

**UCIA Meeting**  
**March 25, 2010**  
**2:15 – 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*

S.K. De Datta, *Associate Vice President for International Affairs and Director, OIRED*

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

Mary Marchant, *Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics, CALS*

Matthew McMullen, *Program Director, Education Abroad*

Miriam Rich, *Communications Coordinator, OIRED*

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

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

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

Jerry Via, *Assistant Dean, Biological Sciences*

**1. Welcome, introductions, and approval of February minutes**

Debra Stoudt, Vice Chair of UCIA, called the meeting to order at 2:20. Council members introduced themselves; Dr. De Datta expressed regrets on behalf of John Dooley, who was unable to attend. Dr. Stoudt noted that the minutes of the February meeting had been distributed electronically for review. A motion to accept them was made by Richard Shryock and seconded by Reed Kennedy.

**2. Education Abroad updates**

Matthew McMullen began his report by stating that overall student enrollment trends in study abroad programs at Virginia Tech are increasing. In comparing numbers at Virginia Tech with those in partner schools, he has discovered that numbers of participants at other institutions are decreasing or remaining stable, whereas Virginia Tech's have risen. This growth can be attributed to aggressive marketing and outreach efforts as well as awarding of scholarships. Currently, the Virginia Tech Education Abroad is approximately 15 students away from reaching mark of 1200 participants during the past year.

Jeremy Biletdeaux briefed council members on a situation at Monterrey Tech in Mexico, where the "Global Citizen" program was scheduled to take place this summer. Recently, two Mexican graduate students were killed when caught in the crossfire during a shootout between gang members and police. At that time, a Virginia Tech student was living on the campus and participating in a resident advisor exchange program funded by a Gilman scholarship. The student was evacuated by the Gilman Foundation via armored car and returned to the United States, stopping in Houston for a debriefing; it is unclear at this moment how he will recover the lost credits. The student reported that despite the danger the campus itself is safe, as it is attended by the children of prestigious families. Jeremy added that the administrative staff for international programs at Monterrey Tech is trying to keep people there and is giving failing grades to those who are withdrawing. Virginia Tech's Education Abroad office is working with them to try to provide flexible alternatives, such as online courses, in order to allow students to finish their semester and receive credit. Dr. McMullen expressed frustration that the student had been evacuated without first consulting Virginia Tech. There are concerns that this could

set a precedent among entities that fund scholarship opportunities for students primarily because they may not consider how students will meet their academic requirements. Michelle Deramo-James, who leads the Global Citizens program, has been informed of the matter; applications are no longer being accepted for the program, the situation will continue to be monitored closely, and alternative suggestions for summer programs will be provided.

Dr. McMullen continued his updates with information on the area studies sessions being offered this semester. Attendance at these events continues to increase and it appears that interest is building. Sessions on Asia and Europe have already been held and a Latin America/Africa program will take place on April 7. These events include information on courses and internship opportunities available to students. Dr. McMullen also mentioned the faculty pre-departure sessions he holds; they address not only university requirements for faculty leading programs abroad but other matters of interest such as funding opportunities and liability issues. He added that this information changes frequently and he is willing to hold the sessions as often as faculty deem necessary. The next student pre-departure session is scheduled to take place on April 27 and will help students learn how to prepare mentally and physically for their international experience. Among the topics to be discussed are issues of health, safety, finances, and cultural considerations. The students will also participate in breakout sessions according to their country of destination and meet with a student who has recently returned from that program. Student feedback indicates that this is a very beneficial program.

Dr. McMullen also mentioned a partnership with the University of the Free State in South Africa that had recently been distributed to council members. There seems to be interest in this venture; Sue Ott Rowlands of the CLAHS will take the lead in organizing collaborative and programmatic opportunities. A student exchange agreement is already in place between this institution and Virginia Tech. A tripartite partnership is being considered between Free State, Virginia Tech, and a Latin American university. Many students from South Africa cannot afford to go abroad to study; several council members spoke of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) as a potential source of financial aid for them. Contact has been made with the study abroad liaison at the University of Cape Town; his endeavors have contributed \$18 million to that university and he is therefore a valuable source for information and networking.

Dr. McMullen concluded his presentation with several additional information items:

- A new Emergency Contact Information Release (ECIR) form has been approved; the one currently in use is not approved by FERPA. The new form will be posted on the Education Abroad website.
- Information from MedEx Global Solutions, a consortium of insurance companies whose Blacksburg office is headed by Jeet Heda, a former Hokie, was distributed to council members. Dr. McMullen has offered to invite Mr. Heda and Steven Capaldo from the office of University Legal Counsel to attend the next UCIA meeting to discuss possible options more thoroughly. Kim Beisecker recommended that cost estimates be provided as well when this information is reviewed.
- A health clearance form has been submitted to John Dooley and Paul Knox to review for consideration for future use.
- International liability events will be taking place at UVA and in Washington DC to provide more information regarding how universities can be prepared for and react in emergency situations.
- The Office of Outreach and International Affairs sponsors the Faculty Development Program, which can expand networking and funding opportunities.

