

UCIA Meeting
Monday, December 13, 2010
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
International Affairs Office, Meeting Room A

Present:

Don Back, *Director, Language and Culture Institute*
Lynda Bailey, *Assistant Registrar for Transfer, Office of the Registrar*
Mike Bertelsen, *Associate Director, OIRED*
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*
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*
Richard Shryock, *Department Chair, Foreign Languages and Literatures*
Debra Stoudt, *Associate Dean for Academic Policies and Procedures, CLAHS*
Wendy Vaughan, *Enrollment Services Specialist, College of Architecture and Urban Studies*

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

Debra Stoudt called the meeting to order and asked participants to introduce themselves. Minutes from the November meeting had been previously distributed for review; a motion to accept them was made by Reed Kennedy and seconded by Lynda Bailey.

Dr. Stoudt announced several changes to the itinerary. Jeremy Billetdeaux was unable to attend the meeting but had provided updates to share with the group. Several scholarships administered through the Education Abroad office had been awarded for the coming semester; amounts varied from \$500 to \$1000 and included ACC, OIRED, and Phi Beta Delta scholarships. A pre-departure orientation session had been held recently. Preliminary reports indicate that the numbers of outbound students for the coming semester are high; currently there are 335 participants registered, an increase from 276 from the same time frame last year, although the office is still awaiting final confirmation. There will also be forty incoming exchange students.

Dr. Stoudt reported that the November COIA meeting had been cancelled, but topics during the December meeting that were of relevance to UCIA members included restructuring of the Virginia Cooperative Extension program and the Alumni Awards. The COIA members agreed to move the deadline for next year's submissions of the awards to January in order to be more synchronized with the other award timelines. Dr. Dooley called for additional discussion on this subject, wondering why these prestigious awards receive so few nominations. The process is not terribly complicated but it is time consuming for faculty; publicity could also be better. Dr. De Datta added that the issue of the timeline had been discussed extensively at the COIA meeting and Jack Davis (CAUS) stated that it should be the responsibility of each college/department to get the word out and solicit nominations. Dr. Dooley suggested that since each college has individual awards, one consideration might be to take those award winners and put them into the pool for nominations. Although there may be slightly different criteria for those awards, there can be some modifications made for requirements and timelines. Lynda Bailey proposed a hybrid solution wherein college award winners be considered along with other nominees.

Don Back asked if the award amount could be increased to make it more enticing; Dr. Dooley replied that the stipend for all the alumni awards is the same (\$2000). Wendy Vaughan noted that some colleges do not have awards programs in each category. UCIA college representatives can investigate this subject and the committee can continue to explore ways to increase visibility and participation.

2. Student Conduct on Study Abroad Programs

Frances Keene of the Office of Student Conduct was unable to attend the meeting but Lynda Bailey presented a draft copy of a release form for the Undergraduate Honor System she had developed with input from Wanda Dean. The language was consistent with FERPA guidelines, which state that the release be program leader and term specific; the release had also been sent to legal counsel for their review. Debra Stoudt recalled concerns from Jeremy Billetdeaux that the Education Abroad office would become by default the clearinghouse for this information and suggested that the language be altered to clarify that the recipient of the information could be either the faculty program leader or a representative from the Education Abroad office. John Dooley reminded the group that in recommending policy the best interests of the university should be kept in mind. Although there are several types of study abroad programs such as third-party providers and direct exchanges, faculty-led programs are unique and ultimately it is those leaders are the ones who determine which students are accepted; it is important to consider whether this records check is an added value for them. Dr. De Datta also pointed out that there are benefits to having the information come through one centralized location in order to stay informed and involved but not necessarily a direct part of the decision-making process. Lynda Bailey added that there would not be a formal investigation but rather the procedure would serve as a variable in the decision-making process. Dr. Dooley reviewed the following points that should be kept in mind during the discussion:

- the program leader is the ultimate decision maker;
- determining the role of the Education Abroad office;
- academic standing and financial issues are also variables in the decision making process;
- the university does have a stake in the process once a student is involved and committed to attending a program.

