

**UCIA Meeting**  
**January 8, 2009 2:30-4:00**  
**International Affairs Office, Meeting Room A**

*Present*

Mike Bertelsen, *Associate Director, OIREC and Associate Dean, CALS*  
Jeremy Billetdeaux, *Assistant Program Director for Education Abroad, OIREC*  
Cynthia Bonner, *Chief of Staff and Director of Administration, Student Affairs*  
Laurie Brogdon, *Director of Multicultural Alumni Programs, Alumni Relations*  
John Browder, *Associate Dean, College of Architecture and Urban Studies*  
S.K. De Datta, *Associate Vice President for International Affairs and Director, OIREC*  
Paul Hover, *Library Technical Services*  
Marilynn King, *Senior Associate Director, Scholarships and Financial Aid*  
Paul Knox, *University Distinguished Professor & Senior Fellow for International Advancement, School of Public and International Affairs*  
Lance Matheson, *Associate Professor & Director of International Programs, Pamplin College of Business*  
Matthew McMullen, *Program Director, Education Abroad, OIREC*  
Miriam Rich, *Communications Coordinator, OIREC*  
Jeanna Stewart, *Study Abroad Advisor, College of Engineering*  
Debra Stoudt, *Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences*  
Susan Sumner, *Professor and Head, Food Science and Technology, CALS*

**Action items:**

- Miriam Rich and Matthew McMullen to report on ideas for revision of international and Education Abroad website pages

**1. Welcome, introductions, and approval of minutes**

The meeting was called to order by UCIA chair Lance Matheson. A motion to accept the minutes from the December 18 meeting was made by Paul Hover and seconded by Matthew McMullen; the motion passed unanimously.

**2. Education Abroad updates: Matthew McMullen and Jeremy Billetdeaux**

Matthew McMullen began by reiterating last month's announcement regarding cancellation of the Spring 2009 program at Punta Cana. Jeremy Billetdeaux was able to find alternative programs in Costa Rica for two of the six students who were still enrolled at the time of cancellation; the other four opted to stay in Blacksburg for the semester. The recent economic downturn has impacted the Education Abroad service sector; in response, Dr. McMullen's strategy will be to market not only programs but scholarships and financial aid available. He is planning college-by-college visits to organize information sessions for faculty, and is also working with the Education Abroad team to develop short classroom briefings on 'the Affordability of Education Abroad.' Dr. McMullen commented on the need for greater visibility, which prompted Dr. De Datta to inquire whether the location of the Education Abroad office is conducive to student recruitment. Dr. McMullen replied that the non-central and off-campus location is somewhat of a liability; visitors are already purposeful, substantially advanced in the process of investigating their program options, and less likely to be drop-in customers making casual inquiries. The higher volume of walk-in traffic that the Education Abroad office experienced when situated at Litton-

Reaves indicates a need to attract the attention of the student community. Cynthia Bonner suggested a small satellite office in a more central location, such as Squires Student Center, while acknowledging that staffing and lack of easily procurable office space would be problematic. Dr. McMullen will continue tracking the numbers of visitors this semester in order to monitor these issues of visibility and traffic. Dr. De Datta suggested that Dr. McMullen meet with the various academic deans to promote the programs; Dr. McMullen is proposing a series of informal lunchtime meetings to provide them with pertinent information. Marilyn King reminded him of the resources available through the office of scholarships and financial aid, noting that funds are more available for disbursement earlier in the semester. Paul Hover suggested promoting destinations where the dollar still is relatively strong against local currencies as a way to save money and reduce costs for students. Jeremy noted that the office does try to encourage destinations such as Argentina, Chile, South Africa, and Australia, in addition to marketing unique opportunities such as programs where students do not have to pay for housing costs or where they are paid to be conversation partners for local nationals. Lance Matheson observed that students often do not wish to be the only Virginia Tech student attending a particular program as they feel more comfortable even within a small group of acquaintances. This can be offset by getting to know the interests of the students early in their decision-making process and then suggesting appropriate destinations. Dr. McMullen stated that it could be beneficial to have some type of regional interest focus groups for the students, similar to the faculty regional committees representing projects and interest in Latin America, East Asia, and Africa. Council members agreed that posting such information online would help connect students, raise their awareness of Education Abroad opportunities, update them on campus-wide international events, and put them in touch with faculty leadership. Cynthia Bonner noted that there are many international student groups who could be contacted and mobilized to assist in these promotional efforts, while Dr. McMullen observed that all participating students need an outlet, including those returning from programs; such forums would ideally be student run and led. Mike Bertelsen reminded Dr. McMullen that the Peace Corps recruiter (currently Alex Frane) is a valuable resource as well.

