

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

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International Programs Committee (Inactive)

Campus Governance

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International Programs Minutes 04/20/2015

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International Programs Committee

April 20, 2015, Prairie Lounge, 2:15pm-3:15pm

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

Absent: Pilar Eble, Leslie Gubash-Lindberg

1. Approval of March minutes

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

2. Additional issues related to exchange programs

We returned to our discussion of issues related to the establishment and maintenance of exchange programs.

Sarah Ashkar recently created a form for site visits, drawing on the NAFSA template and the LAC template, and offered it to Stacey Parker Aronson and Pilar Eble for their Mexico exchange visit. She has not yet received a response from them, but this might serve as a model for our future form.

After a discussion later redacted from the minutes due to a misunderstanding about whether a faculty member was seeking information about an exchange or a short-term program with a sports university in South Korea, Marynel requested the committee's approval to add a requirement to the curricular development grant applications that grantees speak with the faculty advocate before they go on a reconnaissance trip for planning a study abroad program. The committee agreed to this idea and Marynel will convey this to the next IPC chair.

A few other questions were discussed, in terms of long-term planning. If we are looking for exchange partners in countries where we already have exchanges, we should be clear about what niche the partner fills/what is provided by any new exchange.

The Potsdam exchange has been approved; the question was raised of how it was established (what was the process like?) and Sarah Ashkar indicated that she only came into the discussion late in the process to help handle the students' process.

Stephanie Ferrian reminded the committee that Sarah Buchanan has established an exchange recently and that she will soon be the Faculty Advocate again. She will be in a good position to help faculty interested in establishing exchanges, although it's not clear that the Faculty Advocate will always have the requisite expertise or experience in this area.

Marynel asked if we should suggest a process, a conversation about strategy and capacity, etc., as part of the planning of exchanges. Based on the committee's response, Marynel offered to draft a statement for Dean Bart Finzel with some recommendations.

--Many potential exchange opportunities have come up this year

--We have good recommendations to share that are not about filling out forms and other minutiae but are about finding the right people to talk to, task with, etc.

--We are not interested in suggesting locations but in being careful about existing partnerships, etc. [example: Could setting up a new exchange agreement in Korea cause difficulties with Yonsei? Shouldn't we find out?]

3. New Business

Viktor Berberi asked if the cancellations of short-term programs the past two years has had anything to do with the LAC agreement, and Sarah Ashkar, Stephanie Ferrian and Sheri Breen were asked to comment.

Some important questions are how close the programs were to their minimum enrollment, and how and why the potential pool of study abroad applicants at UMM divides among programs.

The usual orchestra tour shifted to a study abroad program this year, so even that large number of students that we might see as part of a potential 'pool' would not necessarily have chosen another study abroad program; they are students interested in an orchestra trip.

Sarah stated that she sees no reason that the LAC agreement would have a *negative* impact; For example, the Malaysia program would probably be one we couldn't run without LAC support [they are running it with a very low number of students].

Currently, we don't have a fund to cover deficits that would make it possible for us to run programs at a loss; the LAC has actually recommended that we add a small per-student administrative fee to support the development of such a fund. The Malaysia program would have been cancelled and it would have happened earlier if it were handled at UMM.

Sheri reminded us that UMM has a history of cancellations; it may seem like there's a concentration recently, but these are not unprecedented. Sheri recommends that we develop some way of understanding how to balance among priorities (difficult vs. easy programs, our capacity to fill a number of short-term programs each year, etc.) and think in terms of resolving this problem over the next several years. Sarah concurred that this would be a useful endeavor and advocated that we think about how many programs we can actually fill; all of this would be done with the goal of reducing cancellations. Sarah also noted that students who apply for cancelled programs are not simply transferring to other programs; they had specific reasons to choose the programs they did and they generally have not chosen an alternative program.

Sheri will ask LAC what happens if a program runs a surplus, and where that money goes. Viktor and Marynel have a vague recollection of some kind of 'slush fund' existing. We need transparency about this; if there is a surplus coming in, where is it going?

Viktor asked if there's a way of tracking what has happened over the past several years in a way that would help us plan for the future in a more systematic way. For example, if we see a pattern of programs being cancelled when a large music trip is going, should that affect our planning?

Agenda items for next year/future:

This may not be an item for next year, but may need attention sooner: We still have difficulty figuring out how to assign credits to short-term study abroad programs and we need a clearer policy. Where should this policy originate? This has been handled as an approval process through Curriculum

Committee; they have made policy decisions from time-to-time (e.g., recent experience with July in Paris) but it would be good to have guidelines.

Sheri explained that the 'rule of thumb' is 1 credit per week, but we have exceptions that don't match that and we have to be clear on why exceptions are made. The LAC policy includes thinking about instruction hours, class time, active academic work as opposed to guided tours, informal work, etc.

1 credit per week as standard seems fine, but it would be good to articulate what the norm is for that 'average' week so that it's clear what constitutes an exception.

Sheri noted that this is another case where there's a tension between creativity and structure/system because all programs are not the same. Sheri will be working a bit on this over the summer and she invites IPC participation either individually or as a group if people want to be involved.

Ed asked about whether we survey why students do or don't choose study abroad at UMM [there is national research]; it could be a good planning tool. Multiple potential questions were mentioned that could be included.

Finally, Sarah Ashkar asked if IPC should continue to meet monthly, or consider more frequent meetings. Perhaps more could be accomplished over the course of the year through more frequent meetings of the committee as a whole or more assignments for subcommittees. All noted the difficulties of scheduling such a large group, especially since this is not a Core Standing Committee and some of its members have multiple service commitments.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15pm.

Minutes submitted by Marynel Ryan Van Zee