for future action and inquiry that empowers students as agents within an integrated ecosystem of knowledge needed to create and thrive in a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable future.

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