A major feature of the Anderson administration (1982-96) was the heightening of global consciousness in the educational program of the college. There had long been opportunities for semester and year-long study abroad, as well as January Term off-campus courses in cooperation with other Midwestern colleges. Further, the year-long Luther program in Nottingham, England, in cooperation with the University of Nottingham, had been running since 1972.

Anderson’s first move toward an expansive international focus was the staging of an OIKOS conference as the centerpiece of the 125th anniversary year of the college, 1986. OIKOS is the Greek word for household and the intention was to feature major challenges from the perspective of the global household. The theme was “building bridges of global hope.” The entire college community participated in a concentrated program of guest speakers and forums. For example, Gunnar Staalsett of Norway, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, spoke on ecumenism and world peace. Subsequent Oikos conferences occurred in 1988, 1990, and 1993. The OIKOS conferences brought the world to the college in a special way.

A second initiative was to increase opportunities for students to spend part of their four college years in an off-campus study experience. At the opening of the fall 1989 semester Anderson proposed that the college plan for a time when every student would have such an opportunity. The faculty gasped at the boldness of the proposal, but set to work on possibilities.

Mark Lund, professor of economics stepped up to the plate as director of international education beginning in the fall semester of 1990. Through the following 21 years Professor Lund supervised the planning of off-campus study programs for Luther students, most particularly January Term courses, but others as well. Several hundred students typically scatter over the world—Europe, Asia, Africa, United States, and South America—during January to participate in a wide variety of study/travel courses (307 in 2011, in a total of 19 courses.)

President Anderson also encouraged intensified recruitment of international students. The number and variety of such students grew, especially under the direction of Sonya Lund in the years 1989-2002, reaching a high of 153 in 1991 and continuing at that level to 2002. A decline followed the disaster of September 11, 2001, but a steady increase has resumed in recent years. Students came primarily from non-European countries, for example, Ghana, China, Uganda, India, Namibia, Turkey, and Nepal.

The global emphasis in Luther College education has continued to develop, but the initiative of President Anderson more than two decades ago remains a major legacy of his administration.