

UCIA Meeting  
Monday, November 22, 2010  
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
International Affairs Office, Meeting Room A

*Present:*

Lynda Bailey, *Assistant Registrar for Transfer, Office of the Registrar*  
Kim Beisecker, *Director, Cranwell International Center*  
Mike Bertelsen, *Associate Director, OIRED*  
Cynthia Bonner, *Student Affairs*  
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*  
Monika Gibson, *Director of Student Services, Graduate School*  
Reed Kennedy, *Instructor of Management, Director of International Programs,  
Pamplin College of Business*  
Miriam Rich, *Communications Coordinator, OIRED*  
Nicole Sanderlin, *Director of International Programs, College of Engineering*  
Barry Simmons, *Financial Aid*  
Debra Stoudt, *Associate Dean for Academic Policies and Procedures, CLAHS*  
Susan Sumner, *Academic Program, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences*

*Guests:*

Frances Keene, *Director, Office of Student Conduct*

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

Debra Stoudt called the meeting to order and, prior to asking all participants to introduce themselves, noted that minutes from the October meeting had been distributed previously for review. There were no further corrections and Dr. Stoudt declared them approved as submitted.

**2. Education Abroad updates**

- Health insurance

Reed Kennedy updated the group on the progress made by the health insurance subcommittee, which continues to research the best policy for students. Ian Leuschner, the Assistant Director for Visa Services, has joined the group. Reed stated that an early suggestion was to piggyback on the RFP that Old Dominion University has, but closer investigation reveals that that policy is not well-suited to the needs of Virginia Tech. The group will work with the Department of Human Resources and the Procurement Office to explore other options, and hopes to have more information to present at the December meeting. Reed stated that issues have also come to light regarding insurance coverage for the faculty members traveling. Debra Stoudt asked what information should be given to groups preparing to leave for the summer semester programs; Reed replied that for now the current process should be followed as the prices have already been set and the insurance cannot be made mandatory at this point. He added that the biggest drawback to the ODU policy was its restrictions on pre-existing conditions. Susan Sumner referenced a risk assessment session she attended at the recent Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) meeting and provided some handouts that had been

distributed at the session, noting that there may be no 'best answer' for the situation. Barry Simmons requested that ODU be consulted to see why they accepted a policy that disallowed preexisting conditions; Reed replied that he will follow up with Jeremy to investigate this. Dr. Dooley asked for further clarification regarding the issues with the faculty policies. Reed stated that there are different pre-departure requirements for travel lasting more than thirty days, as well as selection of in- and out-of-network providers. The Benefits section of the Department of Human Resources is working with the subcommittee to provide more comprehensive information. Kim Beisecker reminded them that for \$22 an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) could be purchased; they can be used for faculty and staff as well and include services such as medical evacuation. Debra Stoudt asked that further updates be offered when available.

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

Frances Keene reported that faculty have been very proactive in contacting her to express their support for and interest in having student conduct records information be made available to them prior to embarking on study abroad trips. Dr. Dooley stated that adequate faculty feedback has been received and it was time to move forward to create a policy strategy. Ms. Keene clarified that the issue focuses primarily on behavioral-based incidents and less on academic and honors violations, for which there are other sanctions already in place that could affect participation in study abroad programs. She differentiated between probation, active sanctions, and deferred suspensions, and reiterated that it would be strongly recommended that students with active sanctions not be allowed to participate in study abroad trips. John Browder asked if these incidents could be disclosed by completion of forms submitted through Studio Abroad. Nicole Sanderlin commented that the College of Engineering does not submit names to Studio Abroad until after the students have been accepted into programs; she described how the college recently used the Office of Student Conduct to screen applicants to their programs and discovered a participant whose candidacy was denied based on the information gleaned. Dr. Dooley asked about the complexity of the process; Nicole replied that she only had to provide the name and ID number of applicants. Ms. Keene added that the information could be provided on a spreadsheet or that copies of the signed disclosure forms could be given to the office. Kim Beisecker expressed concerns that a pending referral could have a negative impact on the decision-making process before an actual judicial referral took place. Nicole explained that their decision was made after the student in question had received a second referral soon after the first one. Dr. Browder inquired if the application process could commence in Studio Abroad in order to facilitate tracking the application process; a self-disclosure form could be added. Dr. Dooley noted that this had been brought up in earlier discussions but the consensus had been to opt for a more proactive approach to investigating the applicants. Debra Stoudt added that students often check boxes without fully comprehending the implications and may unintentionally misrepresent themselves, and Ms. Keene noted that an option for self-disclosure would not necessarily save many steps. Dr. Browder expressed concerns that yet another administrative task might discourage faculty from organizing study abroad programs. Dr. Dooley reiterated that the goal of the discussion is to identify the best way to achieve a quality experience for all student and faculty participants based on assumptions that certain behavioral patterns tend to be repeated. He noted that there are two choices to implement an effective system: ask students to voluntarily disclose any information about past referrals or collect participant data for use in discovery. Several faculty members were still hesitant about different factors that could affect the decision-making process, especially given the targeted program growth. Ms. Keene reminded the group that the recommendation for denial would only be applicable to students with active sanctions, although information would be available regarding other incidents as well. Reed Kennedy offered the example of a situation which took place at Riva earlier in the semester that could have led to a suspension for a student currently on probation. Lynda Bailey stated that faculty leaders should be made well aware of

