

UCIA Meeting
December 18, 2008 2:30-4:00
International Affairs Office, Meeting Room A

Present

Don Back, *Director, English Language Institute*
Mike Bertelsen, *Associate Director, OIRED and Associate Dean, CALS*
Jeremy Billetdeaux, *Assistant Program Director for Education Abroad, OIRED*
Cynthia Bonner, *Chief of Staff and Director of Administration, Student Affairs*
Laurie Brogdon, *Director of Multicultural Alumni Programs, Alumni Relations*
John Browder, *Associate Dean, 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*
Marilyn King, *Senior Associate Director, Scholarships and Financial Aid*
Paul Knox, *University Distinguished Professor & Senior Fellow for International Advancement, School of Public and International Affairs*
Lance Matheson, *Associate Professor & Director of International Programs, Pamplin College of Business*
Matthew McMullen, *Program Director, Education Abroad, OIRED*
Miriam Rich, *Communications Coordinator, OIRED*
Nicole Sanderlin, *Graduate Assistant, Outreach and International Affairs*
Richard Shryock, *Department Chair, Foreign Languages and Literatures*
Nammalwar Sriranganathan, *Professor, College of Veterinary Medicine*
Debra Stoudt, *Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences*

Action items:

- Paul Knox to provide details of new RFP for CESA programs by mid-February
- Jeremy Billetdeaux to follow-up with applications received for the cancelled Spring 2009 Punta Cana program
- John Dooley to identify and contact faculty interested in participating in DoD visit to Iraq

1. Welcome and introductions

The meeting was called to order by UCIA chair Lance Matheson. A motion to accept the minutes from the November 13 meeting was made by Richard Shryock and seconded by Don Back; the motion passed unanimously.

2. CESA – restructuring process for RFPs: Paul Knox

Paul Knox introduced a new proposal to reorganize the process for selecting groups and programs attending the Center for European Studies and Architecture (CESA). As currently structured, the academic programs accommodate 16 architecture students per semester plus an additional 32 business students each fall and 32 LAHS students each spring. Last year use of the facility was expanded to include summer offerings; the resulting interest proved to be university wide and this summer the Center will be filled to capacity. This response has led to a decision to provide more open access for regular semesters available to everyone on campus through the issuance of RFPs. Dr. Knox explained that submission of proposals should be a fairly simple process, involving a short description of a proposed program which would be filtered through the relevant college. Dr. Knox elaborated that the

proposals can come from a college, a department, the honors program, and/or a collaborative effort between departments; the time frame could also be longer than one semester. These suggestions could provide more opportunities for more students as well as ensure a maximum number of participants year-round. Dr. Knox will have additional details in place by mid-February, at which time the RFP for the 2010 academic year would be issued, allowing sufficient lead time for the preparation of proposals. All proposals submitted would be reviewed by a subset of UCIA; Dr. Dooley would solicit and appoint three individuals to serve on this committee. Dr. Knox then opened the floor to questions.

Dr. De Datta asked if this proposal should be approved by the council, since the normal process is being changed, which Dr. Matheson agreeing was a valid point. John Browder inquired as to whether the criteria for selection of the winning proposals would be based on numbers of students, learning outcomes, or financial considerations. Dr. Knox replied that ideally there would be matching funds from the foundation as well as from the entity submitting the proposal, but those details would be part of the agreement and separate from the criteria for selection. Dr. Dooley suggested that if the group were conceptually comfortable with the idea, they could endorse the transition and later provide input for Dr. Knox, to include defining the evaluation of the proposals. Dr. Dooley added that his concern was less about numbers and more about demonstration of an added value experience and more complete leverage of assets, and recommended that some volunteers step forth to work with Dr. Knox on this issue. Dr. Knox reminded the group that it was not their role to judge the academic quality of the programs, but to look at factors such as the interdisciplinary value and use of local resources as opposed to emphasis on numbers of participants and dollars. He added that the review committee could even link groups whose proposals could be related. Dr. De Datta interjected that the intent of his comment was to ascertain approval of the idea from the council and the other remarks could all be considered and included as part of the RFP. Dr. Browder reiterated his concern that the RFP not be viewed as a prize to the highest bidder with other less lucrative offers being more marginalized.

Dr. Matheson summarized the goals of new process as per the discussion:

- To facilitate full utilization of CESA
- To create a system of RFPs to expand the opportunities university-wide
- To use the UCIA as a means of providing input to Dr. Knox in formatting the criteria and evaluation of proposals

Dr. Browder noted that these changes are going on the record without having received anything in writing to detail the process. Debra Stoudt asked if the programs chosen would continue every year or if they would rotate in a cycle and observed that potentially the participating groups could remain exactly the same. She also suggested that a minimum number of student attendees be written into the RFPs to ensure that adequate logistics are available, citing as an example the limited number of faculty apartments currently on hand. Dr. Dooley responded that one such solution could be the increased use of foreign collaborators to circumvent the issue of accommodations and reminded the group that the objective of this new procedure is to push the bounds of programming while still meeting established financial criteria. There could be concurrent programs and the same model could be used for years, but not at the expense of any competitive proposal.

