

STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE

Minutes from 10/07/08 meeting

Members present: Nick Kontogeorgopoulos (chair), Annette d'Autremont, Duane Hulbert, Martin Jackson, Glynnis Kirchmeier, Tiffany Aldrich MacBain, Aislinn Melchior, Jac Royce, Mike Segawa, Lisa Ferrari.
Visiting: Jannie Meisberger, Jan Moore.

The meeting was convened at 4:00 PM. Nick announced that he had communicated with the members of the International Education Committee (Peter Wimberger and John Lear) and had explained the nature of the SLC's work on the pre-study abroad survey and the fact that we are in the process of designing a post-study abroad survey at this time. It is hoped that the survey results may at some point prove useful to the IEC. In regard to the discussion (during our meeting on 9/23/08) of the data that suggested that students who study abroad had worked less in the year prior to departure, Wendy Dove examined the data to explore this question. Upon closer examination, there is no statistical difference between those who study abroad and those who do not in terms of their patterns of employment.

A discussion of the faculty bylaws was shelved until the next meeting so that we could fully utilize the knowledge of Jannie Meisberger and Jan Moore who provided their input on the study abroad surveys. They were particularly interested in getting clearer data on questions where students could check multiple answers. It was decided that question number 6 would be put into a scaled format so that respondents could rate the relative value of particular factors that led them to wish to study overseas.

During the course of the meeting an attempt was made to improve ambiguous questions and to focus the data collection so that the survey would be more informative. Thus, the question on the language of instruction will be expanded so that it clearly reveals whether a student was involved in an immersion program (thereby allowing an analysis in the future of whether immersion programs impact outcomes). Similarly, Lisa Ferrari suggested refining the question concerning travel experiences outside of the United States in order to distinguish whether students had spent extended periods abroad or merely been on family vacations. Again, this information has the potential to be important when analyzing the benefits that accrue from the study abroad experience and how well any given student might react to the challenges and opportunities of living and studying overseas.

Jan and Jannie both expressed concerns that there is a tendency among students who return to compare their experience overseas with their experience at UPS – a comparison of apples to oranges. The return survey will be given to the students who have been allowed a full semester of "re-entry" and who will perhaps have reflected more upon their experiences.

In the next two weeks, Nick will send out the survey replies to the open-ended questions that allowed students to provide written responses and Jan and Jannie will email any suggestions they have for questions to include on the post-study abroad survey. In the next meeting we will further discuss the wording of questions in order to compose the post-study abroad survey. We adjourned at 4:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Aislinn Melchior