

UCIA Meeting
February 12, 2009 2:30-4:00
International Affairs Office, Meeting Room A

Present

Don Back, *Director, Language and Culture Institute*
Mike Bertelsen, *Associate Director, OIREA and Associate Dean, CALS*
Jeremy Billetdeaux, *Assistant Program Director for Education Abroad, OIREA*
Laurie Brogdon, *Director of Multicultural Alumni Programs, Alumni Relations*
S.K. De Datta, *Associate Vice President for International Affairs and Director, OIREA*
John Dooley, *Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs*
Paul Hover, *Library Technical Services*
Marilynn King, *Senior Associate Director, Scholarships and Financial Aid*
Lance Matheson, *Associate Professor & Director of International Programs, Pamplin College of Business*
Matthew McMullen, *Program Director, Education Abroad, OIREA*
Fred Piercy, *Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research, CLAHS*
Miriam Rich, *Communications Coordinator, OIREA*
Nicole Sanderlin, *Graduate Assistant, Outreach and International Affairs*
Glenda Scales, *Assoc Dean for International Programs and Info Technology, College of Engineering*
Richard Shyrock, *Department Chair, Foreign Languages and Literatures*
Susan Sumner, *Professor and Head, Food Science and Technology, CALS*

Action items:

1. Welcome, introductions, and approval of minutes

The meeting was called to order by UCIA chair Lance Matheson and participants introduced themselves. The minutes had been submitted previously for electronic approval.

2. Education Abroad updates: Matthew McMullen and Jeremy Billetdeaux

Matthew McMullen began the updates by presenting information regarding Virginia Tech's student alcohol policy. Lance Matheson reminded the group that the current policy in place as approved by the Board of Visitors applies the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia to Virginia Tech students; i.e., if a student is under the age of 21 they are not permitted to drink on university-sponsored trips, even if the drinking age is lower in the host country. Enforcing this policy places a considerable burden on the faculty in charge of these trips. Dr. McMullen investigated the rules governing other Virginia institutions as well as ACC schools and discovered only one that uses the same policy; all other schools follow the rules of the host country, which changes the focus of the faculty's responsibilities considerably. There are mechanisms in place at these other institutions for enforcement of the policies, such as judicial referral processes and pre-departure waivers acknowledging the consequences for disruptive behavior. Dr. McMullen noted that all the schools he contacted were curious as to the policies of the other institutions. He added that the NAFSA annual conference, which takes place later this year, will present a program session organized by Washington State University and Loyola Marymount University on alcohol harm reduction.

Dr. De Datta asked how this information from other schools can impact policies at Virginia Tech; Lance Matheson suggested that the evidence be presented to the Board of Visitors in the hopes that they will remove the restriction currently in place. Richard Shyrook restated this idea as a motion: that Virginia Tech implement a policy consistent with its peer universities regarding alcohol laws of host countries where consumption is the norm. Susan Sumner seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously; further discussion then ensued. Dr. De Datta wondered about the reactions and liability issues if an accident did occur and parents learned that this restriction had been removed. The consensus of the group was that students above the age of 18 are legally adults and responsible for their own actions; the details of this policy could be brought to the parents' attention along with other relevant travel information that families find useful, such as dress codes and packing tips. Dr. Matheson reminded the group that this motion does not have to go through legal counsel as it is merely a recommendation from the UCIA to be brought forward to the Board of Visitors. Formal removal of this restriction will enable students to participate more fully in a variety of international opportunities, such as family functions, special events and programs where alcohol is served, and tours of vineyards/wineries where the product is part of the cultural and economic fabric, without fear of repercussions. Dr. McMullen reminded the group that university funds cannot be used for the purchase of alcohol; he finalized the discussion by stating that the Board of Visitors can most successfully be approached by having mitigating procedures in place to provide clear evidence of the orientation that students will be given and how risk will be reduced through preventative action, awareness, and responsibility. Since the council has already endorsed this idea, the next step will be to take the suggestion to the Board of Visitors.

As Dr. McMullen commented on his continued efforts to provide outreach to advisors and faculty and promote exchange programs during these difficult economic times, Glenda Scales initiated a discussion on the memorandums of understanding (MOUs) that outline the nature of these agreements. The MOUs are very broad as currently written and each has different attachments explaining the type of exchanges. Courses are not always easily transferred between the participating institutions and pre-approval can sometimes be problematic. She commented that even though the MOU database is online, not all pertinent information is readily accessible—including the details of the exchange agreements—and the college deans who implemented the agreements are often not mentioned. She suggested that there be a procedure in place to give colleges and deans greater awareness of how, when, and by whom the MOUs are created. Dr. De Datta and Dr. Matheson outlined the current process of MOUs being initiated by units within colleges and approved by deans but requiring signatures only from Dr. De Datta and President Steger. Dr. Scales reminded the group that there is a relatively high rate of turnover among the deans and departments; consequently, there is no paper trail to inform them that these agreements exist. John Dooley stated that this conversation highlights the need to clarify this situation; additionally, he cautioned the group that in establishing these exchange agreements, it is more beneficial to build slowly by starting with student and faculty exchanges and research projects before progressing to collaborative degrees. Dr. De Datta agreed that it is important to follow up on this information and make sure it is publicly available.

