

## **Minutes of the March 10, 2009 Meeting of the International Education Committee**

Present: Tristan Burger, Lynnette Claire, Lisa Ferrari, Diane Kelley, John Lear, Jannie Meisberger, Jan Moore, Heidi Orloff, Jonathan Stockdale, Peter Wimberger

Chair Peter Wimberger convened the meeting shortly after 2:00 p.m.

Diane's excellent minutes were approved. According to Peter, Lisa will attach the worksheet that Kris used for her presentation on the finances of different study abroad options, though without the budget numbers. If anyone wants access to numbers, they can ask Kris.

Jannie noted that changes to the UK program will be effective for students applying for 2010-2011.

Peter announced that the cabinet approved a single pricing model where students pay UPS tuition for all of our programs and receive federal, state and UPS aid up to FAFSA determined need, with small adjustments related to airfare, visa, etc. The trustees were told about the change, though did not need to approve them. Kris and Sherry will announce the changes to the campus soon. They will be effective for freshmen arriving this fall.

Various misunderstandings circulating about changes to study abroad were discussed and will soon be clarified by a general message to faculty.

Peter talked to Maggie Mittuch about how the new policy will effect students. Right now, 65% of our students don't get aid up to FAFSA-determined need, and so have a "gap." Only 35% have their need met, or have no need. Jan noted that she has been working with students whose families take on 20K private loans.

### Report on Program Review

Jannie was pleased with the thoughtful questions of the full-day review of the Office of International Programs. The group did a great interim summary at the end of day, and the presence of the outside reviewer was particularly useful. The completed review report will eventually go to Jannie and Kris.

### Forum Conference

There was a brief discussion of the recent Forum on Education Abroad conference in Portland which Jannie, Lynette, Peter and Mark Harpring attended. All found it useful, and Lynette recommended a "glossary" from the organization for new committee members. The forum on Ethics in Study Abroad, helped with understanding of issues of insurance, charging university tuition, etc. Reports by Jannie, Lynette and Mark are appended to these minutes.

### Deadlines

Peter noted that there was general agreement on the committee that it was not our purview to set deadlines, but that it would be useful to consider the impact of moving towards a single deadline for study abroad. The administration proposal is to consolidate the current deadlines, Sept 15 and Feb. 15, into a single Feb 15 deadline for the next academic year's programs (and the next summer), starting with the upcoming year. The logic is that it allows the university to pool financial aid money to be allocated for upcoming year.

Peter asked, if students are already allotted financial aid, what is the money that needs to be divvied up? Does the FAFSA deadline affect this process? Jannie said that since there is concern about finances at the university, a single deadline helps with the university budget, and also helps students and families plan. Students apply using a budget worksheet, and after the deadline, we'll know we won't have more students than those who initially apply.

Peter asked whether a single deadline allows various costs to be factored in by June in a way that can't be done with two deadlines. Jannie explained that study abroad requires university outlays we wouldn't have if the student were on campus and their fees and financial aid stayed here. Jan clarified that students already have to guess costs using the previous year's financial aid.

Tristan said an inevitable effect of a single deadline is that some students won't get paperwork in on time, but that she is more concerned about students applying to study abroad without knowing what their financial aid will be. Lisa pointed out that half of students don't know about their financial aid until after they apply already.

Diane expressed concerned support from the Foreign Languages and Literature department and asked a series of questions. The answers, from Jannie, Jan and Lisa, were that there is currently no preapplication deadline; that students who are uncertain about their plans at the time of the deadline will still be able to apply for two programs at once, though no more than two; and that if an accepted student drops out, the spot be filled from waitlist, particularly for our own program. But if a space opens up, only someone on a waitlist can fill that spot. There might conceivably be limits on late adjustments between programs of varying cost, since it could exceed the university's allotted costs for study abroad.

