

**UCIA Meeting**  
**December 3, 2009**  
**8:00 – 9:30 a.m.**  
**International Affairs Office, Meeting Room A**

*Present:*

Don Back, *Director, Language and Culture Institute*  
Mike Bertelsen, *Associate Director, OIRED and Associate Dean, CALS*  
Jeremy Biletdeaux, *Assistant Program Director, Education Abroad*  
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*  
Ana Dubnjakovic, *Performing Arts and Foreign Languages Librarian*  
Michael Herndon, *Director of Summer Sessions, Office of Summer Sessions*  
Julie Ingram, *Applicant Eligibility Coordinator, Scholarships and Financial Aid*  
Reed Kennedy, *Instructor of Management and Director of International Programs,*  
*Pamplin College of Business*  
Mary Marchant, *Professor, CALS*  
Matthew McMullen, *Program Director, Education Abroad*  
Miriam Rich, *Communications Coordinator, OIRED*  
Richard Shryock, *Associate Professor and Department Chair, Foreign Languages and Literatures*  
Alexandra Sommers, *Graduate Assistant, Outreach and International Affairs*  
Debra Stoudt, *Associate Dean for Academic Policies and Procedures, CLAHS*  
Tom Wilkinson, *Associate Vice President for Distance Learning and Summer Sessions*

**Action items:**

- College update for January UCIA meeting – John Browder, CAUS

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

UCIA chair John Browder called the meeting to order and asked attendees to introduce themselves. The minutes of the November meeting had been distributed electronically for approval by council members; there were no corrections to those nor were there additional agenda items.

**2. Education Abroad summer session issues**

Tom Wilkinson and Michael Herndon were in attendance as guests from the office of summer sessions to provide background on the development of these programs as they relate to study abroad opportunities. Dr. Wilkinson explained that several years ago the university expressed the need for additional engagement in summer session programs. A task force was established to address this issue and offered several recommendations, among them hiring a summer session director to provide dedicated support and service, creating a budget model, establishing grants for start-up/seed money for new summer session courses, and increasing faculty pay for these programs. The grants funding is now in its fourth year and a sub-committee of the summer session advisory board will be meeting today to select recipients for the 2010 courses. Initial funding is provided for development and implementation of new courses with the hopes that they would be continued in subsequent years. The advisory board then reviews the programs over a three-year span to track enrollment statistics and revise across-the-board funding if necessary based on those numbers. This strategy seeks to encourage growth in

enrollment while evaluating overall trends in program participation. The budget for these grants grew through 2008 but dipped in 2009.

Dr. Wilkinson added that students are interested in summer session courses but there sometimes are not enough courses available to meet the demand. Faculty who may consider teaching often lack the necessary funding as well. The biggest concern for students who do not take summer session courses is financial. Research indicates that students weigh the cost of tuition versus their opportunities to return home (particularly to northern Virginia or the Tidewater region) to work or to pursue other interests during the summer months. There has also been increased interest in online course offerings. Dr. Wilkinson commented that it appears that the formula for funding is not really working as hoped and the model is being reexamined. He also noted that budget cuts have caused funding to be directed towards other priorities; this year's budget was cut by \$25,000 for a total allotment of \$50,000 to be distributed during 2010. Feedback from the Commission on Outreach and International Affairs (COIA) indicated the \$5000 paid to faculty was not enough and this was consequently increased to \$10,000. There are four focus areas that will be considered when evaluating the applications for courses to be awarded: high enrollment courses, first year experience, curriculum for liberal education, and global issues. Dr. Wilkinson stated that one study abroad course was funded during the first year of the grants program in 2007; only one application was received this year for education abroad programs in 2010. Richard Shryock offered three points for consideration:

- Funding should be made available for the year in which the program is intended to be held. Plans to conduct an intensive Russian language course had to be put on hold because the funding had come in during one fiscal year and could not be carried over to the next.
- Funding appears to be linked to the target of increased enrollments; however, many courses have class size limits and there is no way to add/grow the number of students.
- Other mechanisms for continued funding should be implemented rather than simply reviewing enrollment history.

