

**Minutes from the
University Council for International Affairs (UCIA)**

January 18th, 2005
325 Burruss Hall
1:30 – 3:00 PM

Present:

Andrew Becker, Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures,
Associate Professor of Latin, Ancient Greek, and Classical Studies
Kim Beisecker, Director, Cranwell International Center
Cynthia Bonner, Lecturer Admin, VP Student Affairs
George Crofts, Associate Dean, College of Science
Jack Davis, Chair of UCIA, College of Architecture and Urban Studies
S. K. De Datta, Associate Provost for International Affairs and Director of OIRED
Gene Egger, Director Special Programs, College of Architecture
Patty Foutz, Alumni Relations
Monika Gibson, Director of Student Services, Graduate School
Tamara Kennelly, Library Systems
Marilyn King, College of Veterinary Medicine
Chad Miller, Econ. Dev. Specialist/International Programs
Miriam Rich, Communications Coordinator, OIRED
Robert Schubert, Director, School of Public and International Affairs
Kathleen Stadler-Thompson, Education Abroad, OIRED

Welcome and Introductions

Action Items

I. Approval of minutes

Minutes from December 8th, 2004 were distributed electronically and changes could be made during meeting. Minutes were approved.

Information Items

I. Current initiative at OIRED and IDDL – S. K. De Datta

After two major grants, Virginia Tech has improved their reputation immensely. Now we're looking at a contract with the US Army. An Arab/American group called PalTech is working with us right now. The four contracts are for four hundred million dollars – roughly one hundred million each. We joined PalTech to develop a curriculum for the US Army that will then be distributed through the internet. We are the only university who was invited – however we are one competitor of many. The project is called "Training and Doctrine Command".

II. Need for guidelines to minimize problems while traveling overseas for Education Abroad Program – S. K. De Datta

De Datta gave background on Punta Cana to committee.

Stadler-Thompson explained some Education Abroad challenges. Eleven students recently traveled to Punta Cana where they encountered minor problems – fender bender, stolen luggage and sickness. In each instance parents were called directly. Kelly at Punta Cana was very helpful – she made sure each student called parents. Now Stadler-Thompson is working on updating the Do's and Don'ts booklet. Any feedback from faculty who has traveled abroad is welcome and encouraged. They should contact Stadler-Thompson or De Datta with recommendations.

When students became ill in Punta Cana, Mihalik (group leader) was un-reachable. Discussion on need for cell phones on all trips – at least the group leader needs an international cell phone, even if it is at a high cost. A suggestion was made to purchase pre-paid phone cards. Long-range walkie talkies may also be helpful.

A pre-departure meeting between experienced trip leaders and newer trip leaders may also be helpful to iron out projected problems. Egger will send “Last minute check sheet” to Stadler-Thompson.

III. Update on J-1 and H1-B visa processing – S. K. De Datta

De Datta gave brief background on Jerry Berkley-Coats. He also had a hand-out for the committee and explained the statistics on the handout. There has been very significant progress from the office in terms of visas.

Beisecker explained that the state lawyer's office is Kauffman – so if the University is to reimburse the work, it must be through Kauffman. New lawyers were contracted during political turn-over.

IV. Review of recent research visit to Dominican Republic – Jack Davis

Three faculty members have recently been to Punta Cana to see the biodiversity center. They have dorms for students and housing for faculty.

The School of Architecture + Design and Department of Geography are working on map and planning project for the squatter village of Veron. Right now the inhabitants are digging their own wells and toilets. There are no streets, no planning. This is an opportunity to look at this community and re-structure and help out. This is a great opportunity for students to go and make a real difference. We are trying to organize a yearly trip to really improve this village. We are beginning by making maps of everything and then will work on getting municipal water set up. Any faculty who might be interested in participating let us know – contact Dean Sutphin.

V. VT initiative on Tsunami relief efforts – Kim Beisecker

We are still locating students and finding them. Six students were directly affected – either family or friends. Twelve are waiting on information; six were in Thailand and witnessed the disaster. One undergraduate and one graduate student are facing severe financial issues. One alumna was killed – from Sri Lanka – both brother and sister-in-law also graduated from Tech. What we don't know right now is greater than what we do know. Right now we're dealing with lots of late flights, students having trouble getting back etc.

All students are now asked to check into Cranwell upon arrival in Blacksburg. There is also a letter on the website from the counseling center – what to do with concerns about students – phone number is up as well.

There will be an event on campus – Friday, January 28th – silent parade. It will leave Squires at 12:00 noon and move to Burruss where there will be a speaker. Right now that speaker is tentatively President Steger. At that point a challenge will be made for each person to give \$3. A world will fill up with pins and magnets. There are flags at the Squires Atrium from the eight most affected countries.

Anyone who had information on other types of aid – please pass that information along so it can all be consolidated.

The group collecting relief money is Hokies United – it was set-up after 9/11 and is now a standing support charity.

Reminder that some of the most impacted groups (i.e. women and children) need specific help – not just donating money to a general charity but to one who works specifically for the neediest groups.

VI. VT will host the first ACC International Conference in the autumn of 2005 – S. K. De Datta

In the fall of 2005 we will have a common academic enterprise – the first international conference will be hosted at Virginia Tech.

VII. Draft agenda of the International Faculty Development program – Jack Davis

We're trying to encourage the engagement of research resources at CESA. We've proposed nominating two faculty from each college to travel to Riva on May 18th. They will participate in the program for ten days – a program put together by several of us working with John Dooley. This would encourage them to have liaisons with people in the community. We would bring faculty who do not have strong ties to CESA – this is seen as a long-term investment. This is also to encourage faculty that their careers will not suffer but will rather be enhanced by international initiatives.

VIII. ISDT – S. K. De Datta

We presented the report to the President, Provost and John Dooley. The Provost said we should move ahead with an implementation plan. We also highlighted certain issues as high priority.

De Datta asked for any questions or comments.

Davis gave brief update on Tom Kaloupek's office. Can certain Travel Approvals be grandfathered in? Up to \$50,000 does not have to be approved – over \$50,000 will be approved as sole source providers.

Discussion on travel costs.

Next meeting will be on February 9th instead of February 8th. It will be from 10:30 – 12:00 noon in 325 Burruss Hall.

Davis adjourned meeting at 2:45 PM.