

Minutes of the International Education Committee

September 14, 2012

Members present: Phillip Brenfleck (student), Haile Canton (student), Lisa Ferrari, Matthew Ingalls, Michael Johnson, Diane Kelley, Donn Marshall, John McCuiston, Roy Robinson, Tanya Stambuk, Matt Warning, Peter Wimberger

Also present: Stephanie Noss, Sally Sprenger

The committee approved the minutes of September 5th, 2012.

Meeting Dates: All meetings will be in Wyatt 226 with the exception of Oct. 12, 2012.

The October 12th meeting will take place in Wyatt 326.

We will meet on September 14, September 28, October 12, October 26, November 9 and November 30.

Kelley began the meeting by stating that the Senate had not yet approved the submitted charges. Our liaison, Elise Richman expects that they will be approved at the next Senate meeting on September 24.

Kelley brought up an important issue that related to the proposed charge of assisting the Office of International Programs in selecting students for study abroad. She stated that in the near future we might be required to choose students for the programs in order to stay within a fixed budget.

Robinson continued that at some point, the International Study Abroad program at the University of Puget Sound might have a fixed budget. In the past, when the program had overspent the budget, money was taken from other sources to help fill in the gaps. Currently, we may need to stay within the fixed amount given to the study abroad program and extra money will not be provided through other sources. At this time, there is no mechanism in place to help us stay within the budget. We do not have a mechanism in place to control how many students will be going abroad and what the overall cost will be.

Ferrari agreed with Robinson. She added that the goal is not to limit the number of students going to study abroad. The goal is to ensure that everyone gets to go but at the same time we need to stay within the budget.

A series of questions ensued. How do we select students for the study abroad programs? How do we allow everyone to have a study abroad experience? How do we meet the needs of students wanting to go abroad? Faculty agreed that there is a need to develop a mechanism in order to help us stay within budget and to give as many interested students the opportunity to study abroad. In short, we are looking for ways to control cost and to make sure we are meeting the needs of our students.

Ferrari added that the goal is to have everyone go and not overspend the budget. She continued, asking if it isn't possible to award every student his or her first choice program because of budgetary matters, what does the university do? Does the university take expensive programs off the table? Does the university get to decide that not everyone gets to study abroad? Does the university decide that students need to offer several options to where they would like to study? She continued that the message that has been heard from this committee in the past is that it is unacceptable to limit the number of students who can study abroad.

Wimberger stated that it was the committee's belief two years ago that students who qualify for study abroad should be able to go. Ferrari questioned how was the university going to stay within budget?

Faculty agreed that students accepted into a program should not later discover that they might not be able to attend. Wimberger recalled that two years ago, the committee sent a memo to Kris Bartanen stating that we needed to have a way of letting students know that some may not be able to go on their first choice program or perhaps, not at all. As of now, there is no mechanism in place for doing this. One possibility would be to have a blanket statement every year stating that depending on demand, students may not be able to go their junior year or may be asked to change programs.

Discussion continued about the significant costs of certain programs. Australia and New Zealand are the most expensive followed by the UK and Ireland. Robinson mentioned that some schools are asking students to make an academic argument as to their reasons for studying in these particular programs. By doing so, these students may be asked to think more seriously about their academic program. It may also deter those students who are not so academically invested. This requirement may help us stay within budget. Marshall thought that this requirement may provide some concern. He reminded us that first semester sophomores would be writing these essays. Many of them will not even have declared their major. Warning asked why we haven't considered asking students who would like to go on a more expensive program to pay more than tuition. Discussion ensued about encouraging some kind of fee for the more expensive programs.

Wimberger stated that there are so many programs in Australia. He wondered if we needed so many programs in Australia.

Kelley wanted to know if the committee supported the idea that our goal would be to not turn anyone away from an international experience. Faculty clarified that the goal was to not turn those students away who were qualified for the study abroad experience.

Kelley informed us that the money from the programs couldn't be rolled over from year to year. She reported that money not spent is absorbed into the general budget or the President's discretionary fund. She also stated that the Pac Rim program rolls over its budget. Faculty wondered if other study abroad programs could do the same.

Robinson stated that he would like everyone to go but he would rather have a student who is highly qualified go on an expensive program even if that meant a less qualified student was unable to go. Another suggestion was to find an alternative international experience for those students who were unable to attend their first choice program. Some suggested an international summer program. Ferrari clarified that faculty can look at the situation two ways. One, a student who wants to study abroad finds some way to participate in some kind international education experience or, every student who applies wishes to do so is able to study abroad for a full semester (or year.)

Marshall suggested that the university could cover costs up to a certain amount and the student would take up the remaining cost. Kelley disagreed. She didn't think that students should be paying more than tuition. Robinson stated that at some point, difficult decisions will have to be made. He stated that these decisions will affect some students' choices about studying abroad. Most faculty agreed that the goal doesn't have to mean a semester of study abroad. Wimberger pointed out that we have an academic goal and a financial constraint. Faculty questioned what the process for students would be when the financial constraints limit the academic goals.

Kelley stated if the goal is to not have students cut, there might be other options for those students not accepted to their first choice. She continued that we would try to give students a semester abroad, but if that were not possible, we would find a way for these students to have an international experience. Warning countered that he believes the higher priority is to have students in academically strong programs even if it means that some students will be turned away from the study abroad program.

Ferrari summed up the meeting. She stated that the goal is to encourage as many students who are interested in having some kind of international experience to apply. However, this may mean that the study abroad experience might not necessarily be in the traditional sense as administered by the International Programs.

Kelley adjourned the meeting at 1:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya Stambuk