

UCIA Meeting
September 24, 2009
8:00 – 9:30 a.m.
International Affairs Office, Meeting Room A

Present:

Jerry Berkley-Coats, *Assistant Director for International Support Services, OIRED*
Mike Bertelsen, *Associate Director, OIRED and Associate Dean, CALS*
Cynthia Bonner, *Chief of Staff and Director of Administration, Student Affairs*
Laurie Brogdon, *Director of Multicultural Alumni Programs, Alumni Relations*
John Browder, *Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, College of Architecture and Urban Studies*
S.K. De Datta, *Associate Vice President for International Affairs and Director, OIRED*
John Dooley, *Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs*
Ana Dubnjakovic, *Performing Arts and Foreign Languages Librarian*
Monika Gibson, *Director of Student Services, Graduate School Student Services*
Julie Ingram, *Financial Aid Counselor, Scholarships and Financial Aid*
Reed Kennedy, *Instructor of Management, Director of International Programs, Pamplin College of Business*
Mary Marchant, *Professor, CALS*
Matthew McMullen, *Program Director, Education Abroad*
Miriam Rich, *Communications Coordinator, OIRED*
Susanna Rinehart, *Director of Education for Diversity and Inclusion, Office for Equity and Inclusion*
Nicole Sanderlin, *Graduate Assistant, Outreach and International Affairs*
Richard Shryock, *Assoc Professor & Dept Chair, Foreign Languages and Literatures*
Jeanna Stewart, *Assistant Director of International Programs, College of Engineering*
Debra Stoudt, *Assoc Dean for Academic Policies & Procedures, Liberal Arts & Human Sciences*

1. Welcome, introductions, and approval of meeting minutes: John Browder, Chair

The meeting was called to order by chair John Browder, who welcomed members to the first meeting of the year and asked council members to introduce themselves. The minutes of the April meeting had been distributed electronically and were approved by council members.

2. Education Abroad updates: Matt McMullen, Program Director

a. Education Abroad fair: The Education Abroad fair was held on the Drillfield on September 23. Although it was difficult to ascertain an exact headcount, even with the use of sign-in sheets, participants stated it seemed to be better attended than in previous years. Matt McMullen reported seeing many students making multiple circuits of the displays to first gather information and then to follow up with specific questions. There were approximately 20 vendors in attendance, all of whom agree that Virginia Tech is consistently among the best institutions for recruiting study abroad participants. A reporter from Collegiate Times was also on hand to take photos and interview attendees. Dr. McMullen emphasized that recruiting projects such as this fair are a team effort. He mentioned that the office works with many third-party providers who can serve as a resource for faculty when working on trip logistics such as transportation and lodging arrangements.

Dr. McMullen also shared information from Education Abroad Forum that detailed the negative impact the economic downturn has had on the study abroad industry. In addition to reduced enrollment in programs, students are seeking more financial aid and scholarships as well as opting for more economically feasible programs. He can share the reports via email for those interested.

b. Risk Management issues: Dr. McMullen provided updates on risk management issues with information obtained from an Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) webinar. He recommended joining this organization, which serves as a valuable source for networking with other institutions and national organizations as well as an opportunity to share expertise. The Education Abroad office has a faculty resource guide that has been reviewed and approved by various entities within the university, such as the police and the Dean of Students office; a one-page quick reference guide has also been created for faculty members. Dr. McMullen suggested meeting once a year or perhaps even once a semester to update this information and keep it as current as possible. John Dooley concurred that it would be a good idea to begin holding an annual meeting to which non-UCIA members of the university community would be invited to discuss these issues as they relate to students traveling abroad as well as other scenarios such as faculty doing research overseas. Dr. McMullen also proposed that rather than relying on parents' insurance policies, additional coverage that would also cover emergencies such as medical evacuation and repatriation be mandatory. The cost of this could be built into the program fees and the extra expense would be approximately \$25 - \$40 more; he has been working with an insurance broker to get details. John Dooley clarified that if this recommendation does become policy, it would be necessary to engage the office of procurement and an RFP would be issued to ensure the best coverage and price. He asked Dr. McMullen to get more cost specifics before further action is taken. Dr. De Datta agreed that this would in the long term benefit parents, citing several examples of incidents where accidents and unforeseen events ultimately cost parents far more than the insurance premiums. Dr. Dooley added that the procurement process would take approximately one month; he stressed the importance of providing detailed financial information, clarity of costs, and any other implications to the college representatives for them to interact with their departments. It was noted that insurance for many of the non-faculty led programs is offered by the third-party providers; Dr. De Datta commented that perhaps these requirements be extended to all students studying abroad regardless of the type of program in which they are involved in order to have equal coverage and protection.