Next, Jeremy provided numbers of the student participants for this year's fall (199 vs. 206 for fall 2007) and spring (199 vs. 106 spring 2008) semester programs, which indicate a drop in summer semester program participation as well. Dr. De Datta commented that the loss of the Punta Cana semester is very hurtful and stressed the urgency of disseminating the information on financial aid. Dr. McMullen hopes to address much of this through redesign of the Education Abroad website, which he envisions will also include a breakdown of opportunities by region and country. Dr. Knox inquired as to how one can become involved with or learn more about the faculty regional committees; Dr. Matheson agreed that people are unaware of these resources and unable to educate themselves. Miriam Rich responded that she has met with Susan Felker to discuss ways that the international sections of the Virginia Tech website can be updated and improved; she commented that the current page does not adequately reflect the global presence of Virginia Tech programs and projects. Dr. McMullen agreed that these links could also appear on the Education Abroad website. Dr. De Datta asked them both to follow up with their ideas and report back at the next UCIA meeting in February. Paul Knox added that Larry Hincker in University Relations should be contacted to see how notices can be posted on the home page of the Virginia Tech website as a means of starting this networking process. The discussion continued briefly as council members reflected on the importance of accurately representing the work that is being done and the need for promotion of international affairs.

Dr. McMullen continued his update by informing the council that he has been actively promoting Education Abroad opportunities to students and is posting a video on the website to increase interest. Dr. Matheson agreed that the advent of 'YouTube' has triggered a need for creative marketing

strategies; he is also planning to purchase a video camera for his students to use on their summer travel sessions to create informal, informative and entertaining videos to promote the programs. Dr. McMullen mentioned the possibility of tying into the popularity of blogs, which could be linked to scholarships; he has begun preliminary investigation into related legal issues such as how new entries can be posted with a delay to deter inappropriate content.

Dr. McMullen next brought up the issues related to medical evacuation of students traveling overseas. Faculty guides have indicated that students should provide proof of medical evacuation insurance as recommended by the State Department, but there is no formal structure for this on the website and it appears to be guided by faculty discretion. The International Student Identification Card (ISIC) website has also removed this information from their website. Dr. McMullen feels that there will most likely be an increasing reliance on the afore-mentioned areas of regional expertise to assist students and faculty in making these decisions.

Finally, Dr. McMullen presented the results of a webinar that was organized and co-sponsored by NASULGC and the AAU on the internationalization of land-grant schools. Earlier he had shared via e-mail a copy of the presentation, which analyzed the results of a survey that focused on the topics of institution support, international curriculum development, faculty policies and procedures, and international students. The webinar identified five core findings and paired them with recommendations, summarized as follows:

1. High school students are interested in study abroad, language learning, and international learning opportunities.
  - Learn about your students' interests and backgrounds and build on this information.
2. It cannot be assumed that students are acquiring international/global learning through study abroad experiences or through curricular requirements.
  - Focus on the curriculum to ensure that *all* students engage in international/global learning.
3. Institutions are investing in faculty development and have increased this investment since 2001.
  - Continue to invest in faculty development to advance internationalization of teaching and learning, research, and service.
4. The data show a mixed picture on integrating internationalization in institutional planning and assessment.
  - Create a strategy that includes developing an internationalization plan and ensuring active support from all levels of campus leadership.
5. There are still gaps between institutional rhetoric and reality
  - Ensure active leadership as evidenced through repeated messages about the importance of internationalization to the community, the creation of strong and visible international administration and leadership, and the provision of adequate budget and support staff

The webinar was led by Madeline Green of the American Council on Education and William Lacy of University of California-Davis. Dr. McMullen commented that he raised the question of economic issues, but internationalization is much more embedded within institutions now than it was in the past and is less vulnerable to budget cuts and reductions. Dr. De Datta mentioned the extensive process with which the international strategic plan was set into motion; Lance Matheson asked what kind of follow-up has been made to that report. He also inquired as to whether or not an international certificate was available at Virginia Tech. Miriam Rich replied that there is a graduate certificate administered through

OIRED but nothing yet in place for any of the undergraduate programs. Dr. Matheson elaborated that it could be a great benefit to the university to institute such an offering that could include a variety of seminar series to capitalize upon the pockets of expertise in the different fields and wondered if there were funds to support and develop this. Dr. McMullen added that there could be guest lecturers involved. Lance Matheson recalled that Ioannis Stivachtis, director of International Studies, had expressed an interest in such an offering that could potentially be done at the department level as part of a three-credit, year-long seminar. Paul Knox added that a menu from which students could choose could be incorporated into the selection that would consist of a language component as well. Dr. McMullen observed that his experience with the 'Semester at Sea' program helped strengthen students' world views greatly through its required courses and thematic areas; by the time the semester was finished, students had a comprehensive understanding of key global issues plus detailed knowledge on specific country topics.

There were no further items to discuss and the meeting was adjourned at 3:48.