

UCIA Meeting  
Monday, February 28, 2011  
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
International Affairs Office, Meeting Room A

Present:

Lynda Bailey, *Assistant Registrar for Transfer, Office of the Registrar*  
Jeremy Billetdeaux, *Assistant Program Director, Education Abroad*  
Cynthia Bonner, *Chief of Staff and Director of Administration, Student Affairs*  
Laurie Brogdon, *Director of Multicultural Alumni Programs*  
S.K. De Datta, *Associate Vice President for International Affairs and Director, OIRE*  
John Dooley, *Vice President, Outreach and International Affairs*  
Tracey Drowne, *Academic Programs Specialist, College of Architecture and Urban Studies*  
Reed Kennedy, *Instructor of Management, Director of International Programs,  
Pamplin College of Business*  
Marilynn King, *Senior Associate Director, Scholarships and Financial Aid*  
Eric Miller, *Program Director, Education Abroad*  
Jennifer Nardine, *Instruction and Outreach Librarian*  
Andrew Plofchan, *SGA representative*  
Nicole Sanderlin, *Director of International Programs, College of Engineering*  
Robert Smith, *Associate Dean and Professor, College of Natural Resources and Environment*  
Alexandra Sommers, *Graduate Research Assistant, Outreach and International Affairs*  
Debra Stoudt, *Associate Dean for Academic Policies and Procedures, College of Liberal Arts and  
Human Sciences*  
Susan Sumner, *Associate Dean for Academic Programs, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences*

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

Debra Stoudt called the meeting to order and asked participants to introduce themselves. Minutes from the January meeting had previously been submitted for review and were accepted as distributed.

**2. Education Abroad updates**

Eric Miller was welcomed as the new program director for Education Abroad. He stated that since his arrival he has been meeting with representatives from the different colleges. The Education Abroad office sponsored an expo on February 24 in Torgersen to promote both faculty-led and affiliate study abroad programs. Jeremy Billetdeaux added that although due to its location the event does not generate the volume of visitors that the fair on the Drillfield attracts, attendance was consistent with previous expos; there was also a career fair held at Squires on the same day. Dr. Miller also reported that the RFP for the medical insurance has been forwarded and should be ready to be implemented this year. Dr. Dooley elaborated that a four-week turnaround on this is anticipated, with responses being evaluated by a committee that includes a representative from Purchasing. Dr. Miller addressed the question of whether purchasing the insurance could be made mandatory without first obtaining Board of Visitors approval; he suggested that this could be done by using an opt-out waiver which would require students to actively prove they had adequate coverage. Dr. De Datta expressed concerns about the issues of responsibility and liability should a student be injured or become ill during a trip. Dr. Dooley reiterated that the council had done considerable work trying to come up with a solution that would protect the students; the RFP process would offer students the most favorable rate of insurance and also allow an exemption if proof of full and complete coverage could be demonstrated. Dr. Miller agreed that this strategy is comparable to that used in other colleges and universities.

### **3. Student Conduct Policy follow-up and feedback**

Debra Stoudt asked for feedback received regarding the implementation of the student conduct records check. Bob Smith remarked that faculty from the CNRE were concerned about the level of information that would be provided; Debra Stoudt reminded the group that personnel from the Education Abroad office would not be involved with the students participating in faculty-led programs and vice versa; in order to make the best decisions it is necessary to be aware of the full nature of all relevant issues. Susan Sumner added that her summer group will be using this process and she has not yet heard anything negative but will keep herself updated on faculty reactions. Dr. Stoudt noted that one of her colleagues was enthusiastic about the process; Dr. Stoudt will be involved in the follow-up records check for the summer group of students and will provide feedback on that as well. Nicole Sanderlin stated that the College of Engineering had done the check for a spring semester trip and it proved to be very helpful. Dr. Stoudt expressed concerns that decisions be consistent and based on information received; she observed that initially the UCIA members did not understand some of the terminology as explained by the Office of Student Conduct and this was likely to be the case with faculty as well. She suggested that some basic guidelines be made available to faculty in order to stress the need for consistency, particularly within each college. She also reminded the group that there are already many variants among the decision-making criteria, such as GPAs, and this is a pilot program. Eric Miller recommended that faculty be prepared to defend whatever decisions they make. Dr. De Datta recalled that the thresholds were established as guidelines; there were recommendations that students with active deferred suspensions should not be accepted but decisions regarding other conduct matters were at the discretion of the faculty. Dr. Dooley added that the university is still exposed in these situations; deferred suspensions are a red flag and certain standards should be adopted for all scenarios but the faculty should be trusted in the decisions they make. Susan Sumner added that at a different university she had led a program where a student violated the rules and she had to rely on her judgment to make on-the-spot decisions about handling the situation. Dr. Dooley commented that Legal Counsel has a rather conservative outlook on the matter; he advocates for greater faculty involvement that will emphasize the learning experience. Lynda Bailey asked if the terminology recommended by Student Conduct should be spelled out in the consent form so students could more easily identify the potential impacts on their application process. Andrew Plofchan suggested that students would appreciate the opportunity to discuss incidents with faculty; he serves on the Hokie Handbook review committee and his experience indicates this could be a more consistent and fair way of dealing with these potential problems. Debra Stoudt mentioned that economics can play a part in decision making process as well; an extra student may make a difference in the prices charged to a group or even whether or not a program takes place. She also reported that when she presented this information to the Commission on Outreach and International Affairs, she was questioned as to why the conduct check did not apply to graduate students as well. Council members recalled some discussion regarding this omission and that a request had been made by a representative from the Graduate School to exclude their students from this process; previous minutes will be referenced for clarification. Jennifer Nardine inquired about transfer students' records prior to enrolling at Virginia Tech; Susan Sumner replied that more applications are requesting this information and students will become accustomed to providing it. The consensus of the group is that the program should be implemented for the year and while feedback would be gathered periodically, it should not continually be changed throughout the pilot period. Dr. Dooley emphasized that its greatest value is in CESA, where there has been a history of behavioral issues; Dr. Stoudt agreed that UCIA representatives should continue to work closely with faculty program leaders to stay informed regarding decisions. This information and the pertinent forms will be posted on the Education Abroad website.

