WHEREAS, according to the 2007 Open Doors Report, study abroad at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire is ranked 14th in the nation among all master-level universities in the United States in terms of the number of students participating, an increase from 2005-2006 as seen in Attachment “A”; and

WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire is ranked 7th in the United States for duration of its study abroad programs; and

WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, has received an award from the Institute for International Education in regard to its innovations in extending the study abroad to a wide student audience; and

WHEREAS, 25% of the student body participates in a UW-Eau Claire study abroad program (including semester, all year, and summer programs); and

WHEREAS, students who study abroad come back with a nearly 100% positive satisfaction when surveyed; and
WHEREAS, students who choose to participate in various study abroad programs receive a different variety of cultural and diversity knowledge that cannot necessarily be taught at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; and

WHEREAS, potential employers are now seeking students who have more experience with other cultures; and

WHEREAS, having an international experience as a requirement for graduation will greatly extend the goal of having a complete liberal arts experience at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; and

WHEREAS, the international experience graduation requirement could be met in a variety of ways:

(a) International Internship
(b) Short term or semester study abroad
(c) International Service Learning
(d) International Music Tours

or for certain students for whom an international experience is unavailable (i.e. Non-traditional students)

(e) an international related research project, which would be earned here at Eau Claire; and

WHEREAS, if the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire chooses to expand study abroad, the university community will see an increase in diversity because the more students that are sent out by the university, the more international students will be
enrolled. Having more students from different areas of the world will greatly expand the university’s diversity; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that this requirement will add an additional cost to students, if an international experience were made a requirement for graduation, students will receive a variety of support to keep costs as low as possible; and

WHEREAS, currently many students struggle to meet financial requirements of study abroad programs, even with the various scholarships and grants available to them; and

WHEREAS, cheaper programs exist for individuals who have a hard time meeting the financial requirement. These programs which are in the summer are less expensive than traditional semester and year-long study abroad programs; and

WHEREAS, with the projected increase in study abroad participants, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire would be able to join a Study Abroad Consortia which will give students increased financial aid to study abroad and make more international universities open to our study abroad program; and

WHEREAS, if an international experience were made a requirement for graduation, stipends would be made available to offset the cost of the expense. These stipends are estimated to be at about $1,000 per student enrolled; and
WHEREAS, opponents of study abroad cite the possibility of discouraging potential students from enrolling at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire because of this requirement; and

WHEREAS, Goucher College, which is a privately funded institution has implemented a similar type of requirement for their undergraduates. The details of their proposal seen in Attachment “B;” and

WHEREAS, after implementing this program, Goucher College experienced a substantial increase in the number of students applying and an increase in the quality of the applicants in terms of their average ACT scores and grade point averages; and

WHEREAS, many students, especially underclassmen experience difficulty when scheduling classes each academic semester; and

WHEREAS, if study abroad is a requirement for graduation, about 2,000 students would be leaving each year, which would greatly free up class schedules, allowing students to have better access to classes that they want or need. In addition, sizes of classes at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire would decrease, because of the number of people who will study abroad; and

WHEREAS, exemptions should exist, and for the international experience requirement certain students could have this requirement waived including, but not limited to:

(a) Students with disabilities
(b) Non-Traditional students
(c) Participation in an international internship

other exemptions can include if students are enrolled as international students or are military veterans; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the program is to greatly improve the education received by students, but for these certain groups, going abroad may be a hindrance to their education and should be excluded from the requirement; and

WHEREAS, the importance of study abroad has been realized by our national government when the United States Senate passed a bipartisan bill in support of the study abroad as seen in Attachment "C;" and

WHEREAS, to be fair to the students who are currently enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, the graduation requirement for the study abroad program would be implemented in 2012. Students enrolled after that year would be subject to the requirement, and would know when applying to the university that they would be expected to complete it;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Student Senate supports the adoption of a international experience graduation requirement for the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that upon passage President Raymond French transmit copies of this resolution to Dr. Brian Levin-Stankevich, Chancellor; Andrew Soll, Vice Chancellor, Business & Student Services; Dr. Steve Tallant, Provost/Vice Chancellor;
Dr. Gail Scukanec, Dean, College of Education and Human Services; Dr. Thomas V. Dock, Dean, College of Business; Dr. Donald Christian, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences; Dr. Elaine Wendt, Dean, College of Nursing and Health Sciences; All Members of the Strategic Planning Committee; Dr. Karl Markgraf, Director, Center for International Education; Ann Lapp, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Development & Diversity; and Jodi Thesing-Ritter, Associate Dean of Student Development, Student Development & Diversity.

Submitted by:
Adam Sorelle, On-Campus Senator
February 18, 2008