- Many grants available for faculty leading overseas programs, but the requests must come through colleges or departments. Dr. McMullen can assist with this information and emphasized the circular relationship between successful education abroad programs and internationalization. He would be happy to provide to host meetings or trainings on these resources. Debra Stoudt asked if some of the information can be posted on the Education Abroad website as well.
- Christina McIntyre of the Honors program will be hosting sessions on the Fulbright scholars program.
- Almost 100% of the faculty leading study abroad programs who have been using Studio Abroad software are now trained on its use.

### **3. International guest housing task force update**

Debra Stoudt updated the group on the meeting of the international guest house task force, whose members consist of Don Back, Jeremy Biletdeaux, Reed Kennedy, Dr. Stoudt, and Kevin Sullivan. The group decided to create a survey to ascertain the needs of the different colleges and departments; last year's query produced some anecdotal responses but the committee decided that more depth and detail was necessary. Don Back has prepared a draft that will soon go out to the colleges and departments. Kevin Sullivan has had the opportunity to discuss this project with several other institutions and get information regarding their similar accommodations, such as whether they have houses or apartments that were provided as gifts or purchased outright. A more detailed report will be given at the April 29 meeting. Dr. De Datta mentioned that the College of Veterinary Medicine does have such accommodations for their visitors; one of them, a leased facility at Foxridge, was not being used to capacity. There were issues with the property management team as well. The Language and Culture Institute has been using units at Windsor Hills, which seems to be working well. Dr. De Datta asked Kim Beisecker to weigh in with her experiences through the Cranwell International Center. Ms. Beisecker replied that Cranwell works with many of the facilities in Blacksburg but not all of them are friendly towards internationals; Windsor Hills is also not convenient to Blacksburg Transit routes, nor are there grocery stores within walking distance or even sidewalks on which to walk. Ms. Beisecker recalled that several years ago a donor had wished to make a gift of a housing facility to the university but it was ultimately unworkable. Dr. De Datta mentioned the University Club as a possible model, but Ms. Beisecker commented that there are few bathroom and kitchen facilities and it is not so viable an option for mature visitors. The Graduate Life Center is also full to capacity. Cranwell has used the Red Carpet Inn for housing solutions but it is in the process of changing owners.

### **4. Update on international activities**

Reed Kennedy of the Pamplin College of Business gave an update on the international programs in Pamplin; these consist of faculty-led, exchange, and third party vendors. The college currently offers an International Business minor and also develops internship programs. Until recently, Pamplin had been able to award \$500 scholarships to its students studying abroad, but that amount has been reduced to \$300 and will soon be eliminated completely due to budget cuts. Some endowed funds will be coming available for possible future funding opportunities. The college is meeting its goal of 25% student participation in education abroad programs, and will be adding faculty activity reports in order to increase the range of available information regarding international activities. Dr. De Datta commented on the impressive numbers of student participants, contrasting that to the university-wide target goal of 10% growth per year.

Jeanna Stewart of the College of Engineering has offered to invite a representative from Academic Affairs to address the group regarding the zero credit service learning opportunities she mentioned during her presentation last month on international programs in the College of Engineering.

#### **5. Informational items**

Kim Beisecker related that April 10 – 16 will be International Week; a calendar of events will be available soon. The international faculty meetings that Cranwell has been hosting have proved to be popular networking and social events, with a wine and cheese social planned for the next gathering. April 15 has been designated 'Haiti Day' in conjunction with Haitian ambassador Raymond Joseph's visit to the campus April 15 – 16. A Haitian lunch will be served for a minimum donation. The Ambassador will address the community in a session at 7 p.m. at Burruss and there will be a steel drum performance as well. The 'Day of Remembrance Run' on April 16 will pass through a corridor of flags displayed by international students at Cranwell. More details for this event will also be forwarded as they are finalized. A Bangladeshi lunch is also being planned for a different day.

Dr. De Datta reported that President Steger and representatives from MARG Group, LTD, signed a Memorandum of Understanding on March 8 to move forward with the VT, India campus. The next steps in making this a reality are to create a business model and a trust. The campus will feature high-tech masters programs in the areas of nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology, and mechanical engineering; no undergraduate degrees will be offered. Virginia Tech will have complete control over the academic aspects of the partnership. The Board of Visitors reacted enthusiastically when the news was announced and Senator Warner has also voiced his favorable expectations.

Richard Shryock announced that the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures will sponsor an Arab Festival with music and dancing on Thursday, April 15 from 12 – 4 p.m. in honor of Reema Samaha.

There were no additional items and the meeting was adjourned at 3:28 p.m.

#### **6. Next meeting: Thursday, April 29 (2:00 – 3:30 p.m.)**