

UCIA Meeting
September 4, 2008 10:30-12:00
International Affairs Office Meeting Room A

Present

Don Back, *Director, English Language Institute*
Jerry Berkley-Coats, *Director, International Support Services*
Mike Bertelsen, *Associate Director, OIRED*
Jeremy Biletdeaux, *Senior Coordinator for Education Abroad, OIRED*
Laurie Brogdon, *Director of Multicultural Alumni Programs, Alumni Relations*
John Browder, *Associate Dean, College of Architecture and Urban Studies*
S.K. De Datta, *Associate VP for International Affairs and Director, OIRED*
John Dooley, *Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs*
Monika Gibson, *Director of Student Services, Graduate School Student Services*
Tom Hammett, *Professor, CNR*
Paul Hover, *University Libraries*
Ian Leuschner, *Assistant Director for Visa Services*
Mary Marchant, *Associate Dean and Director of Academic Programs, CALS*
Lance Matheson, *Associate Professor, Pamplin College of Business*
Miriam Rich, *Communications Coordinator, OIRED*
Richard Shryock, *Department Chair, Foreign Languages and Literatures*
Debra Stoudt, *Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences*
Kathryn Ticknor, *International Support Services Associate*

1. Welcome and introductions

The meeting was called to order by UCIA chair Lance Matheson and introductions were made around the table. S.K. De Datta thanked Andrew Becker for his years in service as chair of the UCIA.

2. Education Abroad issues

Jeremy Biletdeaux notified the group that there were several issues regarding the Allergy and Dietary Needs form that had not been resolved from the previous year; these will be addressed at a subsequent meeting.

Jeremy announced that an Education Abroad fair would be held on Wednesday, September 24; he handed out flyers for the event and will also e-mail them for campus-wide distribution. He noted that there have been some cancellations/drop-outs for the CESA LAHS program for the spring 2009 semester and referenced Andrew Becker as the POC for filling these spaces. He also updated the group on the programs at the Caribbean Center for Education and Research (CCER) in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic; this is the first time that a full fall semester program has been offered. The recent tropical storms/hurricanes have not greatly impacted the area or the activities of the current group of students. There are 11 students registered for the spring semester and recruitment of additional participants continues; the POC for this center is Jerry Via. The spring programs are more general in nature, offering courses in Spanish language and culture, whereas fall programs will focus more on biological sciences and natural resource management.

This fall has seen the largest group ever of incoming exchange students (111), with approximately 175 students participating in outbound programs. Last year a total of 1180 students participated in education abroad programs; this number represents an increase of more than 10% (the targeted rate of program growth) from the previous year. The growth in participation can likely be attributed to summer programs and/or shorter length programs. John Dooley had provided this information to the Board of Visitors, adding that the annual number of participants in Virginia Tech Education Abroad programs has increased by 700 in the last five years. Dr. Dooley credited a good deal of this growth to the faculty-led programs and thanked them for their endeavors, noting also that it is necessary to continue this growth and extending his thanks to the staff who help to sustain this trajectory. Tom Hammett echoed his appreciation for the staff support, mentioning in particular the purchase of the 'Studio Abroad' software.

Dr. De Datta updated the group on the search for the new Program Director for Education Abroad. The position was upgraded two levels, from an assistant director to the program director, with a commensurate increase in salary. Of the five highest-ranked applications received, two candidates had already accepted other positions; telephone interviews were conducted with the remaining three and two of them were invited to campus for face-to-face interviews. It is hoped that a decision will be made shortly and the position will be filled soon. Dr. De Datta also mentioned the recent hire of Mary Ogburn as a program coordinator for the Education Abroad office.

Dr. De Datta introduced the members of International Support Services (Jerry Berkley-Coats, Ian Leuschner, and Kathryn Ticknor), whom he invited to the meeting to highlight their work in facilitating the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) signed by institutions offering student exchange programs with Virginia Tech. The office also processes a variety of visas for incoming international faculty and visiting scholars, whose numbers have increased as well. Additionally, this department is working with student visa issues involving countries to which Virginia Tech students travel.

3. Informational issues

- *Regional Centers:* Dr. De Datta briefed the group on the status of the establishment of the five regional centers that are called for in the Virginia Tech strategic plan.
 - *Europe:* The Center for European Studies and Architecture (CESA) in Riva San Vitale, Switzerland, is the European center and currently in its sixteenth year of operation.
 - *The Caribbean:* The Caribbean Center for Education and Research (CCER) in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, serves as the Caribbean center and has to date offered three spring semester programs. A local coordinator, Travis Beye, has recently been hired to manage the day-to-day operations of the Center.
 - *Latin America:* Efforts have been made to collaborate with the University of Guanajuato (México) to establish a Latin America center; a proposal was submitted but the state government has now taken the lead and changed the focus of the project from a research facility to a tech park concept. It is expected that an answer will be received soon.
 - *Asia:* The India initiative was begun by President Charles Steger and will consist of a full-fledged thirty-acre campus that specializes in engineering and will be established in the city of Coimbatore in collaboration with PSG. A delegation from Virginia Tech will be visiting India in October to meet with the Advisory Board.
 - *Africa:* The Africa presence is presently served through the VT-MENA graduate program in Egypt, with plans to create a center in South Africa as well.