### **4. Update on International Initiatives**

Cynthia Bonner gave a presentation on her experience as a participant in the Fulbright program for university administrators in Germany, which aims to enhance U.S. – German relations. She visited several German universities during a two-week period in October 2010 along with 19 other administrators from the U.S. She offered an overview of the higher education system in Germany, including several changes that are being implemented as part of the Bologna Process that seeks to implement a common university structure across the European Union in order to provide greater mobility and employability for students. Among those initiatives being explored are more career services. Cynthia had been interested in organizing a resident advisor exchange but observed that there is really no equivalent position in German universities. Dr. Dooley added that the German government is offering many such programs and that there are similar opportunities available to interested faculty.

#### **5. Update on VTNavigate**

Alexandra Sommers, a graduate research assistant for Outreach and International Affairs, reported on progress made for the webpage that will serve as a ‘one-stop shop’ for information regarding international activities at Virginia Tech. This resource will serve a broad audience such as faculty, future students, and those involved in grant writing; it will include country profiles, photos, and details about faculty research and alumni in-country. One person from each college will be asked to update the information on a semester basis; this would probably be the associate deans or UCIA representatives. Dr. Dooley reiterated the importance of this critical asset which measures VT’s global footprint and how crucial it is to keep it updated.

#### **6. Informational items**

Dr. Dooley updated the group on progress made with the development of the undergraduate certificate in global competency. He has met with Susan Sumner, Mike Denbow, Rachel Holloway, and Tim Case to establish the framework for this special designation in achieving a certain level of competency in international studies. It appears as if one potential obstacle is using the phrase ‘certificate program;’ language may be tested to see if ‘concentration’ would be more widely accepted. Students would be required to demonstrate language proficiency, have participated in a full semester education abroad experience (or two summer sessions), successfully completed a series of approved classes focused on global strategies, and a submitted a capstone project. The outcome is that this designation will position students to become more marketable; the Hospitality and Tourism Management program is assisting in development of this initiative. Dr. Dooley reported that other institutions are ahead of Virginia Tech in implementing such programs and it is imperative that Virginia Tech begin working on this. He asked council representatives to have a conversation with their associate deans for undergraduate education, with the next step begin a discussion with counterparts to create college-specific plans. He cautioned that this should be well-organized and to rush into it would likely be a disservice to potential employers. The Language and Culture Institute can administer the language proficiency exams. Andrew Plofchan agreed that, having participated in a study abroad trip, he would have liked to have had greater exposure to foreign languages.

Dr. De Datta reported that he had recently returned from Senegal, where he attended the kickoff for the USAID Capacity Building for Agricultural Education and Research (CBAER) project. This is the largest grant (\$28 million) won by Virginia Tech; as part of the ‘Feed the Future’ initiative, it will revamp the agricultural education curriculum at the college level in Senegal, using the U.S. land-grant system as a model. The event was attended by USAID officials as well as the Senegalese Minister of Higher Education and the Virginia Tech’s partners in the program (Michigan State, University of Connecticut, Purdue, and Tuskegee).

Debra Stoudt shared a message from Don Back, who is currently in Haiti for a Higher Education for Development (HED) project. He announced that the fifteen Humphrey Fellows will be arriving here on March 28 to begin their English language training. Biographies of the Fellows will soon be made available; there will also be social events to which faculty members will be invited. The email he sent will be forwarded to council members.

There were no further items and the meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

#### **7. Next meeting**

~~The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 21 from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at the International Affairs Offices. Please note that this is a change from the original schedule.~~

The March meeting has been cancelled; the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 25, from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at the International Affairs Offices.