Dr. McMullen also mentioned several administrative and programmatic issues. A new graduate assistant within the Education Abroad office has made a considerable effort to reach out to the various colleges and departments to introduce them to the software program StudioAbroad and make them aware of this program and its benefits, such as tracking alumni, in order to build interest in its use. He also referred to a new process in place within the College of Engineering for Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Student Exchange Agreements (SEAs) upon which Jeanna Stewart elaborated. The following is a summary of this process:

All proposed COE study abroad programs must be approved by the appropriate department head (Graduate School, if necessary, International Programs Faculty Committee, Academic Affairs Office and an Associate Dean within the college). The following steps must then be completed for approval:

1. Submit an [online proposal](#) for your proposed international program/collaboration. This proposal will be reviewed and approved by the International Programs Faculty Committee.
2. Review the "[Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)/Student Exchange Agreements \(SEA\) Checklist](#)".
3. Submit the "[COE Internal Signature Page for International Programs](#)" to the COE International Programs office.

The COE International Programs office will assist personnel in developing and revising MOUs and SEAs, obtaining approval from the Virginia Tech legal department, and obtaining necessary signatures from Virginia Tech officials. This process is not intended to be perceived as an additional hurdle but rather a

service provided to faculty. There currently is a university-wide standard protocol in place in which both types of documents must be reviewed by legal counsel and then signed by Dr. De Datta as well as by President Steger; the procedure has been streamlined through the office of International Support Services and templates for developing the MOUs are available online. John Dooley emphasized that the process outlined by Jeanna Stewart is an appropriate internal control within the college and cautioned against pursuing MOUs without substance. MOUs and SEAs are at the institutional level and once in place can be customized with addenda to meet the specific needs of the colleges. He offered the example of the MOU in place with the University of Kent, which has been modified with separate information for CLAHS and CAUS. Dr. Dooley commended the new process in place at the College of Engineering. Jerry Berkley-Coats also referred council members to the online MOU database which can be referenced.

3. Informational items:

a. Regional Centers and other regional programs: Dr. De Datta updated the group on the activities on four of the five proposed regional centers; John Dooley will address the fifth later in the meeting.

- The Caribbean Center at Punta Cana, Dominican Republic has a group of ten students participating in the first-ever fall semester program. The search is underway to hire an onsite coordinator as students are currently not getting full support. Follow-up plans are also being made to continue the airport survey project that has been ongoing for several years.
- The Latin America center originally planned for Guanajuato, México did not materialize due to a change in plans of the local government; an MOU is now in place with the University Astral in Valdivia, Chile that involves several of the colleges.
- The proposed VT, India initiative originated by Dr. Steger presently has two good prospects for collaborative partners. A strategy meeting will be held in Chennai on October 27 with targeted board members invited to address a series of specific questions.
- The current Africa center is through the VT-Middle East-North Africa (VT-MENA) graduate program in affiliation with the Arab Academy for Science and Technology and offers degrees in electrical engineering, computer engineering, and computer science. A pan-Africa project is also planned through the efforts of CLAHS.

b. Faculty Development Program-Chile: Dr. Dooley briefed the group on this initiative which is currently in its fifth year. The venue has changed from Europe to México to Chile; nominations for participants will be sought from college deans as the program returns to Chile next year. The trip will include visits to Santiago as well as to a partner institute that operates a research facility in Patagonia and meetings with CONACYT (the Chilean equivalent of the National Science Foundation). The objective of this program is to build capacity within the colleges and develop and implement new projects, such as collaborative research projects, education abroad opportunities, and publications. This not only expands faculty members' horizons as individuals but also helps create internal advocates for internationalization. No Spanish language component is necessary to participate. The website (http://www.outreach.vt.edu/IFDP_main.html) details the different projects and lists previous years' participants.

c. Outreach NOW conference: S.K. De Datta reported on this year's Outreach NOW conference, which took place on September 14. The conference theme was 'celebrating the progress of the internationalization of Virginia Tech' and served as a means of communicating and showcasing internally what is usually conveyed to the world. The day began with a keynote address by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, winner of the World Food Prize and the father of India's 'Green Revolution.' The conference format also incorporated a full day of activities including a lunchtime session featuring the award winners for

excellence in international education, outreach, and research, a panel discussion on ‘reflections on internationalization,’ and a poster reception highlighting the work of Virginia Tech faculty, staff, and students. The following day a special talk by Dr. Swaminathan was held for graduate students at the Graduate Life Center, as well as a briefing at OIRED that touched on food and livelihood security and gender issues. Dr. De Datta reported that a total of 447 faculty are currently involved in international outreach and study abroad programs.