- *Oman Educational Project:* Dr. De Datta updated council members on this project, which endeavors to guide a private sector group in setting up a university that specializes in high-tech areas (English, business, science). Although Virginia Tech is not granting the degrees or assisting with the funding, this project still provides a good opportunity for Virginia Tech to establish a strong presence in the Middle East.
- *University Austral, Chile initiative:* In addition to the Latin America center targeted for Guanajuato, México, a faculty and graduate student exchange program is being developed with the University Austral in Valdivia, Chile; it will work with Vet Science, CALS, Architecture, and Natural Resources.
- *Faculty Development Program-Mexico:* John Dooley discussed this initiative which, consistent with the Virginia Tech strategic plan, seeks to advance the internationalization of the university community through the development of faculty expertise and leadership in the global arena. The program, which moved to México this year, operates in two year-cycles; Dr. Dooley reported that this summer's session exceeded all expectations and the program will be returning to México. An announcement will be made to all college deans to increase participation.
- *Sudan initiative:* Mike Bertelsen offered an update of this project in southern Sudan that will focus on post-conflict rebuilding of the agricultural education programs with support from the office of Congressman Frank Wolfe and funding from a SANREM associate award. Dr. Bertelsen is part of a team that, in collaboration with Father Michael Schultheis (a Jesuit priest and former president of Catholic University of America who is in the process of establishing a Catholic University in Sudan) will travel to Sudan in late November to conduct a needs assessment / marketing study workshop with local stakeholders. A follow-up trip is scheduled for March 2009.

4. Phi Beta Delta

Dr. Jerry Berkley-Coats serves as the Virginia Tech chapter coordinator of the international honor society that recognizes scholarly achievement in international education. The chapter is seeking nominations and applications for new faculty, staff and student members and an induction ceremony will be held later in the fall. Dr. Dooley suggested that the ceremony take place during International Education Week (November 16 – 22, 2008) and urged council members to support this organization by seeking qualified members.

5. Discussion items

- John Dooley mentioned the ACCIAC Biennial Conference taking place in Miami November 7 – 11 and noted that scholarships available for those interested in attending.
- Richard Shryock announced that the free foreign language conversation classes being offered to faculty and staff have begun. New faculty and instructors have been hired to increase the availability of language classes offered to Virginia Tech students.
- Dr. Dooley supported Dr. De Datta's efforts in bringing the entire International Support Services team together and also noted that as of January 1 they will be able to handle all permanent residence requests internally and will no longer have to outsource application. Effective October 1 a processing fee of \$300 will be charged for each H-1B application received. A visa

information session is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, October 15; Miriam Rich raised concerns that this may possibly conflict with World Food Day.

- Don Back updated the group on the Humphrey Fellowship program in which a group of international mid-career professionals were invited to participate in language and cultural experiences at the university. The endeavor was extremely successful, particularly in its interaction with the faculty, and will increase continue next year, increasing to a 10-month long program with English language training as well. This topic prompted Dr. De Datta to initiate a discussion of guest housing for international visitors. There is a growing need for, and interest in, offering some type of 'international house' facility for such guests. The consensus of the group is that this would be a popular option worth pursuing. Dr. Dooley asked each the representative of each college to provide an estimate of the number of room nights they typically need to host international guests.
- Mike Bertelsen announced that the faculty small grants program was now accepting applications through November 15; applications can be found on the OIRED website.
- Dr. Dooley reminded the council that their function was not limited to the exchange of ideas and information, but should also serve as a forum in which they could address priorities to advance the internationalization of the campus. The interest generated by the topic of international guest house highlighted the need to identify this as a priority for the coming year and a needs assessment could be undertaken as well as a small task group formed. Although no meeting had been scheduled for October due to travel commitments by Dr. Dooley and Dr. De Datta, several members requested that one be added to the schedule. Council members will be updated of this change via e-mail.
- Richard Shryock asked about the possibility of involving undergraduate students from the foreign language department in some of the OIRED projects; Mike Bertelsen responded that the work consists of a heavy development component that usually requires more advanced degrees. Other short-term internship options were suggested, such as those available through organizations such as 'Engineers Without Borders.' Dr. Dooley noted that the focus of the question was not whether or not such opportunities are available to undergraduates, but how they can be better integrated into the variety of international projects taking place on the campus, albeit on a short-term basis. He suggested that the council consider ways to incorporate these students into these programs as the university moves aggressively towards internationalization.

There were no additional discussion items; the meeting was adjourned at 12:08.