

International Education Committee

March 9, 2018

9:00am

Wyatt Hall 226

Present: Debbie Chee, Carmen Eyssautier, Lea Fortmann, Diane Kelley, Kriszta Kotsis, Sunil Kukreja, Mike Spivey, Matt Warning, Peter Wimberger, Sheryl Zylstra

M/S/P to approve minutes from Feb 23 meeting.

Announcements:

New show up in Kittredge gallery.

Question about changes to federal travel advisories and subsequent policy changes at the university. The updated policy is posted on the International Programs website.

Moving second agenda item, to review draft of Faculty-led study abroad program application to next week when the committee will look at proposals from faculty members.

Review of eligibility and selection criteria for student study abroad

Due to budgetary restrictions, the IEC is reviewing current criteria to potentially make it stricter (e.g. stricter GPA requirements) so they will not have to deny as many applications in the future. One proposal is to increase the minimum GPA to 3.0 (from 2.0). This stricter requirement would have excluded 29 students from the applications reviewed this year. Increasing to 2.75 would have reduced it to 9 students not being eligible. Another alternative discussed was to more strongly enforce current criteria requiring students to meet stated program GPA requirements. However, one person noted that programs often accept students that have a lower GPA than their stated requirement. One member brought up the issue of disparity between average GPAs across departments where stricter GPA requirements might discourage students from certain disciplines, especially math and sciences, who are already less likely to study abroad.

Another proposal was to consider age or class standing. Currently the policy allows second semester sophomores to study abroad. Others also expressed reservations about second year students studying abroad and believed that after 3 or 4 semesters students may be more mature.

Another committee member noted that we need to make it more clear about when students are eligible to apply, distinguishing between class standing when the student applies versus when they actually go to study abroad.

Other discussion included adding a prompt to the GPA essay to include an explanation and justification about why the student wants to go on that specific program when they

don't meet the GPA requirement. If the committee has to make an exception to the criteria, they believe it needs to be for a good reason that the students should articulate. This also could create a more positive experience for the students if they have to think more about it and justify their choices.

The discussion returned to increasing the current GPA from 2.0 to higher, since no programs currently allow students to go with that low of a GPA. The committee could increase the GPA or have the criteria be based on the specific program GPA. However, concerns were expressed about not knowing the GPA for all the programs on the books and some programs may have a lower GPA minimum requirement.

Also important to consider if students have a 2.0 GPA when applying but then have a bad semester, they could face academic sanctions, which could be problematic. Alternatively, many students struggle one semester in their first year, and then are on an upward trajectory by the time they apply for study abroad. The committee does not necessarily want one bad semester to preclude a student from being able to study abroad.

One member also noted the need to add an additional essay for students who want to study abroad for a full year at two different programs. The essay would include a ranking of programs and an explanation of academic reasons for why they want/need to go on two different programs.

A discussion on the application essay ensued.

The committee recognized the challenges of ranking the essays in an objective manner, currently judged as low, medium, or high. A rubric for the essay might be helpful if we continue to use the essay as part of the selection criteria.

The committee discussed the need for requiring essays if reviewing them is a lot of work. In the past, essays were only read for borderline students, which would reduce the time required for reading essays, but others questioned whether we should require essays of all students if they are not all going to be read.

One committee member commented on the value of having the students articulate their reasons for wanting to study abroad and how this might come up when comparing a strong student with a lackluster essay to a medium student with a strong passion for wanting to study abroad.

Another committee member commented that we could make the essay shorter and/or have a form instead of an essay to streamline then process of reviewing essays. Other ideas included having a process for streamlining the application e.g. first ask if they need to study abroad for their major and if yes, put those into a pile. Then for all the other students, ask them to explain why they want to study abroad.

Other considerations included rephrasing the question on the essay about the GPA requirement so students only write the second essay if they don't meet the program GPA requirement.

The committee decided to table the discussion in order to move on other business and assigned a subcommittee to review and streamline the eligibility criteria to be reviewed at the next meeting, which will then be updated in the Bulletin and International Programs website.

Review Proposal for Greece Lesbos Program in conjunction with Lewis and Clark

Next the committee reviewed a proposal by Eric Orlin for a joint study abroad program with Lewis and Clark. Orlin attended the program in 2015 and proposed that UPS faculty trade off with Lewis and Clark faculty leading the program in alternating years. He is currently working on putting together a framework for how it would work, the compensation model, ability to replace classes for faculty that lead the program, etc.

It was discussed that this program is closely related to College Year in Athens (CYA) program, which is currently an approved program. The main difference is the month in Lesbos. The same courses are listed in both programs. Since Fall 2008, five students have studied abroad with CYA, two students are currently there this spring. It was noted that students would actually be more limited in their courses if they went through the Lewis and Clark program.

Some committee members questioned the need for a full-time faculty member to be there for the whole semester if most of the classes are taught through the CYA program. It was unclear if the faculty member also teaches a course while there. The following questions were outlined for Orlin to address:

- Why should this replace CYA given that it would take more work and resources for the university?
- If we had more control, would there be a home stay incorporated, where currently there isn't one.
- Clarification on the four courses the students have to take and why –is this scheduling to allow the students to go to Lesbos, or specific content?
- Is it necessary for faculty member to be there the whole time? Could they only go for the Lesbos portion?
- Does the faculty member teach a class there?

It was also noted that this program would be significantly more expensive than the CYA program without getting a deal, unless the university was able to get a deal from Lewis and Clark.

Proposal for site visit for Faculty led study abroad in Ghana

Finally, the committee reviewed a proposal for a site visit to develop a faculty-led study abroad trip to Ghana. Since the proposal is by a visiting AFAM faculty member, the committee discussed the eligibility of the candidate and the whether the program would be able to continue after the faculty member left. It was noted that the money for the site visit would come from the faculty development fund. If the money is not used by faculty, it rolls over into subsidizing student costs for future trips.

One committee member noted that we are still waiting for a letter from department chair, which might address some of the questions the committee has.

Another commented that their sense that she is doing the site visit now to offer a course next year in her second year, which would be a tight timeline to get the whole program approved next fall.

Questions for Faculty proposer and AFAM Chair:

- Timeline – when will the course be offered?
- It seems the only time to do program is next spring if 2-year appointment, is there a possibility of extending the appointment?
- Would another faculty member take over the program after the visiting professor left?

One committee member commented that it seems she knows the location and believes it is an actionable possibility that could create opportunities for students that they might not otherwise get. It is their sense is that she is motivated to do this and it could be a good opportunity for the student body to visit a part of the world we don't send a lot of students.

The committee decided to table proposal until we hear from the department Chair.

Meeting adjourned at 9:54am.

Respectfully submitted by Lea Fortmann.