

UCIA Meeting
Monday, October 25, 2010
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
International Affairs Office, Meeting Room A

Present:

Mike Bertelsen, *Associate Director, OIRED*
Jeremy Billetdeaux, *Assistant Program Director, Education Abroad*
Laurie Brogdon, *Alumni Association, Office for Diversity and Inclusion*
John Browder, *Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, CAUS*
S.K. De Datta, *Associate Vice President for International Affairs and Director, OIRED*
John Dooley, *Vice President, Outreach and International Affairs*
Ana Dubnjakovic, *Performing Arts & Foreign Languages Librarian*
Marilynn King, *Senior Associate Director, Scholarships and Financial Aid*
Jonathan Moore, *Graduate Student Association*
Miriam Rich, *Communications Coordinator, OIRED*
Nicole Sanderlin, *Director of International Programs, College of Engineering*
Richard Shryock, *Foreign Languages and Literatures*
Debra Stoudt, *Associate Dean for Academic Policies and Procedures, CLAHS*
Susan Sumner, *Academic Program, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences*

Frances Keene, *Director, Office of Student Conduct*
Sue Ott Rowlands, *Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences*

1. Welcome, introductions, and approval of September meeting minutes

Debra Stoudt called the meeting to order and asked participants to introduce themselves. Minutes from the September meeting had been sent to council members for review and were approved as distributed.

2. Education Abroad updates

• **Input on informed consent form**

Jeremy Billetdeaux reported that there had been considerable negative feedback from faculty members regarding the informed consent document that had been presented at the September meeting, primarily in regard to the second page, which listed of possible situations and scenarios that should be taken into consideration prior to departure. There were concerns that even the unintentional omission of a item might be cause for liability at a later point, even though University Legal Counsel had advised college representatives that the list does not have to be exhaustive but merely must call attention to general conditions. Dr. Dooley commented that the form seemed to have the opposite effect of its original intent to protect faculty, who now feel they would be assuming even greater liability. He stated that it may not be possible to provide the faculty with what they want and that perhaps the current procedures are in fact the best option available. The medical clearance form that had been presented last year and would have required signatures verifying physical and mental clearance for participation was also not well-received. Jonathan Moore commented that the feedback he received from the student groups had, in contrast, been positive. Debra Stoudt suggested that the further discussion of the subject be tabled and that the current liability agreement be endorsed as acceptable. Dr. Dooley added that the informed consent form had been modeled after those used in other universities; however, Virginia Tech's Office of Legal Counsel tends to be more conservative than those in peer institutions.

- **Health insurance**

Jeremy Billetdeaux also updated the group on the information regarding health insurance. He has spoken with the Office of Procurement to check rates in addition to consulting with the vendor, and has received quotes indicating the insurance would cost approximately \$1.50 per day, per participant. The insurance is a mandatory requirement for Old Dominion students participating in study abroad trips; students can opt out if they are able to prove they currently have adequate existing insurance coverage. However, Jeremy noted that ODU has a much smaller portfolio, sending 225 students abroad each year as compared to Virginia Tech's 1200. Legal Counsel has stated that it is permissible to make this a requirement. There are some additional factors to take into consideration, such as Swiss regulations that will not give a blanket endorsement to a policy but rather review individual policies on a student-by-student basis before granting a waiver or requiring that Swiss insurance be purchased. Jeremy said that a suggestion has been made to sponsor one student's insurance costs during a semester in Switzerland to see if the waiver is accepted. He added that it has been noted that Medex does not enjoy the best reputation for dealing with claims; in speaking with Steve Bell, the director of international programs at ODU, Jeremy reported that handling of claims varies widely from country to country. In response to a question from Dr. De Datta, Jeremy stated that some students at CESA did meet the Swiss requirements but were not informed of the approval until immediately prior to leaving the country. Jeremy suggested inviting Ian Leuschner to attend the UCIA meetings and to work with the health insurance subcommittee, as he is familiar with the situation in Switzerland. Dr. Dooley noted that Switzerland has a higher standard of care than many other countries, and observed that there are two issues on the table: agreement that it is wise to require all students to purchase insurance, and a desire to obtain the best policy at the best cost. He suggested that first we establish standard, and then we determine whether it would be better to be attached as a rider on ODU's policy or request that the Office of Procurement issue an RFP. Debra Stoudt clarified the three most critical points for the insurance requirements: repatriation of remains, emergency evacuation, and primary provider. Mike Bertelsen suggested that the Swiss requirements be used as the baseline for identifying standards. Jeremy noted that currently students do have to sign a waiver stating they have insurance as well as an agreement to reimburse the university for incurred expenses, if necessary. However, insurance coverage may not be adequate; students may be unfamiliar with the terms of their policies, which are usually those of their parents, and most of those do not include the additional coverage recommended for overseas travelers. Debra Stoudt expressed concerns that the Swiss model would ultimately prove to be too expensive; John Dooley agreed that the committee should set what they want and then provide those requirements to the Office of Procurement. Ian Leuschner will be contacted to join in discussion with the subcommittee.

