

UCIA Meeting

February 25, 2010

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

International Affairs Office, Meeting Room A

Present:

Kim Beisecker, *Director, Cranwell International Center*

Mike Bertelsen, *Associate Director, OIRED*

Jeremy Biletdeaux, *Assistant Program Director, Education Abroad*

Cynthia Bonner, *Chief of Staff and Director of Administration, Student Affairs*

John Browder, *Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, College of Architecture and Urban Studies*

Steve Capaldo, *Associate University Legal Counsel*

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*

Julie Ingram, *Applicant Eligibility Coordinator, Scholarships and Financial Aid*

Reed Kennedy, *Instructor of Management and Director of International Programs,
Pamplin College of Business*

Paul Knox, *University Distinguished Professor and Senior Fellow for International Advancement*

Matthew McMullen, *Program Director, Education Abroad*

Nicole Sanderlin, *Graduate Assistant, Outreach and International Affairs*

Glenda Scales, *Associate Dean for International Programs and Information Technology,
College of Engineering*

Rohsaan Settle, *Associate Director of Judicial Affairs, Office of Student Conduct*

Richard Shryock, *Associate Professor and Department Chair, Foreign Languages and Literatures*

Jeanna Stewart, *Assistant Director of International Programs, College of Engineers*

Debra Stoudt, *Associate Dean for Academic Policies and Procedures, CLAHS*

1. Welcome, introductions, and approval of January minutes

John Browder called the meeting to order and asked participants to introduce themselves. Minutes from the January meeting had been distributed for review and were accepted with no changes.

2. Education Abroad updates

Matthew McMullen provided general updates on Education Abroad activities. On February 23 the office had sponsored a workshop on international experience resume building with a group of panelists offering advice on how to enhance career potential through international research. The event was well attended, as was the annual spring expo held February 24 at Torgersen. The expo also incorporated information on internships and service learning opportunities. An area studies session on Asia was held on February 2 and a European session is scheduled to take place on March 2. These programs are new this semester; it is hoped that participation will increase with subsequent offerings. Dr. McMullen noted that overall enrollments in study abroad programs are stable; he observed that drops in interest often occur after students return from winter break, whereas summer program enrollment is usually dependent on students' notification of receiving internships.

Cynthia Bonner introduced guests Steven Capaldo of Legal Counsel and Rohsaan Settle of Student Conduct, who were on hand to discuss updates to the university alcohol policy. Changes have been

made to section 2.2 of the policy clarifying references to 'regional centers abroad' as well as the addition of a paragraph permitting the service of alcoholic beverages at university sponsored events to individuals who meet the legal drinking age of the country in which the event is held. The 'student life handbook' was also amended to read as 'Hokie Handbook.' A set of guidelines, 'Tips for Hosting a Safe and Successful Event,' was distributed to offer suggestions to minimize behavioral issues during faculty-sponsored activities at regional centers abroad where alcohol is served. Steven Capaldo addressed faculty concerns regarding responsibility for student/underage drinking; he noted that the Office of Student Conduct will handle specific behavioral issues but that laws of the country in which the incidents/activities occur take precedence over Commonwealth regulations. Mr. Capaldo added that other countries also have their own behavior-based laws for consumption and that there are consequences for breaking those laws as well. He stated that faculty still have a duty to manage and monitor events. Mr. Capaldo also mentioned the delineation between student-led events and those organized by faculty. Reed Kennedy expressed concerns that faculty are still bound by the Hokie Handbook statement wherein students agree to 'abide by the rules of the Commonwealth' but Mr. Capaldo stated that faculty should be assured that Virginia law is not applicable in other countries. Discussion ensued as to appropriate sanctions for disruptive and damaging behavior; referrals can be handled via telephone/videoconference and consequences such as warnings and suspensions would be determined based on prior incidents. This raised the question of whether or not a student with a prior alcohol or behavior violation stateside should be permitted to participate in a study abroad experience; this issue is currently being explored prior to a larger discussion. It was also agreed that a follow-up discussion on how thresholds of behavior are defined in contexts of international settings would be beneficial. The group consensus was that the policy as amended now permits students under the age of 21 to drink at university-sponsored events while protecting faculty from vulnerability to litigation; a motion to accept it was made by Cynthia Bonner, seconded by Richard Shryock and approved unanimously. It will now be forwarded to Sherwood Wilson, Vice President for Administrative Services, for his signature.