Jonathan, concerned to minimize the effect on students, wondered about students whose experiences change their ideas about where to study when it is already too late to apply. The single deadline seems to be more for the administration's than for students' benefits. He urged that the university make clear to students about all changes and the new single-pricing system.

Lynnette, in favor of a single deadline, asked why this date? Or what if both deadlines were in the spring? Lisa says this was considered, but that deadlines close together could create more confusion and could delay information to students. She added that now that

all programs are partnered, it makes it easier to study abroad senior year, since there would be no senior year residency credit.

Jannie's answer to a question from Diane was that non-UPS programs request a deposit a few weeks after acceptance, while UPS programs require a mid-April \$500 deposit, with a \$100 cancellation fee.

There was some discussion about students who apply for a Spring program and then have their GPA drop below the minimum in the fall. Jannie said usually providers ask for grades the last semester before the program. These cases already exist, and decisions would be up to the Academic Standards Committee. There is also the possibility of conditional acceptance based on improvement.

Peter noted that the single deadline will mean that faculty will be writing more letters around Feb 15. Jonathan pointed out that we will have to advise further ahead. The single deadline will go into effect next year.

Peter proposed and it was agreed to change the next IEC meeting to the Thursday after Spring break.

The meeting was adjourned soon after 2:50

Respectfully submitted,

John Lear

Appendices: Forum on Education Abroad conference

Mark Harpring  
Foreign Languages and Literature  
Report on Forum on Education Abroad  
Portland Oregon  
February 18-20, 2009

Summary: While I was sick during the conference and was unable to attend all the sessions I would have liked to attend, my experience at the conference was beneficial; in fact, many of the ideas for enhancing our students' experiences while abroad that were shared at the conference served to confirm my perceptions on study abroad, I came away with new ideas on how to make our students' experiences even more rewarding, both personally and academically. In the sessions I attended, one theme stood out for me (although it was approached from different perspectives: How do we better integrate study *abroad* and academics *at home* to provide a more fulfilling experience for our students? While the practice of having pre-departure meetings is necessary (and was mentioned in every session), it is simply not enough given the limited resources of many international education offices; *faculty* need to take a more proactive role in assuring that

students go to appropriate programs (both for their academic level and interests) and that the students' experiences abroad are integrated into their course of study at home. Study abroad, rather than a semester away from Puget Sound (many students say they "need a break" from the university), should be one facet of their education and need not be something "extra" or ancillary to their major course of study.

#### "Addressing the 'Study' in Study Abroad: Experience vs. Academic Performance"

In this session, the presenters shared the results of a small study they conducted to answer the question "How do American students experience the academic environment of an Australian study abroad programs?" The study grouped students into five areas ranging from those who were "disengaged" from their studies to those who were "Highly engaged" to their studies while abroad. The panel gave several recommendations to decrease the gap between students' expectations before going abroad and the 'reality' of the educational system in which they will study. They suggest that, at a pre-departure meeting, students be given a more in-depth idea of what to expect in their country of study, and they identify **faculty** as a/the key resource in bridging the gap between expectation and actual conditions at the host institution.

#### "*Haba na*: Step by Step We Reach the Goal"

Although this session seems far-removed from my work as a Spanish professor—it centered on a student film project created in Kenya—I was interested to see how different students/institutions have incorporated independent projects into their study abroad experience. Although the majority of the session was dedicated to the film viewing, there was discussion at the end on the importance of independent projects as a way to connect the abroad experience to a student's academic program at home.

#### "Program Review and Critical Language in Study Abroad"

The starting-point for the presenters of this panel was that students who go abroad on language study programs are not reaching their potential: neither language skills nor 'cultural literacy' reach the levels that they should/could reach. While the academic rigor of the program might share some of the blame in this respect, the presenters discussed other factors, including pre-departure preparation, suitability of the program for different learners and evaluating students' progress during their time abroad (beyond end-of-term exams).