Jeremy added that he had no other updates to offer; interviews are being conducted this week for the position of program director for Education Abroad.

3. Follow-up, Student Conduct on Study Abroad Programs

Frances Keene of the Office of Student Conduct was present to follow up on recent discussions regarding student conduct and honor matters on study abroad programs. Ms. Keene reported that in researching the subject, she has discovered that there are many different programs led by many different leaders and perhaps a centralized model for dealing with the issues was not the best solution. She suggested that program leaders provide her with information on study abroad participants upon receipt of applications for review against conduct records; the list would be reviewed a second time two weeks to one month prior to departure as an additional safety check to ensure there have been no subsequent violations. As student privacy is a big concern, the Office of Student Conduct will run the

checks itself and notify faculty of any sanctions discovered. Faculty program leaders will then be strongly discouraged from permitting students with active sanctions to participate in the programs; communication would be directly with faculty, and the Education Abroad office would not be involved in the process. In response to a question from John Browder regarding the type of information to be collected, Ms. Keene replied that it would be names, birthdays, and student ID numbers. Dr. Browder expressed concerns that this would be yet another task with which faculty would have to deal and it could discourage and deter them from leading programs. Ms. Keene explained that it would be a mandatory step in the program process and uniformly applied to all students in order to help make trips more successful; program leaders could designate someone to act on their behalf to compile the information and forward it to Student Conduct if there were concerns about overburdening faculty members with additional responsibilities. Susan Summers commented that simply having the notification that records would be checked on the application forms would raise students' awareness of expectations. Information could be taken from applications that are processed through Studio Abroad, but the review should take place early in the application process before students are accepted; also, there are still faculty members operating independently who do not use Studio Abroad. Jeremy noted that all third-party providers and non-Virginia Tech programs require disclosure on their application, and drug and alcohol problems are the leading issues. Ms. Keene assured the group that having her office review the lists is a manageable solution, as it is accustomed to conducting such checks for a variety of other purposes. Richard Shryock suggested asking students to divulge relevant information at the time of application and then follow up with the pre-departure check to eliminate a step in the process; this could cause students to lose deposits but it is a risk of which they would be advised when filling out applications. This proposed solution will be taken back to the colleges for feedback.

4. UCIA bylaws

A draft of the revised bylaws had been distributed to council members previously for their comment and review. There was no further discussion; a motion to accept them as distributed was made by Jonathan Moore and seconded by Richard Shryock. The bylaws will be posted on the UCIA website.

5. Briefing on Commission on Outreach and International Affairs meeting

Debra Stoudt reported that the information discussed at the October 14 COIA meeting relevant to the UCIA included the upcoming nominations for the Alumni Awards and the restructuring of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Program.

6. Initiation of initiatives in Sri Lanka

Sue Ott Rowlands, Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, visited Sri Lanka this summer to explore opportunities to increase teaching and research exchanges in Pali and Buddhist studies. Several universities there have a strong tradition in sociology that, due to the civil war and the tsunami that struck in 2004, have expanded to disaster recovery, displaced persons, and gender issues. Dean Ott Rowlands gave a presentation on her trip, stating that the next step will be a faculty-led group of fifteen students visiting the University of Colombo in May 2012. Dr. De Datta noted that the College of Agriculture had been established there with assistance from Virginia Tech.

7. Hokies Abroad

Laurie Brogdon, Director of Multicultural Alumni Affairs, provided an update on the international alumni association and the opportunities it offers for networking, attending receptions, and recruiting speakers. She added that the number of active members is relatively small since it can be a challenge to contact potential new members as the organization largely depends upon responses to emails. She asked that

faculty be encouraged to help publicize the organization. She will break down the numbers of members by college and distribute the information to council members.

8. Recruitment of Alumni Awards review committee

Debra Stoudt called for volunteers to serve on this subcommittee. Nominations will be due in early December; the committee will convene in January to review the submissions and choose awardees for Excellence in International Education, International Outreach, and International Research. Don Back had previously volunteered to be on the committee with Debra Stoudt; Marilyn King agreed to serve as well. Dr. Dooley urged the UCIA to spread the word about these honors, each of which carries a \$2000 award.

There were no additional items to discuss and the meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m. The next meeting will be held Monday, November 22, from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at the International Affairs Offices.