Dr. Shryock also commented that the task force that created the International Strategic Plan recommended increased foreign language proficiency by means of offering more courses and intensive classes. He stated that students other than foreign language majors would be interested in taking such classes, especially in the summer when they would not interfere with their core classes; this could also generate revenue in addition to assisting the university in moving forward with its mission. He shared the frustration that the faculty feels by being constrained in the courses they can offer. Dr. Wilkinson concurred that the issue of same-year funding should be relatively easy to address and that there should be more ways incentivize faculty since the university does depend on the profits which the summer sessions produce. He added that the overall goal of the summer programs is to enhance the student experience, but is ultimately tied to budgetary issues. Dr. De Datta recalled that according to the International Strategic Plan the number of Education Abroad participants needs to increase and expressed concerns that faculty will take other opportunities during the summer months if their involvement in summer session programs is not facilitated. Dr. Wilkinson stated that there is also a target of 10% growth in all summer session enrollments. John Browder reiterated that the grants program was separate from regular funding allocations and inquired as to what the application process entails. Dr. Wilkinson replied that notification is sent out from the office of summer sessions in the form of a call for RFPs to departments, colleges, deans and associate deans as well as publicized on the VT news; this year's announcement was delayed slightly in order to procure adequate funding. Faculty had approximately one month to submit their applications on line; they will then be reviewed by a subcommittee of the summer session advisory board to select and notify winning recipients. Dr. Herndon elaborated that this subgroup consists of de facto members of the 20-person advisory board

who voluntarily agreed to serve on this committee. Cynthia Bonner commented that it seems a lost opportunity that so few applications have been received to fund the study abroad summer sessions. Richard Shryock added that the wording can be discouraging and may lead people to believe they are not eligible to apply, citing as an example that foreign language courses would appear to be disqualified due to the emphasis on higher enrollment classes. Debra Stoudt suggested that the 'global issues' focus area for evaluating grant proposals could easily be applied to the criteria of first year experience and curriculum for liberal education in order to make an application more viable. Michael Herndon added that this year a total of 17 applications were received, down from last year's 20. Dr. Wilkinson speculated that the funding cut may have impacted the number of applications. He added that the committee looks at the overall experience and impact on the students; the office tracks enrollment data and continuance of courses. He noted that both CALS and CNR are going to a nine-month faculty appointment system due to the budget cuts. Don Back asked for examples of the courses funded; they include courses in all colleges and are comprised of online courses as well as classroom settings in political science, global issues, architecture, art history, food science and technology, mining and engineering. There were a total of 340 enrollments over the two sessions. More information can be found on their website (<http://www.summer.vt.edu/grant.htm>). Don Back asked if the criteria were weighted at all; Dr. Wilkinson replied that it is difficult to give more weight to one of the categories than the others and instead the merits of each application is considered as a whole and discussed at length.

### **3. Education Abroad updates**

Matthew McMullen reported that in seeking to offer more student and faculty outreach, the Education Abroad office has been actively promoting the 'Studio Abroad' program that is used for record keeping and tracking programs. He reported an increase of 15 new users in 5 colleges are now using this with a stated goal of full compliance university wide. This software company is one of three leading providers and is used by more than 15 universities, including Duke and the University of Virginia. Dr. McMullen added that the scholarship applications now include the stipulation that recipients write a monthly blog about their experience (with Education Abroad office maintaining editorial rights over content) in order to provide wider publicity for programs. He cited the online journal begun this summer by communications students at Riva and how they have continued to update their entries as a sort of alumni group. Dr. McMullen stated that in addition to wider exposure, the blog will provide information to other students in the form of a "real time journal" to answer questions about food, facilities, and other logistical concerns about a study abroad experience. A total of 12 scholarships were awarded this semester and the blogs that the awardees create will be posted on the Education Abroad website. The office is now also using Twitter to promote events and plans to increase use of this medium in the coming semester. The entire website has been updated using feedback-driven content and has received good reviews; it was featured during the recent NAFSA conference as an example of creativity and meeting the stakeholders' needs. Dr. McMullen welcomes all comments. The office is also endeavoring to use less paper and has designed a one-page poster to be posted in the most visible sites across campus, eliminating the need to post multiple flyers. They have also begun publication of an electronic newsletter which will be featured as a link on the website. These will both be shared with council members via email.