3. Faculty small grants program: Mike Bertelsen

Mike Bertelsen briefed the group on the faculty small grant programs, which had recently concluded its fall cycle. These funds are available for curriculum development of innovative international academic programs and academic research, as well as the cost of developing new education abroad and/or

student exchange programs. It is suggested that applicants have 100% cost sharing as an indication of the support of the affiliated college/department. A university-wide committee reviews the applications and four winners have been selected, with letters of notification having already been sent. Since its inception in 2004, \$97,500 has been dispersed to a total of 81 beneficiaries that extend to all levels of the campus. Dr. Bertelsen provided a breakdown of numbers awarded to recipients in the past, both by colleges (CALs – 15, CAUS – 13, Pamplin – 8, Engineering – 14, LAHS – 25, Natural Resources – 11, Science – 6, Veterinary Medicine – 2, others – 7) and geographic impacts (Europe 33%, Latin America/Caribbean 20%, Asia 16%, Africa 19%, multi-regional projects 9%). Dr. Bertelsen added that they would like to perform an impact assessment to see if and how this seed money has grown and suggested that this would be a good research project for an undergraduate student to undertake; he said that reports are submitted as part of the awards process but they are required too soon to see any long-term results and there is currently no follow-up in place. In response to a query from John Browder, Dr. Bertelsen informed council members that this cycle's winners included a new program to study Japanese in Japan, a service learning project at Kenyatta University, and a collaborative project with the Chinese National Park Service that includes a college-level center. All applications received were of a very high quality and it was difficult to choose the most outstanding. Dr. De Datta commented that this program has allowed many new ideas to flourish. Dr. Dooley added that these grants are awarded twice yearly and the number of applications has remained stable throughout the years; he expressed his surprise that it is not better advertised and more widely used. The deadline for the next cycle of applications is March 15.

4. Education Abroad updates: Matthew McMullen, Jeremy Billetdeaux

Matthew McMullen stated that, through meetings with Dean of Students Tom Brown, a more detailed policy regarding emergency responses is being developed. There will be a manual posted on the Education Abroad website as well as a quick guide and a wallet-sized reference card which travelling faculty can carry with them at all times. Dr. Brown will be reviewing the information to provide additional updates and feedback.

Jeremy Billetdeaux reported on other activities within the department. Pre-departure orientation sessions were recently held; numbers of participants for spring programs have changed little and are similar to those of last spring, which can be attributed to economic conditions across the country. Among the programs that are going forward, Jeremy noted that there is an increased interest in opportunities in Spain. Dr. Matheson added that programs Pamplin had tried to organize in México and Korea have also been cancelled for the coming semester. Dr. McMullen had checked the number of walk-in visitors to the Education Abroad office; there were a total of 291 customers this fall (August – December) compared to 280 last year, but there is a slight drop in the number of students actually going abroad. Mike Bertelsen observed that the same thing had happened to a CALS faculty-led program in South Africa. The Punta Cana spring 2009 semester program has also been cancelled due to lack of participants; the fall semester program is currently scheduled to take place as planned as well as one for spring 2010. John Dooley asked Jeremy to follow up with the applicants to see if the reasons for their dropping out were indeed based on economic considerations; Jeremy noted that many 'applications' are in fact only an indication of initial interest and very often no further action is taken by the inquirer. Richard Shryock asked if a small application fee could be charged to discourage such 'false applications.' Dr. McMullen stated that OIRED scholarships of \$500 have been awarded to 11 students for the coming semester and the department is currently in the process of redesigning its website to include more information about activities and scholarships. Richard Shryock commented that the site map should be

reviewed as many of the links are too long to effectively use; Dr. McMullen replied that they are employing student feedback in enhancing the quality of the site.

5. Conference call with Robert Love (Executive Director for Expeditionary Business) re: engaging U.S. universities in Iraq

John Dooley briefed the group on his communications with Robert Love, a representative from the Department of Defense (and Hokie parent) who works with issues of higher education in Iraq. Mr. Love has visited with Dr. Dooley and spoken about reconstruction work within the country; he plans to take a group to Iraq in February and is engaged in discussion with representatives from Cornell, Texas A & M, and Michigan State. Dr. Dooley arranged for a conference call to take place during this meeting of the UCIA to further discuss this opportunity.

Mr. Love explained that this is a very unique apolitical task force charged with working with Iraqi entities to establish a sense of normalcy within the country while rebuilding the infrastructure. Few universities have been reestablished in Iraq, even in Baghdad. Mr. Love commented that the media tends to focus only on the negative, highlighting trouble spots and violence within the country, but reassured the group that the danger is quite minimal. The trip in February will feature site visits to three universities within and near the city of Baghdad (University of Baghdad, University of Science and Technology, and the University of Babel) as well as several other universities in the north of the country. Mr. Love also provided information regarding housing and logistics of the trip, adding that the University of Idaho, the University of Michigan, and Penn State have also expressed an interest in this tour. Although the project would welcome participants from all sectors of the universities, they are especially targeting those in agriculture, engineering, technology, and business. Several VT faculty members were mentioned as possible resources with whom Mr. Love might consult. Dr. Matheson asked whether the specific objectives of the trip were to establish connections or work on curriculum development; Mr. Love responded that it is primarily an opportunity to establish relationships for future exchange and to inject US knowledge into the rebuilding country. He commented that currently everything is needed, as the Iraqis have been insulated for many years; visitors return to the US with a completely different perspective on the situation within the country. Mr. Love indicated his willingness to travel to Blacksburg to meet with anyone interested in the opportunity and will send some articles about the project. Dr. Dooley will check with faculty members who might consider participating.

6. Selection Committee for Alumni Awards for Excellence in International Education, Outreach, and Research – John Dooley

Lance Matheson stated that he has already asked John Browder to chair the selection committee for the awards. Don Back and Matthew McMullen volunteered to serve on the committee as well.

There were no further items to discuss and the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.