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International Programs minutes 03/23/2015

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International Programs Committee [approved April 20, 2015]

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

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

Absent: Pilar Eble, Stephanie Ferrian

1. Approval of February minutes

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

2. Next meeting

April 20, 2015, at 2:15pm was proposed as a date for the next meeting. Because a few committee members cannot make that date and time, the chair will attempt to find another common time that week (with the caveat that this Monday time has been the only common time available in recent months).

3. Update on concern with process of establishing exchanges

Marynel shared Dean Finzel's response to our query about whether we can continue to consider this issue and offer some suggestions. We agreed to continue our discussion of the issue and pursue agreement on some suggestions to make.

4. Update on IPC-SLF grant initiative

Three applications were received and two projects (both for on-campus courses) will be funded. The recipients will be notified this week.

6. Update on May/summer programs

The Nepal program has been cancelled; the Malaysia program will be going with 6 students. In total, four out of the six planned programs will run this year.

7. Update on non-affiliated program policy

There were still concerns and questions surrounding the non-affiliated program policy, so Sarah sent 5 questions to Stacey Tsantir and followed up with a phone conversation (Aaron, Stacey and Sarah) to ascertain how the policy will be implemented and how that affects us. Sarah recommends that we still have a non-affiliated policy for all the reasons we've already discussed.

Stacey is working with the LAC folks to clean up the policy language/process. Once we hear from her that the language has been cleaned up and we have a model to use, we can use the LAC's policy to draft a policy for UMM. The policy should make it onerous to the student to participate in a non-affiliated program; this would most likely involve a petition process. The student would need to prove that the program they intend to pursue meets an academic need that is unavailable through any U of MN (-affiliated) program.

The situation with our Sullivan scholarship winner this year is a perfect illustration of why we might need a petition process for a non-affiliated program. She can use the Sullivan scholarship of \$25,000 to either cover the entire cost of a non-affiliated but reputable international student enrollment at the University of Copenhagen, or use it to cover between half and two-thirds of the cost of DIS, an affiliated program that essentially offers the same courses through the University of Copenhagen. It makes perfect sense that she pursue the non-affiliated program.

How would a student prove that a given program meets an academic need that cannot be met through a U of MN (-affiliate) program? What evidence would be required? Sarah explained that academic programs would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and questions would include things about the courses offered, etc.

Viktor asked about the reporting element. How would we ensure compliance? Since this would be on a case-by-case and individualized basis, we could enforce an agreement on reporting as part of the approval process.

Sarah explained the different consequences between the experience of a student whose petition was approved and the experience of a student whose petition was not approved (e.g., if they go on a non-approved, non-affiliated program, they must go as a non-UMM student).

Sarah also clarified some of the differences between support and promotion. Support means keeping them as UMM students and allowing them to take UMM financial aid. Promotion means going beyond that. A policy would discourage students from going on non-affiliated programs, would help guarantee that we meet our reporting obligations, and would help us remain aware of how, when and with whom students study abroad.

Sarah provided statistical information to give us a picture of how many students would be affected. Numbers have been dropping every year since Sarah has been here; many students who are currently using non-affiliated programs are choosing ISA, a program provider with which we are creating an affiliation agreement because it is so popular with UMM students.

In terms of timing, the policy refinement should be finished soon and Sarah would ask for input/IPC involvement in creating the UMM petition process. Sarah would probably create a prototype and share it with us (similar to what has been done with the policy document). She asks that an IPC subcommittee review the non-affiliated program petitions.

Next steps: Sarah will revise our policy document, create a model for a petition process, and share it with the IPC via Google Docs for comment.

8. New Business

We decided to return to a discussion of our concerns about the way(s) that exchange programs are established. Faculty establishment of exchanges has been encouraged, but not structured in any way, and that has caused confusion.

An important question is what constitutes an exchange. How does an exchange differ from a faculty-led study abroad program? Currently, we have bilateral, semester-long exchanges. They do not have to be bilateral, they

can vary in length, etc., but it is important to establish how they are different from faculty-led study abroad programs.

We have a clear, known system in place for approving study abroad programs but no such system in place for approving exchanges. With respect to Bart's response to our query, it is an open question whether having a system in place would discourage or encourage faculty innovation. Would faculty be more willing to work on establishing exchanges if there was an actual system in place?

Sheri noted that she's sympathetic to keeping openness that allows creativity, but she really advocates that we have a clear sense of the difference between study abroad proposals and the creation of exchanges. We don't want faculty to circumvent the process we have for the former, but we don't want to limit creativity in terms of thinking expansively about exchanges that they might initiate.

Viktor asked if we could simply notify all teaching faculty that if they are interested, there is someone to keep in the loop/to ask for support [even if that support isn't financial, as Bart has indicated that there is no money to offer].

Sarah also raised the issue of maintenance and sustainability of our agreements, and ongoing assurance that the exchanges serve all parties well. The Board of Regents policy requires due diligence and that's very hard to ensure without site visits, etc.

How would a site visit work? We could put together a tool kit to facilitate this. Points of consideration might include academic rigor, emergency plans, health and safety procedures of other sorts, housing quality, accessibility issues, etc. There is a NAFSA set of best practices and there is an LAC set of best practices and Sarah gave a combined version that she created (adding some appropriate questions that were missing) to Pilar, Stacey and Hilda, who have just been in Mexico working on establishing a new exchange.

Larger questions: Are we duplicating efforts geographically? Do we need a strategy/set of ideas about our priorities for internationalization through exchanges? How do our efforts mesh with LAC exchanges/efforts? UMM-specific exchanges are very beneficial in certain ways. For example, students with the Native American tuition waiver cannot use it on an LAC exchange.

It seems important to blend a strategy or set of priorities for internationalization with faculty connections, interests, etc., but the information alone that faculty should contact someone in particular at UMM if they are interested in establishing an exchange might be enough as a start.

The committee agreed to keep this issue on the agenda for the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15pm.

Minutes submitted by Marynel Ryan Van Zee