

Minutes of the International Education Committee
February 26, 2010

Members Present:

Jessy Arends, Gareth Barkin, Becca Davidson, Lisa Ferrari, Mark Harpring, Diane Kelley, John Lear, Jannie Meisberger, Jan Moore, Peter Wimberger. Absent: Donn Marshall, Mei Rose, Don Share

Chair Peter Wimberger convened the meeting at 2:00pm.

M / S / P to approve IEC Minutes from February 12, 2010.

Announcements

Jannie announced that OIP is currently processing study abroad applications from about 300 students, which is about the same number of students as applied for the last academic year before the single deadline for applications. Many students, however, applied to multiple programs.

Pac Rim Review:

Peter reported that the Pac Rim report has been revised after Gareth consulted with Karl Fields. There were only a few small changes, plus one paragraph added that addresses the GPA requirement for the Pac Rim. After reviewing these changes, the IEC formally received this report from the Pac Rim review subcommittee, and this report is appended to these minutes in PDF format.

Peter suggested putting off our invitation to Maggie Mittuch to come talk to the committee in favor of discussing criteria for choosing students for study abroad if the budget is surpassed for any academic year. Accepted.

Peter circulated an excerpt from the May 11, 2009 minutes (appended here) that summarizes the conclusions reached by the IEC at that meeting regarding the eventual possibility of the need to limit the number of students going abroad. This document is appended to these minutes. In sum, this document includes several discussion points, one of which has been discussed at many IEC meetings: GPA.

Peter summarized discussions on GPA from five past IEC meetings. In short, in 2008, the SAWG addressed the problem of the rising cost of study abroad for the university by suggesting ways to limit the number of students studying abroad. Two ways to do this were suggested: GPA and limiting the number of semesters abroad. The institution of a strict study abroad budget and the single-deadline for study abroad applications may mean that we need to address this problem in the near future.

Lisa reminded the committee that the primary goal is not to determine eligibility but to prioritize which students get first crack at the funds. For example, should this be students who have higher GPA, or have never studied abroad, etc.

John underscored that our committee's job is not to look at GPA relative to university finances, but relative to academic reasons for studying abroad. He inquired if we anticipate going over budget one year, if the budget can be shifted.

Peter indicated that the pressure on the budget should be eased with the new financial structure, but there is still the chance that we go over budget. We need to establish a prioritization.

Jannie and Jan met with Maggie Mittuch and Student Financial Services. Our goal is to be proactive and have all processes in place.

The committee reiterated that our role is not to make financial recommendations, but to make academic recommendations.

The committee then brainstormed possible criteria to consider when prioritizing which students should go abroad when and if the budget is surpassed.

Possible criteria (in random order):

- GPA
- One program per student
- Allow financial aid to apply for only one program or semester
- Students for whom study abroad directly affects their intended major, minors, or emphases
- Language immersion programs have more priority
- Decide by lottery
- Class standing
- English speaking countries with little connection to major or minor have less priority
- Dividing money between everyone rather than limiting number of students – change financial structure

Jan reinforced that none of this would apply to summer programs, for which students pay themselves.

Suggestions on possible ways to apply these criteria once instituted:

- Assign points to criteria, or different categories etc.
 - Give priority to those with majors/minors/emphases in international areas
- Gareth pointed out that students apply by Feb 15 of their sophomore year, and many have

not yet even declared their major. Students could easily cheat the system. Diane suggested the possibility of combining this criterion with GPA.

- Lottery – perhaps the most fair way. But Diane suggested that this might prevent, for example, a Spanish major from going abroad.
- Students who want to go on a program with no academic connection to their course of study could go when they are seniors.
- Put programs from which students return with the least amount of major/minor/emphasis credit at the bottom of the list.
- Require a faculty recommendation for certain programs and include a question about major/minor application of credits. Jannie confirmed that some recommendations are done and submitted online directly to programs and thus Puget Sound would not see these recommendations. These recommendations would have to be submitted separately to OIP, perhaps at the pre-approval level.
- Give students who were rejected one year priority the next.
- Class standing (true standing, not determined by number of credits earned): eg. juniors given priority over sophomores.

The committee confirmed that these criteria would be public.

John underscored that any limiting of students going abroad will necessarily limit deserving students, and any criteria we institute will be gamed. The GPA is the most transparent requirement, but there will only be three semesters of grades upon application.

The meeting adjourned at 2:55.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Kelley

APPENDED:

Minutes

International Education Committee

May 11, 2009

Present: Tristan Burger, Lynnette Claire, Lisa Ferrari (Associate Dean), Diane Kelley, John Lear, Jannie Meisberger, Jan Moore, Mei Rose, Jonathan Stockdale, Peter Wimberger.

Minutes from the May 5 meeting were put forth for discussion. It was decided that we would add a charge to the list of recommended charges for next year: Revisit residence credit for summer programs given the change of pricing structure for study abroad.