The Forum on Education Abroad  
February 18-20, 2009  
Portland, Oregon

Notes by Lynnette Claire with additions by Jannie Meisberger

This busy and informative conference included exhibitors (mostly program providers), interactive sessions, and social events. There were about 700 people in attendance—about 100 of whom were faculty and 100 of whom were on-site program staff. I have

organized my comments by session, with a few general comments up front. If you are interested in learning more about any of these sessions, please let me know—I would be happy to share.

In our registration packets, we received an Education Abroad Glossary which I believe will be helpful to new (and also returning) IEC members. I will place my copy in the International Programs office for reference.

### *Opening Remarks*

55% of students studying abroad go on programs that are 8 weeks or less in duration, often faculty-led. This is a significant change from the past.

### *Study Abroad Capacity in and Recruitment for Underrepresented Regions*

Only about 2,000 US students study in the Arab world. Half of them study in Egypt and half of those studying in Egypt study at the American University in Cairo. Our review of the Africa and Middle East programs last year raised issues of the needed qualifications of faculty and trying to increase student experience in this part of the world. In this session, the panelists raised issues about the ethical issue of sending more US students to study in Africa. African universities are often over-crowded with local students—in large part due to the lack of qualified faculty. Is it right to take faculty away from Africans to teach our American students? In addition to the limits on intellectual and human capital capacity, there are issues of physical capacity at African universities; there are not enough facilities to house and educate them. When I asked about how other universities handled assessment of faculty qualifications, others replied that if the faculty does not have terminal degrees (many don't), treat the credit as your university treats community college transfer credit. Another way to consider this is if we would admit a student with a degree from that university to a graduate program at our university. Others commented that embracing local standards for faculty is consistent with the idea of study abroad—and why would we send students on study abroad if the experience was the same as they would receive at UPS? This was a thought-provoking session for me.

### *Addressing the Study in Study Abroad: Experience vs. Academic Experience*

A small sample study (11 subjects) was presented that found little relationship between home institution GPA and study abroad academic success. The difference in styles between the home institution and the foreign university, and reasons for studying abroad, influenced this lack of correlation. We need to integrate more “study” into pre- and post-departure programs. One university has their students write three short essays, responding in each to three scenarios. One scenario is academically focused; one is culturally focused; and one is focused on...something else that I don't have in my notes. The university representative said that these essays get the students thinking about different parts of their experience.

[Jannie – additional notes from Barnard College presentation and PowerPoint:

*Impediments to focusing on academics in pre-departure: understaffing of study abroad office; lack of connection/integration between study abroad office and academic advising office/faculty; loss of “study” in pre-departure and re-entry programming; student development/adaptation tends to overshadow academic preparation*

*Complications of assessing academic preparation, beyond looking at GPA: study abroad office access to student academic records is limited (at Puget Sound we have a Cascade database but we do not have access to the DPR, which details classes and grades from other institutions); how well do faculty understand the different types of study abroad programs students go on?*

*Return to campus – majority of students study abroad in junior year and the increase in study abroad GPA coincides with general increase in GPA, as 90% of students perform best in senior year*

*Other academic issues: faculty frustration at ‘losing’ students to study abroad; general sense that academic experience elsewhere is different/not equal to that of home campus, so there is a general disregard of academics offered abroad.*

*Solutions: Surveys, integrated learning tools, faculty dinner conversations with returning study abroad students.]*

#### *Being There: Experiential and Service Learning Here and/or Abroad*

The presenters described their experiences leading students on service learning in the US and abroad. They proposed that students can have a “foreign” experience here by embracing another culture. The person who led a photo and film based project documenting local phenomenon and history noted the difference between “taking pictures” and “receiving pictures”. One person at my table had engaged the foreign students at his university in service learning here in the US. The students resisted at first, but all had a great time and now it is a selling point for their international students.

