Proposed Initiative: Freshman/Sophomore level Semester in Europe Program. Students will take five 3-credit general Education classes while in Europe and be based at three different localities during the semester. Faculty will teach general education classes from these locations on a rotating basis. Students will work in cohorts and cooperate to form established social units that may persist in later years. This experience may also encourage later international studies. Each semester has approx 240 participants.

Proposed by: Ian Williams, Plant & Earth Science

What strategic goal does this initiative support?
Distinctive Academic Excellence; Global Education and Engagement

Describe how the initiative supports the goal(s).
Students groups will become socially integrated while abroad and those social links will persist, helping later retention at UWRF. This early international experience can be built on by later classes (promoting tolerance/international understanding). Bridging the psychological hurdle of studying abroad we will also promote other international programs at UWRF. Running the program in Europe we build on our own experience (ITS, SA:E and WIS) and are in a relatively safe environment. Health care is well established and travel is easy but there are also very significant cultural differences to the US, language and communication hurdles to overcome. The continent abounds with history, art etc. all relevant to the US. These experiences fit into our general education plan. This proposal would set us apart and lay a radically different foundation for our degree programs.

Based on the definition of university-wide initiative, indicate how the proposed initiative has a university-wide impact.
This proposal is based on the general education classes, and affords us the opportunity to integrate these classes together and with the environment where we are teaching them. For example, one possibility might be to have classes in Spanish, English, Geology, Dance and History taught in Spain, England and Italy - making use of the opportunities in those locations. While an instructor might be there for 3 weeks with one class he/she could Skype the class when they arrive elsewhere and continue to direct projects at the second site. Virtually all the subjects relevant to general education will participate in this program, and it may even open avenues that we have not yet exploited - basic Agriculture taught in Eire perhaps? The effect of this experience on the students ought to effect the rest of their time at UWRF and the relationships established with their instructors could prove fruitful in their later education.

Please provide a set of benchmarks and/or indicators of success to support your initiative.
1. Compare GPA, retention and post-graduate success of participants with those who took the more tradition route through their education at UWRF.
2. Look at job satisfaction of faculty engaged in the program compare with those remaining at UWRF.
3. Survey Participants on the effect of this program on their undergraduate experience, and their families concerning how this program affects recruiting efforts for the University.
4. Financial study in order to establish the costs and savings of such a program.

What elements are involved in the initiative?
Inclusiveness, Human Capital, Technology, Facilities, Finance

Indicate how each element would be/would not be affected by the initiative.
- Sustainability: Since the classes involved are general education classes, and the faculty are teaching as part of their regular load, this program is sustainable. Furthermore, this
environment will allow certain classes to consider the efforts that Europeans are focusing on environmental (or agricultural) sustainability – affording us to learn from the advances being taken by others. However the program does not directly influence the environmental sustainability of this campus.

- **Inclusiveness**: The main element that would be affected by this proposal would be inclusiveness. There have always been a certain number of students that have a hard time integrating themselves into the university environment, and this program will create a situation where there is a small cadre of students dependent on each other who will get to know one another very well – and who will get to know five faculty members very well (who may well turn out to be mentors for these students). It is my estimation that this will ease the transition to college for certain students. It must be noted that some individual may not thrive in the environment, so selection of students will be very important.

- **Human Capital**: The effect on human capital is not insignificant. A regular class, taught abroad, will offer many of our faculty an easily accessible experience which will improve both their moral and their teaching; surely the lessons learned in an overseas other culture experience will be reflected in the classroom? In addition, since this becomes a significant part of the freshman experience, the efforts of our staff to make that first year worthwhile might be redirected to help the overseas experience with mutually beneficial effects. However, this program will not necessarily require the hiring of new faculty or staff, provided that the existing Global Connections office feels that coordinating this project is within their capabilities. We may need someone to spend time in Europe establishing residential locations - but as the years go on this ought to become less time demanding.

- **Technology**: Communications technology with students off campus will be important and instructors might well need to have Skype-like contact with their classes before and after their time in Europe with the group. While that three week period will be pivotal for the class, advantage should be taken of using technology to exploit the rest of the students time abroad.

- **Facilities**: There would be a need to establish long-term arrangements with institutions in Europe (places to sleep and perhaps even other universities if we want to use their facilities). If the program becomes established, the same group leaders might be used every year, and so we might be able to establish long term relationships with certain hotels or guest houses. We could also exploit already existing situations such as using Dalkeith House.

- **Finance**: This needs investigating. At first glance it may seem a very expensive program, but our experience with other programs shows that the increase in cost, over a UWRF semester is not as significant as one might imagine. As is always the case, if we have many more students in Europe each semester then costs will be reduced. In addition there will be savings back at UWRF - if 200 students are not on campus each semester, then there in a decreased need for certain facilities here. Clearly there would have to be a financial feasibility study.

- **Other:**