M/S/P – Minutes as amended.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss how to prioritize student applications for studying abroad if the newly imposed budget does not cover all students going abroad in the 2009-2010 school year. The urgency of this discussion is based upon the fact that students going abroad in the fall have already been selected and others have already applied and been accepted to programs with rolling admissions for spring 2010. All other spring 2010 applications are due September 15.

It was agreed to come up with a list of possible recommendations to be considered.

One additional charge for next year's committee developed out of the discussion. Given the fact that the incoming class in fall 2009 is estimated to be much larger than most previous classes, the financial burden of study abroad on the university during their junior year (2011-2012) could be much greater, assuming that the percentage of the class going abroad remains consistent with other classes. Next year's IEC should consider making a recommendation via Assoc Dean Ferrari and/or Demarais to suggest to the Budget Task Force that the university budget accordingly. This recommendation will be submitted by Peter to the Senate with our finalized list of charges.

With the assumption that the University does not wish to limit the number of students wishing to study abroad in the 2009-2010 year despite budgetary constraints, the committee came up with the following list of possible recommendations of ways to stay within budget. This list is for discussion only; one urgent recommendation follows the list.

1. Limit students to a single partner program before any student receives funding for a second program.
2. Allocate limited slots to programs taking into consideration the academic or financial desirability of the programs.

Discussion of the ethics behind this option ensued. Jannie underscored that students and parents do not understand limiting programs because of the cost of the program since they are still paying university tuition for partner programs. If programs are limited because of academic reasons, this is much more understandable.

Lynnette pointed out that the University should have as a goal the maximization of abroad study for as many students as possible, which may mean decisions based on finances are necessary. She also underscored that the University could better assure a wide diversity of programs with this approach.

John saw the problem that students might not understand that they cannot go on a program they understood was “on the books” as an abroad option. The University should be as clear as possible on this, including the number of students who would be accepted into each program so students know before applying.

Jonathan saw that our discussion was proceeding in two directions.

- a. We could arrange offerings so that we would not need to evaluate students competing for slots in abroad programs. This would be a structural change.
 - b. We also need criteria to evaluate students by if we are forced to choose between them given the financial constraints of the budget.
3. Prioritize students by GPA and/or by the academic need of their study abroad.
 4. Encourage students to apply to an approved program, rather than a partner program, as a backup to their first-choice program. Or give them a second deadline to apply for an approved program once they have been denied their first choice.
 5. Offer anyone accepted to but denied resources for their partnered programs a guarantee of support for the following year, even though this would send them abroad during their senior year.

6. Eliminate any limits to study abroad choices for the next two academic years. Students came to UPS with a certain understanding of how study abroad at Puget Sound functioned. To change this suddenly is unfair. Given the small size of next year's junior class, the committee is hopeful that we would remain within budget without having to make any limiting decisions. We would also like to suggest that if we come in under budget, that the savings be carried over to the following year's study abroad budget.

Discussion ensued.

The committee also briefly discussed the possibility of no tuition exchange for study abroad in the 2010-2011 academic year, although tuition remission would still apply. Since this funding comes from a different budget and since we are specifically discussing students going abroad in the 2009-2010 year, this possibility did not apply to the list above.

Recommendation

Given that:

- **Students have already been accepted for study abroad for fall 2009 and have, therefore, already begun depleting the budget without spring semester students (with a Sept 15 deadline) having been fully taken into account**
- **Students have already been accepted to programs with rolling admissions for spring 2010**
- **Some students have already been accepted to abroad programs for two semesters in the upcoming academic year**
- **Students planning to study abroad in 2009-2010 have an understanding that they can choose the program that best suits their needs according to the application process in place. This process has already been completed for fall and some of spring semester.**

The IEC makes a strong recommendation that students studying abroad in the 2009-2010 academic year be exempt from limitations that the new budget has placed on study abroad. We do not see how to prioritize students for study abroad acceptance in the 2009-2010 academic year in an ethical way.

We also hope that the need to prioritize will be a moot point, given the smaller size of next year's junior class. If this is not the case, we propose revisiting the problem of meeting the budget after the September 15 spring semester application deadline.

We understand that a subcommittee on this matter may be necessary in the summer months. If this is true, the following committee members have volunteered to be called in during the summer: Lynnette Clair, Diane Kelley, John Lear (after July 20), and Peter Wimberger.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Kelley

Report from IEC Pac Rim Subcommittee

Gareth Barkin, Diane Kelley, Mei Rose

February 26, 2010

As part of the review of all Puget Sound study abroad offerings, the IEC subcommittee on the Pac Rim program was charged with evaluating this one-of-a-kind academic study abroad program available exclusively to students at Puget Sound. Since the early 1970s, every three years a group of between 14-24 Puget Sound students departs on a full academic year of study in at least six Asian countries. Elisabeth Benard has served as director for the past five three-year cycles. The director is accompanied on the trip by a health service coordinator (in 2008/2009 Lisa Robinson from CHWS) and a business manager (in 2008/2009 Lisa Long).