the distinctions between the classifications of sanctions. John Browder agreed that the policy should be tried for one year, based on deferred suspensions and other active sanctions, and the records check be conducted one week after applications are received. Debra Stoudt recalled that Ms. Keene had recommended doing two checks, one at the onset of the application process and the other a few weeks prior to departure. She also inquired what would be done about potential loss of revenue as a result of denying participation to a student, and John Browder noted that a student dropping out of a program could result in a revenue loss of \$7000. Ms. Keene stated that the timing of the checks could be customized based on how and when the faculty wished to receive the information. It was noted that there can be many factors involved in the selection process and that program leaders have different standards and make their decisions based on a number of considerations. Barry Simmons recommended that some sort of training be offered to program leaders to help facilitate the decision making process. Dr. Dooley agreed that faculty who already make the initial decisions regarding acceptance should be the ones consulting the Office of Student Conduct in making the final choices; training will enable them act in their best judgment in the best interest of all faculty and students and the university will be able to defend them if necessary. This procedure can start in 2011, beginning with the summer semester; Ms. Keene will revise the September 30 memo and send this out to everyone. Monika Gibson requested that the information regarding graduate students remain unchanged. The students will be required to sign and date a form that includes their student ID number and gives consent to have their records checked; it will be beneficial to have their signature on a form. These forms will be required one week after applications are turned in, with the records check taking place two weeks after the form is received. Ms. Keene said the office would attempt to process the investigations quicker than that, although there are busy times in the office that may slow down the procedure. Cynthia Bonner suggested a sample release form be placed on the Education Abroad website for faculty to use as a template. Frances Keene also stated that refusal to sign a form would constitute an incomplete application. Dr. Dooley asked if a check could be done without the signature; Debra Stoudt replied that the wording could state that the acceptance is contingent upon the check. Barry Simmons raised two points for consideration: who would review the process and evaluate its success after the initial year, and how to manage the timing of the form with the receipt of the non-refundable deposits often required in conjunction with applications. Ms. Keene will work on the language of the form, reminding everyone that the success of this endeavor depends on its adaptation as a university-wide initiative, uniformly implemented across departments and colleges. The process will be evaluated in December 2011.

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

S.K. De Datta, Director of the Office of International Research, Education, and Development, gave a presentation on current projects and initiatives taking place within the department. OIRED reports to the Office of the Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs and includes the Education Abroad Office, two USAID-funded Collaborative Research Support Projects, and the International Support Services unit, which offers support to international faculty through visa processing, MOUs, and VIP visits. His presentation offered highlights of the various endeavors, all of which include a strong gender component; additionally, several of the partnerships include collaborations with 1890 institutions. Dr. Dooley noted that there is growing demand for identifying undergraduate research and suggested there be an increased focus on identifying and emphasizing these numbers.

#### **5. TOEFL and exchange students**

Susan Sumner introduced this topic, which had come to her attention when a Biological Systems Engineering faculty member began a dialogue with Jeremy Billetdeaux in the Education Abroad Office regarding students from Brazil who wished to participate in an exchange program, but did not have

qualifying TOEFL scores. Additionally, there is an imbalance in the numbers of students exchanged between the university involved and Virginia Tech. Lynda Bailey noted that there are three types of TOEFL tests, a paper-based, a computer-based, and a web-based, all of which have different scoring. It was noted that other universities, such as the University of Florida, do not have this requirement, and the discussion was opened for considerations. Lynda Bailey felt that Jill Wells, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions, should be present to address the issue, adding that the admissions office enforces policies but does not set them. Kim Beisecker concurred that these requirements were established a long time ago and have not been updated, but it would be beneficial to have Jill present for any future dialogue on the subject. There are other categories for provisional admissions, such as taking classes at the Language and Culture Institute until a certain grade is achieved. Dr. Dooley added that the UCIA can influence and direct policy, suggesting that some flexibility may be in order given the circumstances, and asked if this issue should be explored and revisited, or if council members felt the requirements should be firmly upheld. Kim Beisecker noted that as an alternate strategy, Cranwell has sometimes changed students' statuses to that of interns. Debra Stoudt replied that requests have been made by VT partner institutions to waive the test and grant exchange students a preferential status. There is a fairly rigorous process for selection for these programs, yet things should be more flexible to accommodate the needs of the partner institutions. There are also concerns that exchange students be fully capable of participating in the classes in which they are enrolled and that those classes be appropriate to their studies. It was noted that the TOEFL is also not always indicative of the level of English fluency; Nicole Sanderlin asked what would serve as the replacement metric for the TOEFL. Barry Simmons inquired about the admissions standards in other ACC institutions. Dr. Dooley replied that he can investigate how this is managed and if exemptions are made; he will follow up with ACC schools as well as peer institutions within the Commonwealth. Dr. De Datta expressed concerns that students not be placed in a situation that could set them up for failure.

There were no additional items to discuss and the meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m. The next one will take place on Monday, December 13, from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.