Lynda Bailey wondered if it would be beneficial to create several forms to differentiate between the records checks requested by student conduct and the undergraduate honor system, as well as the different types of programs. Dr. Dooley raised the point that once leaders have made their selections and students' information is entered into Studio Abroad, there should be a point of contact to whom subsequent violations are reported; faculty leaders would be the primary contact but the Education Abroad office could also have some level of information. Discussion ensued as to whether there should be single or multiple forms for the various programs and entities. Lynda Bailey offered to work on a draft that would have clear distinctions between the types of programs and would also be consistent with FERPA requirements. Debra Stoudt noted that programs are already recruiting for next summer. Lynda Bailey asked how the second records check immediately prior to departure would be handled, and Dr. Dooley recommended altering the language in the third paragraph to include a reference to the additional check. Lynda will provide a draft for council members to review. Reed Kennedy recommended including the name of the program as well. Debra Stoudt asked if the forms would also specify what actions would be taken if a student who applied was in the process of adjudication or received a disqualifying sanction after initiating the process; Reed Kennedy replied that these issues are addressed in other applications and forms that students are required to complete. Dr. De Datta reminded the group that the aim is not to discourage students from participating through complex and intimidating application processes but rather to encourage their participation and grow programs.

3. TOEFL

John Dooley recapped this discussion that had begun with an inquiry to CALS regarding admission of exchange students who did not meet TOEFL score requirements. He provided handouts containing information about policies of Virginia commonwealth institutions which demonstrated that Virginia Tech's policies are consistent with those of other schools. Dr. Dooley felt that exemptions would not work for this case and that there were no compelling reasons to pursue this, as it was only the second time that this request was brought forward for consideration. Reed Kennedy suggested that work could be done with the LCI and Don Back commented that the Graduate School also makes some exceptions for the language requirements. Dr. Dooley noted that the students in question were undergraduates from a Brazilian university and students in a similar situation at the University of Florida had done well. Debra Stoudt concurred that since there was no strong dissent, the policy can remain as is and Dr. Dooley will advise CALS. Don Back added that the topic may need to be revisited in the future point as there are often frustrations expressed with the language abilities of students, especially verbal. He stated that the internet-based TOEFL scores are more accurate than paper tests, as test takers must also speak into the computer and the grading provides a more effective means of assessing language capabilities. He added that exams are indicative of skills, but the courses here are still demanding.

4. Health insurance

Reed Kennedy reported that the health insurance sub-committee would be meeting with Purchasing next week to begin work on the RFP process as well as with representatives from the Benefits section of Human Resources to discuss the Anthem policy coverage for faculty traveling overseas. He noted that while traveling overseas faculty usually has to pay medical expenses upfront but the costs are later recovered; however, Anthem requires detailed pre-departure information. A comprehensive update will be provided at a future meeting.

5. Update on International Initiatives

Richard Shryock of Foreign Languages and Literatures gave a presentation on departmental activities. He also included results of a recent report from the Modern Language Association that presented data on trends and directions in the study of languages nationwide, which shows that studies of Asian languages are increasing but overall European languages remain the most popular. The College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences is hoping to add a major in Russian soon as well as a minor in Italian. Another option being explored is the addition of distance learning classes held in real time. The Office of the Provost is offering support for all these initiatives; interest is also being generated through programs such as film festivals held at the Lyric Theater, the Global Learning-Living Community, and the Reema Samaha Arabic Language and Culture Initiative. Many of these activities have resulted from implementation of the international strategic plan as well as the task force on language competency. Dr. Shryock will share copies of his presentation to council members. Dr. De Datta asked how students can be better prepared to perform in the global environment. Dr. Shryock replied that more and longer exchange programs are being offered, in addition to increased classroom time; there is a trend to hold up to five classroom sessions per week for more difficult languages. He noted that there is considerable support from the Board of Visitors for foreign language initiatives and each year the department has had increased resources. This will help facilitate additional programs such as an Arabic language instructor, a position which they hope to fill by early next semester.

Don Back will provide an update next month on the Language and Culture Institute.

There were no additional items to discuss and the meeting was adjourned at 3:07 p.m. The next meeting will be held Monday, January 24, from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at the International Affairs Offices.