The travel itinerary changes each cycle and includes stops, tours and field trips in places of cultural and national interest such as the Gobi Desert, Beijing and the Forbidden City, the Great Wall of China, the terracotta soldiers in Xian, the Himalayas, the Taj Mahal, etc. Please find the general itinerary and course schedule for the 2008/2009 Pac Rim abroad program at the end of this document.

The program works closely with the students in these three-year cycles to prepare them before they leave, guide them as they study abroad, and help them adjust upon return. In the first year, students chosen for the program meet weekly as a group with the director; these weekly sessions allow for academic and emotional preparation for a strenuous year abroad in a number of culturally distinct countries as well as allow the group to bond. In the second year, students participate in the program, traveling and studying across many countries for nine months. In the third year, students reintegrate into American cultural life and life on campus. This reintegration is easier in recent years than it has been in the past because of the technological advances that allow students to remain in closer contact with friends, family, and American culture while traveling in Asia.

During the year of preparation, the director not only prepares the students, but must arrange all the logistics of such a long stay abroad for a large group of people. These preparations include arranging courses and who will teach them (including at least two course by the director, others on site, and occasionally a course offered by additional Puget Sound faculty), accommodations, budgets, preparing for health and insurance issues with the health director, methods of travel, visas, homestays at certain sites, etc.

In the most recent Pac Rim group of 24 students (16 women, 8 men), students were declared majors in the following disciplines: English, Art, FLIA, Biology, IPE, P&G, International Business, Economics, Religion, Philosophy, Spanish,

Chemistry and Theater and Asian Studies. Seventeen of the group also had an Asian Studies emphasis in their majors.

Students return with eight credits from their academic year abroad. These credits largely count toward their majors, emphases in Asian Studies, the upper-division graduation requirement or as electives. On past trips the director has occasionally taught a core course, but this has not been the case in recent trips.

The program has a relatively low GPA requirement of 2.0 for student applicants. However, this subcommittee accepts the Asian Studies program's rationale for maintaining this cutoff, specifically that (1) the program was never intended to focus on top tier students exclusively, (2) the one year commitment and extensive preparation winnows out less serious applicants, and (3) students on this program are in daily contact with the director and many courses are taught by Puget Sound faculty or instructors with longstanding ties to the university, thereby reducing the chances of less motivated students falling through the cracks.

Procedure

The IEC appointed a volunteer subcommittee to conduct this review of the Pac Rim program. Subcommittee members each reviewed a full dossier of materials, which included a statement by the program director, Elisabeth Benard, background materials on the history of the program, and the complete set of student evaluations of the entire, year-long program. Subcommittee members then met to discuss their findings and impressions, and to develop a format for the report. It was decided that further information from the program director would be useful in evaluating the program, and so Elisabeth Benard was contacted by email, and information from her responses to the subcommittee's questions have been integrated into the final draft of this document.

Most Successful Program Elements

In conducting the review of this program, the subcommittee was struck by the overwhelmingly positive impressions that students took away from their experience on the Pac Rim program. While there were also constructive comments regarding the organization and content of the trip, some of which led to a series of recommendations (below) for future programs, a representative review of materials from the 2008/2009 year must also reflect those elements that appeared most successful, and which the subcommittee recommends be continued or expanded in future years.

First, many students praised the organization of the program, and reflected positively on the level of detail and planning required to run such a long, multi-site program. They were also pleased to be getting course credit for participating in the program, and grateful for its academic content; most felt it could be

reasonably integrated into a four-year degree without too much difficulty. While they felt many of the courses were profitable, students also expressed a strong appreciation for the new independent research option, which they felt allowed them to explore their own interests and fully take advantage of diverse cultural contexts in which they were living. The ‘buddy system’ employed to help students form relationships with local youth in some locations was also popular, and some participants indicated such efforts to allow them greater immersion were key to the program’s success.

Many students expressed appreciation for the unique nature of the program itself, and the opportunity to visit so many Asian states and regions as part of a one year, academic endeavor. While some felt they would have liked more depth at times, all appeared to understand and accept the necessary trade-offs for the opportunity to experience such a diverse range of cultural settings. Many spoke of a “family atmosphere” that developed among the students and staff of the program, which is a testament to a well-administrated trip, given the amount of time group members had to spend with one another. It was also clear that having a dedicated medical professional on the trip was an invaluable asset, and many students praised this staffing feature. It was also apparent to the subcommittee that significant improvements had been made to the program since the previous trip, in 2005/06, which were evidenced by increased student engagement.