#### *Adapting to Different Expectations when Teaching Outside the US*

In this session, I found my college roommate (who I hadn’t seen in 20 years) presenting on the challenges of helping students, particularly women, adapt to cultural norms in rural India. He noted that he has to interact differently with his women students in India than he does here. He enlists the help of a local woman who was educated in the US to facilitate his work. *Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands* was recommended as a good book on cultural do’s and don’t’s. There was discussion about the tendency of politically conservative students to avoid study abroad. I thought this might be a question to include on the student life’s survey.

#### *Visibility Matters II: Expanding Collaboration on your Campus*

This session focused on how to integrate study abroad programs into the campus and how to connect more with the stakeholders on each campus. One campus has a Focus on Fall program where the students who study abroad in the fall live in the same residence hall in the spring, essentially creating a semester-long re-entry program. This has increased fall study abroad on their campus.

#### *Undergraduate Research Presentations*

The students receiving awards from the Forum presented their research, which was incredible. We should encourage some of our students to submit their research in this competition.

#### *Student-Centered Learning: Engaging with Local Community*

Linfield College has J-term study abroad programs. They provide faculty with \$1,000 for scouting trips (it's competitive). Most students at Linfield study abroad—often through J-term programs. It must be pretty expensive for Linfield though as the J-term tuition covers all the students' expenses—including airfare. The students who attended the Forum had been on a trip to New Zealand to study the Maori. The instructors created an excellent guided field journal. Student projects were selected in small groups. There was discussion about extending the learning by studying the same subjects in the US upon return.

*Voices from the Field: My How Times Have Changed! Resident Directors' Perceptions of Study Abroad in the 21st Century (Jannie)*

Panelists were long-time Resident Directors of US programs in France, Spain and Italy. They noted that students coming on the programs now generally have lower level language skills and they need much more support in more areas. Students come with more mental health issues. Medications, such as Ritalin are not available in Europe, so they have to bring the entire semester's supply with them. Students do not want classes on Fridays as this interferes with their travel plans. The first question most students ask at orientation is how to get access to internet.

*'Here', 'There' and 'Here' Again: Student Advising Before, During and After a Study Abroad Experience (Jannie)*

This was a session on one way to do effective student advising on home campus and at the overseas university by using the on-line tool, Moodle. The site is password-protected, but students can give their password to parents. Most information, including application materials, course information, assignments and information from faculty and student alums is on line. They have paperless applications. An advantage of Moodle is that students can ask questions electronically and get a response from a real person at the overseas university much more quickly, and this information can be shared on the site. This is particularly helpful when trying to get course information.

*Being Proactive in an Economically Reactive Time (Jannie)*

Panelists were from a large program provider, a private liberal arts university, a large state system and a large state university. Advice included working closely with admission office to showcase study abroad opportunities as a recruiting tool and to get admission support with top university administration.

Panelists said that exchanges do not work as they are very labor-intensive, and reduce the number of students going abroad, since it is 1-1. Freshman/Gap year is also problematic unless university designs campus academics around this experience. Students doing this tend to have fewer ties to the university life when they do come to campus.

We should look at duplication of programs – if several individual universities are running programs at one site, look at consolidating efforts and form consortia to ensure minimum enrollments and share the costs.

The panelists strongly urged everyone not cut staff/faculty international travel to review programs, sites – parents have lots of safety questions and need to know that we have vetted the programs we endorse. In general the state universities are experiencing cutbacks, particularly where a balanced budget is mandated by the state constitution.

Arizona State U - 25% cut immediately in budget, 2 weeks' unpaid furlough before June, no out-of-state travel. Private universities are adopting a 'wait and see' attitude to see how fall enrollments stand up before making cuts, changes.

*Being Here, being There: Assessment and Program Improvement at Home and On-Site (Jannie)*

Presenters from large university, overseas program and private liberal arts university discussed their experiences with the Forum's Quality Improvement Program (QUIP) review process. They found that having an outside review team provided more credibility with the administration than in-house, or self review process. QUIP opens up more possibilities, allows different ideas for teaching and learning improvements.