Dr. McMullen also gave an update regarding insurance. He stated that there are many misperceptions as to what supplemental insurance would cover and clarified why its purchase is recommended. Dr. McMullen pointed out that the additional cost is not substantial, totaling only a few extra cents each day when factored into the entire program. The suggestion was made that the insurance come as a recommendation for each program by the individual faculty members involved, rather than as a requirement from the Education Abroad office; this would circumvent the need to go through the

procurement office and engage in the RFP/bidding process, which could actually result in higher rates. Dr. McMullen stated that faculty traveling on study abroad trips should also purchase this insurance. All this information could be added to the website without promoting any particular plan and give students and faculty the option of purchasing the insurance that best suits their needs. Dr. McMullen also plans to implement a series of area studies program sessions for the coming semester in which students and faculty can get information on the variety of courses and resources available to them. This will help students prepare before their departure on a study abroad program and give them a forum in which to continue their involvement upon their return.

Cynthia Bonner gave an update on the meeting of the alcohol policy subgroup, which had met in November to discuss how faculty can host events and allow students under the age of 21 to partake of alcohol in accordance with the legal requirements of the country they are visiting. They have met with a number of entities and personnel in the university, such as legal counsel, student conduct, Ed Spencer, Mark McNamee, and Daniel Wubah; the proposal is widely supported and is now awaiting refinement of language and wording. This policy does not need to go through the board of visitors. The discussions have highlighted that fact many faculty members are not entirely aware of all the policy and all its implications. Cynthia noted that students who create problems after consumption of alcohol will be dealt with as a separate disciplinary issue. In response to an inquiry from John Browder, she replied that this will apply to the Virginia Tech international centers as well as to Education Abroad activities; John Dooley already has the authority to authorize alcohol consumption for certain events at CESA as per a recent revision of the policy but as it currently stands, it cannot be served to students under the age of 21.

#### **4. Informational items**

##### **a. International Research Resource page**

Alex Sommers, a research assistant in the Office of Outreach and International Affairs, reported that she has been tasked with creating a database of faculty research with international concerns in an effort to keep faculty members and graduate students aware of research being undertaken across the university. However, preliminary work indicates that it would be difficult to sustain a database of this size and scope; she has also discovered that other groups across campus are also trying to find out what is going on beyond their own college and department, beyond the international scope. Alex therefore plans to conduct a needs assessment to ascertain the requirements and potential barriers for faculty to update and use such a database. She informed the group that the international resource research database would contain not only a collection of faculty information but would also incorporate MOUs, education abroad opportunities, exchange agreements, international student organizations, international corporate agreements, international alumni, and international focused courses. The end product will be a database where one can pick one country from a list and get a comprehensive list of Virginia Tech activities in that country. Alex summarized the database project as an excellent way to broadcast Virginia Tech's international footprint and help to network faculty, staff, and graduate students who are interested in the same research areas.

##### **b. Update on Alumni Awards**

A total of four nominations have been received for the three different categories. The deadline has been extended through close of business on Friday, December 4, in order to encourage additional nominations.

## **5. Other items**

Glenda Scales was unable to attend today's meeting and present the monthly report on the international activities of the College of Engineering. John Browder agreed to give the report in January for the College of Architecture and Urban Studies.

Dr. De Datta announced that Miriam Rich had finished the application for the Paul Simon award for internationalization presented by NAFSA. Miriam provided more details on this award, for which Virginia Tech had applied last year; it is awarded to 2 – 4 institutions each year and does not entail a cash prize but does provide opportunities for publicity through publication of a booklet and the conduct of interviews. The application applied to the entire university, not just the activities of OIRED.

There were no further items to discuss and the meeting was adjourned at 9:39.

## **6. Spring semester meeting schedule**

All meetings will take place in Conference Room A, International Affairs Offices, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Thursday, January 14

Thursday, February 25

Thursday, March 25

Thursday, April 29

Thursday, May 27

## **7. Next meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, January 14; 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.