d. Donor funded projects: Dr. De Datta stressed that in order to advance the reputation of the institution, it is necessary to seek resources such as those available through donor funded projects. Currently a total of \$136 million has been awarded through OIRED, with another \$30 million pending as per a draft agreement received from USAID. These projects encompass collaboration with other US universities as well host country institutions and national and international NGOs, and include strong gender components. Mike Bertelsen provided details of one of the projects in southern Sudan, a country which has been devastated by civil war and seen millions of its citizens killed and displaced. The current efforts focus on establishing a Catholic University of Sudan that will feature a world-class college of agriculture. Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA) has given considerable support to this project and has been instrumental in procuring start-up capital. A delegation from Sudan may be visiting the Blacksburg campus in November.

e. CESA RFP process: Dr. Dooley remarked that the fifth regional center, the Center for European Studies and Architecture (CESA), has historically been utilized primarily by architecture students, with students from Pamplin and CLAHS also attending in alternate fall and spring semesters. Discussions had taken place to determine means of allowing more opportunities for students from other colleges to participate as well. An RFP process is now being implemented and faculty from all departments will be able to request space and program opportunities effective with the Spring 2011 semester. The deadline for submission for these proposals is November 16; John Dooley will convene a review panel and applicants will be notified by December 18. Reviewers will be seeking creative, innovative program ideas.

4. International Support Services

Jerry Berkley-Coats distributed handouts that described the various types of visa services provided by the International Support Services personnel in OIRED. He outlined the different requirements and restrictions for the different processes available (J-1 visas, H-1B visas, permanent resident or ‘green card’ visas, and O visas). Dr. Berkley-Coats added that the office is also responsible for overseeing the activities of the international honor society Phi Beta Delta.

5. Priorities for UCIA to address in for 2009 – 2010

John Dooley highlighted the four issues he felt are most urgent for the UCIA to address this coming year in the context of the International Strategic Plan:

- The Provost’s Office has called for a mid-term progress report on certain items within each of the scholarship domains of the university’s strategic plan. Within the Engagement Domain, progress on the international strategic plan is one of the items. More information is forthcoming and Dr. Dooley will keep the UCIA engaged and informed regarding this new procedure.
- Dr. Dooley would like the council to explore ways to provide greater assistance for faculty in terms of policies and procedures, what types of liability they assume, and the level of university support available to them—particularly from Education Abroad—when it comes to dealing with

logistics. He would like to see in place an infrastructure that can direct faculty to resources such as those that can facilitate transportation planning.

- There is the need for a network of faculty that have greater ownership and engagement with the regional centers. Dr. Dooley suggested including reports from each one of these groups at the UCIA meetings. Outreach and International Affairs graduate assistants Nicole Sanderlin and Alexandra Sommers are working to create a database for the university that will help establish a footprint within each of the regions. Dr. Dooley envisions a website featuring a word map where clicking on a specific location will bring up all the relevant information for the area—who is studying there, which faculty are from there, and the various ongoing projects—in order to greater support program activities. He would like to expand this further by developing strategic partnerships and tiers of relationships within institutions. Dr. Dooly cited the examples offered by the current collaborations with the Technical University of Darmstadt and Monterrey Tech as outstanding models which can be better supported by strengthening these networks.
- Future UCIA agendas should include a fifteen-minute update by the individual colleges regarding their profile of internationalization. Debra Stoudt of CLAHS shared a spreadsheet which could serve as a prototype for these reports. These briefings should also provide the future goals of the colleges regarding internationalization and how those goals connect to the international strategic plan.

6. Other items: Miriam Rich reported that the Virginia Tech international webpage has been updated as per the feedback from the UCIA provided to a committee consisting of Miriam, Richard Shryock, Lance Matheson, and Nicole Sanderlin. John Jackson, director of web communications for University Relations, assisted in finalizing the updates.

Miriam also reported that World Food Day is scheduled for Friday, October 16. OIRED sponsors a telecast of the events; she will forward a flyer and any additional relevant publicity and information.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, October 22, from 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.