There were two instances of courses being taught by regular Puget Sound faculty during this trip, and many students cited these as their favorite courses. It was clear that the presence of professors from the University was a highlight of the year for many, and should be pursued, to the extent possible, in future programs. Finally, though the breadth of the program was cited as a weakness by some students, the overall consensus was that it was actually a great benefit, and that the program occupied a unique position which differentiated it from more immersive, semester-long programs. It was felt this benefited participants by allowing them a greater overview of Asian culture, which they could draw on later in life, should they wish to return to one of the visited locations for a longer period of time.

Recommendations

The Pac Rim program is positioned as a unique, transformative experience among the other international offerings at Puget Sound. Consistent with its positioning, returning students generally raved about the program and unanimously indicated that they highly recommended the program to other students. While the program has many strengths, several recommendations could further enhance student experience with the Pac Rim program.

First, the program consists of a variety of courses that are taught by different instructors including Puget Sound professors, local instructors, and guest

lecturers. To ensure academic consistency, the program should consider providing students with uniformly clear expectations for all the courses they are taking. A similarly structured syllabus for each course would be an example that could clarify expectations. Written components should be included in every course to maintain consistency between courses in the program. Establishing clear expectations is especially important for the recently added independent research option. Independent research tends to be less structured and having a uniformly clear expectations across all independent studies could help in focusing students' attention and ensuring timely completion of their work. In addition to the recommended written component, independent research expectations could include for example, a research plan with specific deliverables and due dates.

In the interest of academic consistency, the program might consider having a pool of qualified local instructors. While it is often difficult to recruit and retain the same local instructors with expertise in specific areas, the program should consider recruiting for more than one alternative instructor. Local instructors should be briefed on course expectations and the required written components. Should the designated local instructor become unavailable, a qualified alternative local instructor could then be easily located.

Second, the program covers wide geographic areas which also may vary from cycle to cycle, including Mongolia, Japan, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, South Korea, Thailand, and India. It is understandable that depending on the program director's expertise and local connections, more time will be spent in some geographical areas than others. If logically possible, however, the program should consider providing a greater geographical balance in terms of time spent in each location rather than allowing that some regional stays be much longer than others. If this is not possible, more significant homestays in places where students stay the longest would provide cultural immersion and help justify the length of time spent there. The subcommittee recognizes the value of homestays for acquiring cultural knowledge and encourages the Pac Rim program to pursue them when possible.

Third, the current program director is flexible and willing to making changes when necessary to ensure that student needs are satisfied in terms of cultural exposure and academic rigor. The program should consider procedures for grooming the successor of the program to maintain the quality and consistency of the program. Ideally the next director would be an assistant and/or teach a course in the program.

Finally, the program is generally more attractive to female rather than male students. While the general gender ratio of 60:40 that is characteristic of the program reflects the gender ratio on campus, given group dynamics, the program should continue to pursue gender balance when possible.

GENERAL ITINERARY AND COURSE SCHEDULE

PACIFIC RIM PROGRAM 2008-2009

Korea – Incheon/Seoul. Arrival

Mongolia - Ulan Bator & Gobi Desert field trip. Approximately 5 weeks.

Courses:

1. Developmental Biology and Paleontology: Sally Dengler and Alyce Demarais (including extensive field trip to Gobi Desert)
2. Buddhism: Elisabeth Benard (course begun in Mongolia and completed in Japan)

North China - Beijing, Datong, Wu Tai Shan, Taiyuan, Xian, Shanghai. Approximately 2.5 weeks

Japan- Kyoto. Approximately 4 weeks.

Courses:

Finished Buddhism course.

3. Japanese History – Kansai region: George Hlawatsch, Elizabeth Kenney, Paul Scott (all professors at Kansai Gaidai University)

*Homestay in Japan.

South China – Fuzhou. Approximately 2 weeks.

Courses:

4. Comparative Nationalism in China and Vietnam: Karl Fields. Course began in Fuzhou and finished in Hanoi.

Vietnam – Hanoi. Approximately 2 weeks.

Courses: Finish Comparative Nationalism course.

Winter break – Dec 25 to Jan 4 (11 days) – Independent travel

Cambodia - Siem Reap, Angkor Wat. Approximately 11 days.

Course:

5. Art History: Angkor&Vijayanagara: Dr Krishnamurti. Course began in Cambodia, completed in India.

India - Bangalore, Mysore, Hospet, Rato/Mungod, Jaipur, Agra, Delhi, Dharamsala, Delhi, Sikkim, trek in Himalayas. Approximately 3 months.

Courses:

Indian Art History course completed by Indian professors.

6. Tibetan Buddhism: Elisabeth Benard
7. Ecotourism: Wendy Lama (in Sikkim)

*Homestays for 2 weeks in Dharamsala, 2 other one-night homestays while traveling

Additional Course: Independent study projects