3. Revision of international sections of website: Miriam Rich

Miriam Rich shared with the group the progress she has made on updates and improvements to the international sections of the Virginia Tech website. She has consulted with Susan Felker, the communications manager for Outreach and International Affairs, and would like to solicit input from council members as to what changes should be implemented. She provided the group with two handouts, one of what the website looks like now and one on which potential changes had been suggested. The website currently is visually appealing, but its focus is exclusively European and its

content is unclear. Council members offered commentary to guide her; in general, the consensus was that there should be a focus on the international strategic plan that drives the other programs, with an emphasis on the research, development, and education aspects. Dr. Dooley suggested that this would be best handled by a committee and solicited volunteers to assist with the project. Lance Matheson, Richard Shyrock, Glenda Scales, and Nicole Sanderlin agreed to work with Miriam on the revisions.

4. Regional Strategies—Faculty Interest Groups: John Dooley

Dr. Dooley commented that it has also become evident that there is a need to highlight the five regional centers and the programs offered therein, as well as the faculty regional interest groups. It is imperative to dispel the notion that these groups are exclusive and selective; a broad range of members are encouraged in order to facilitate planning and organizing programs and events. It was suggested to post the meetings on the university website calendar as well as on the e-news. All UCIA members should also be invited as this is a valuable networking opportunity and means of disseminating important information to their colleagues regarding grants, scholarships, and special projects. Contact information for UCIA members will be shared with Alexandra Sommers, the graduate research assistant working with the regional interest groups. Dr. Dooley asked for other ways in which these regional interest groups can be used. Lance Matheson proposed using a survey or inviting personnel to an informal gathering to see what ideas and thoughts they could offer; those suggestions could then be used for future agendas. Dr. Dooley cited current projects in Haiti and the expansion of the Latin America center from its original location in Guanajuato, México, as examples of the importance of ensuring that these regional interest groups are all-encompassing in their discussions and that their agendas are diversified for the broadest reach possible.

5. Informational items: council members

A. International Faculty Development Program – John Dooley

Dr. Dooley noted that the IFDP has been in place for the last four years; it will take place this year despite the economic situation but has been downsized to one representative per college. This year's event will take place in Chile, in collaboration with Virginia Tech's programs with the University Austral in Valdivia; the group will also spend four days in Santiago at the Universidad Católica and in collaboration with CONICYT (the Chilean National Commission for Scientific Research and Technology—*Comisión Nacional de Investigación Científica y Tecnología*). Invitations have gone out to the deans for this event, which is scheduled to take place May 18 – 27.

B. Faculty Small Grants – Mike Bertelsen

Mike Bertelsen mentioned that the deadline for applications for the faculty small grants is March 15. Lance Matheson has recruited an undergraduate student to research the impact of previous grants. Dr. De Datta added that despite the impending budget cuts, it was decided to go ahead with the grants program due to its positive impact on faculty and programs and the reluctance to lose momentum and have to build over again. He also mentioned that awarding of the grants has been restructured to two tiers or two cycles in order to better address faculty comments regarding timeliness and coinciding with other awards. This permits them to submit proposals for maximum leverage and tying in of matching funds.

C. Other informational items

Don Back, director of the Language and Culture Institute, announced that the Northern Virginia Center will be opening their Language and Culture Institute on March 2 and classes will begin on March 16. Dr. Andrea Todd has been appointed director. He also informed the group that the Humphries Fellows will be returning this spring; this is a program supported by the department of State in which mid-career professionals from a variety of fields are granted the opportunity to travel to the United States for networking opportunities and intensive English language instruction.

Dr. De Datta announced that the IPM CRSP, which is managed by the OIRED, has won the best global project by Integrated Pest Management and will be honored at the Sixth Annual IPM Symposium in Portland, Oregon March 24 – 26.

Richard Shyrock mentioned the French-Francophone film festival taking place at the Lyric Theater through February 28.

There were no further items to discuss and the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

6. Next meeting: Thursday, March 19 (2:30 – 4:00 p.m.)