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International Programs minutes 02/23/2015

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International Programs Committee [approved March 23, 2015]

February 23, 2015, Prairie Lounge, 2:15pm-3:15pm

In attendance: Sarah Ashkar, Tinu Bello, Viktor Berberi, Ed Brands, Sheri Breen, Pilar Eble, Stephanie Ferrian, Leslie Gubash-Lindberg, Declan McCrory, Marynel Ryan Van Zee, Amber Whittemore

Absent: Yuka Nagasaki

1. Welcome/Introductions

The IPC welcomed new student member Declan McCrory.

2. Approval of January minutes

The minutes were approved unanimously and will be submitted to the Digital Well.

3. Next meeting time

The next meeting will be held March 23, 2015, at 2:15pm. The chair will send an invitation via Google Calendar.

4. Update on IPC-SLF grant initiative

Marynel provided an update on the process; the amounts were set and revisions were made to the applications. Clement has provided feedback and Marynel expects to send the applications out to the employee listserv later this week, with a due date of March 20, 2015.

5. Report on spring Study Abroad Scholarship application cycle

Over fifty applications were received. The subcommittee has made decisions and notifications will go out this week.

6. Presentation of 2 ACE/study abroad matters by Sarah Ashkar

Sarah provided a recap of the reasons behind creating a policy about students going on non-affiliated programs (state reporting policy, Board of Regents policy). Sarah Ashkar, Viktor Berberi, and Amber Whittemore met in November to discuss our options.

Sarah identified the elements of the law and Board of Regents policy that she believes make it sensible for us to adopt a UMM policy with regard to non-U of MN programs.

We are now required to report to Stacy Tsantir any incidents that occur with U of MN students on any study abroad program that involve death or hospitalization. This can be tricky if the program is not run by a program provider with whom we have an agreement; we cannot be certain that the program provider (or the student) will share information with us about any given incident.

The Board of Regents policy on non-affiliated programs (<http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Student/EDABROAD.html>) covers credit and non-credit programs; the state law covers only credit-bearing programs. The Board of Regents policy applies to all programs promoted in any way through the University of Minnesota [there is a very low threshold for what is defined as 'promoted' – Sarah gave an example of simply forwarding an email to a student with the recommendation to consider the program]. We are required to pursue due diligence examination of any program that will be promoted [again, with this wide definition] before promotion, as follows:

Complete a due diligence review of all programs before promoting them to University students.

Due diligence reviews will be conducted in compliance with best practices in the field of education abroad including those sanctioned by [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#) and the [Forum on Education Abroad](#). The unit will document the processes used and the results of the review. Core questions and assistance are available from the education abroad offices and the Director of International Health, Safety and Compliance. [this text is taken from "Preparing for Student Travel and Education Abroad (Units) at http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Student/EDABROAD_PROC03.html]

Sarah recommends that students who, during fall, spring or for an academic year [not for summer terms, because summer is not considered a required term], go on a non-affiliated program, should take a leave of absence. This is the policy followed by the Learning Abroad Center and some other units. We should, in any case, be looking closely at programs with which we would affiliate, checking their policies, academic rigor, etc. Sarah explained which programs would be affected/not affected. All programs affiliated in any way to any U of MN campus would not be affected – our students could continue to participate without any additional action; we are also in the process of affiliating with ISA, (currently our single largest non-affiliated provider, so there won't be any issues with our students' use of their programs.

We will track interest in non-affiliated programs to ascertain whether we should affiliate with given programs; it seems unlikely that this will truly limit students' choices because there is such a large number/variety of programs available to students through the U of MN. Questions were raised about whatever financial aid ramifications this will have; how credits would be evaluated [provisional status until the program is completed]; and the quality of non-affiliated programs.

One member of the committee asked what it would mean if a professor simply said 'yes, that looks good' when a student asked about a program. Sarah affirmed that would not count as promotion; there's no authority to actually approve programs among the faculty/advisors.

The question for us is whether we want to move toward a policy that covers non-affiliated programs in order to meet our legal obligations. Sarah will distribute the proposed policy and we can offer our responses before it is shared by ACE with Dean Finzel.

The second matter of interest is related to the initiation of exchange agreements between UMM and universities abroad. Sarah indicated that it seems that this year, we have an unusually large number of

efforts by faculty to initiate exchange agreements; Pilar Eble was asked to comment. Pilar described how there was little activity in the years following the establishment of existing agreements. Bart encouraged Pilar to check into agreements with some universities at the NAFSA conference and he described the process of creating exchanges as based on 'opportunities.' Existing arrangements have been the result of faculty members seeing and reacting to opportunities with a variety of universities abroad. There has not been a systematic way to manage this. Bart has suggested that a faculty member should also attend NAFSA in order to have an additional UMM person involved.

Another issue was that faculty would begin this process but emails would then sit in mailboxes and nothing would happen; Pilar has been helping to move things along. The templates UMM uses to establish exchanges are coming from the Office of General Counsel.

Sarah indicated that if bilateral exchanges happen, ACE must be involved and that someone experienced with study abroad issues in general should also be involved in the systematic development of exchanges. Students have also shown up in ACE with recruitment materials (cost sheets, etc.) for programs based on agreements that are not yet signed; at least one faculty member this year has invited personnel from a Korean university to meet with and recruit students and has tried to create a summer program without any consultation with ACE or the Study Abroad Advocate on the Enrichment Council.

Given these recent experiences, Sarah suggest that we should have some kind of standard procedure through which exchanges are initiated/have some people who are empowered to be the points of contact for this process/etc. Sarah would like IPC to recommend to Bart that this happen; having a discussion about who should do this and who should serve as the point persons should take place in IPC. Pilar had expected that the ACE coordinator would be the point person but that has not been the case.

Formal site visits are also important. Sarah does not know whether these ever happened with our existing exchanges [if they did happen, there has been no follow-up for a long time]; site visits have a whole variety of components and people must be trained to do those things in order for exchanges to be managed correctly. ACE personnel met with GPS personnel during summer 2014 and received some templates for site visits; these are far more than just a visit of administrators to confirm arrangements and sign paperwork.

Marynel will contact Dean Finzel to share some of our concerns and ask if the IPC is free to have a conversation about this [about new programs being initiated, about current programs being maintained, and about making recommendations to the dean].

8. New business

As no new business was introduced, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15pm.

Minutes submitted by Marynel Ryan Van Zee