Dr. McMullen also addressed several topics related to health and insurance policies of education abroad participants. He stressed the need to make faculty aware of the advantages of purchasing supplemental health insurance, including options and commonalities among policies; it can be purchased for a few dollars per day and includes coverage for unanticipated emergencies such as evacuation. Dr. McMullen also asked council members to consider the suggestion that students be required to have a doctor's note testifying to their physical and emotional preparedness for education abroad activities. This idea has already been brought to Legal Counsel, which does not seem to think implementation would be a problem; it would not be used to accept or deny students' participation but merely to raise faculty awareness of potential issues and ways that all students can be accommodated. Kim Beisecker replied that the Cranwell International Center does sell International Student Identification Cards (ISIC) that offer insurance coverage for international travel, but she reminded the group that physicals are not required for admission/attendance at Virginia Tech and that there also cultural and religious implications to be considered. Paul Knox added that a physician may be aware of specific medical conditions but not in the context of international travel. John Dooley noted that this strategy has already been approved by legal counsel as a means of meeting students' needs. Glenda Scales commented that even though it could be done legally, it may not solve problems that arise. Reed Kennedy expressed the opinion that the idea does offer faculty the opportunity to discreetly adapt programs based on participants' requirements. Paul Knox raised the issue of mental health issues being not so easily identifiable. Dr. McMullen reminded the group that no one particular company or brand can be chosen or promoted; he closed the discussion by stating that he is working on a document with

additional information regarding this topic and it will be reviewed by the group at a subsequent meeting.

3. Emergency Preparedness for International Activities

Matt McMullen stated that the recent earthquake in Haiti has raised concerns as to how personnel can be evacuated in times of crisis. Organizations/companies such as Global Rescue can be contracted for on-call evacuation services; this is a requirement in place for international donor-funded projects involving faculty and staff, but currently not mandatory for student travel situations. Dr. De Datta commented that it is extremely difficult to track and monitor all international travel. John Dooley noted that he had recently attended a AIEA conference where it was mentioned that 95% of colleges/universities do not have this type of rescue system in place. He suggested that it would be beneficial to investigate this further; if VT is already paying for this service because of USAID projects, perhaps the coverage can be extended to a wider range of participants/travelers.

4. Update on international activities

Jeanna Stewart of the College of Engineering reported on their range of international activities, including a program for rising sophomores that serves as an introduction to study abroad opportunities while providing networking, internships, and student referrals. This program, 'Global Issues in Engineering, Leadership and Culture' offers industry and university visits as well as cultural activities. The college has initiated a zero-credit designation for service learning projects in order to track and monitor students' international involvement outside the classroom. They also have an international programs faculty committee and an alumni board consisting of former Virginia Tech students currently living or having lived abroad for networking opportunities. The college has a research assistant working in the Education Abroad office to help increase visibility for College of Engineering programs; they are also in the process of updating their own version of the MOU database. The zero-credit program was discussed further among council members; CLAHS has considered this idea as well as a positive means of collecting information on international projects such as student involvement in other areas such as church mission trips. The group expressed interest in seeing this idea standardized across the university.

5. Haiti/Caribbean working group

John Dooley announced creation of a Haiti working group in response to interest by faculty, staff and students after the January earthquake. The group is being led by Patrick Guilbaud and Bryan Cloyd and will operate in context of the broader Caribbean faculty initiatives. Please refer interested parties to Betty Watts (bettyw@vt.edu).

6. Informational items

Dr. Browder asked Reed Kennedy of Pamplin to provide next month's update on college international activities.

There were no further items to discuss and the meeting was adjourned at 3:26 p.m.

7. Next meeting: Thursday, March 25 (2:00 – 3:30 p.m.)