The membership of the Advisory Committee on International Study (ACIS) for the 2007-08 academic year consisted of the following individuals:

Erica Bastress-Dukehart, History, Chair and CEPP representative
Sylvia Franke, Biology
Leslie Mechem, Classics
Paty Rubio, Foreign Languages & Literatures
Cori Filson, Director, OCSE
Marie Alice Arnold, Senior Program Coordinator, OCSE
Tina Breakell, Program Coordinator, OCSE

The committee met 6 times this year.

OCSE MISSION STATEMENT:

In 2007-2008 the Office of International Programs changed its name to the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges, and thus, adjusted its Mission Statement to more accurately reflect the changing nature of the office and the launch of domestic exchange initiatives. A new OCSE Mission Statement was created, reported to CEPP, approved, and has since been instated. Additionally, in light of the Mission Statement change, the ACIS charge and name as it pertains to domestic and international study was reviewed. The name was still deemed accurate by ACIS, and it was determined that no adjustments were necessary and the charge stands as CEPP had originally created, with the exception of the name change from "Office of International Programs" to "Off-Campus Study & Exchanges."

DOMESTIC OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

During 2007-2008 OCSE broadened its portfolio of domestic programs. With the addition of programs, ACIS's advisory role to OCSE also increased.

Last spring OCSE began to administer the National Student Exchange (NSE) program. (NSE is a 3-year pilot program that will be brought to CEPP at the end of the three-year term to determine if the program should be formalized or terminated.) This year ACIS continued to review this program as it developed, and also to offer advice regarding potential future agreements between Skidmore and other domestic institutions, including Spelman College and Howard University.

In addition, OCSE added two other domestic off-campus study programs to its portfolio: the Washington Semester and Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory. Historically, the Dean of Studies has administered these programs. This structure existed before OIP/OCSE was established. With the creation of OIP/OCSE and the subsequent expansion of OCSE’s portfolio to include domestic programs, shifting these two programs to OCSE made sense. Administratively OCSE is better prepared to support the departments and the students interested in applying to these programs. There was also discussion of OCSE administering the Dartmouth 3-2 program. However, upon further discussion with the Dean of Studies and faculty from Physics and Math, it was determined that this is truly a degree program (not an off-campus study program) and should remain under the Dean of Studies umbrella.

As ACIS chair, Erica Bastress-Dukehart will bring further NSE and domestic initiatives to CEPP this summer, including the recommendation that ACIS maintain its advisory role regarding domestic initiatives.

APPROVED PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS
In the initial conversations regarding approved programs, OCSE and ACIS agreed that the number of programs listed on the complete approved programs list could not grow to over 125 programs. It was also agreed that adding a program to a department’s list would necessitate that the department eliminate one of the current program options. This was communicated to the departments and programs during the AP list development stage.

During 2007-2008 ACIS discussed the need to review and revise the approved programs lists. OCSE shared with the committee enrollment data, divided by study abroad program and by major since the inception of the approved programs policy (fall 2005 – fall 2007). This data, along with the data from the non-approved program petition process, will be analyzed for program utilization in an attempt to assess the appropriateness of programs on each departmental list. There are some programs on the list in which no students have enrolled.

The committee discussed the process and potential policies surrounding the review and revision of the AP lists. Specifically, ACIS wondered if a policy should be created that would automatically remove programs after a specified period of non enrollment. The committee also discussed creating a policy to enforce the practice of removing a program before being able to add one. Instead, OCSE prefers to approach this through conversations with departments and programs. The committee thought that was a good start but did not want to rule out developing specific policies later on.

Finally, there was discussion regarding the timeframe for the review of AP lists. OCSE initially wanted to begin the review this year. After some consideration this was viewed as premature. Some AP lists have been in place for only a year; most for only two and a half years. It was decided that OCSE and ACIS will spend the next year (2008-2009) developing a process for formal approved program review. The process will be finalized by spring 2010 and ready to implement by fall 2010. All AP lists will be reviewed after five years; AP lists will be slated for review based on that cycle (those that have been in place the longest will be reviewed first). OCSE will utilize data regarding student enrollments to start the conversation with departments and academic programs and will make recommendations based on past enrollment trends. In preparation for the formal review, OCSE will start informal conversations with departments about enrollment trends, starting with departments that are most active and least active. OCSE will seek to gather information from departments on their challenges and successes in using the lists. Some questions to be considered: Are programs meeting the department’s needs? Does the faculty want more education on off-campus study? Are there any tools that OCSE can provide to assist the departments?

ACIS will discuss this process further as OCSE gathers information in the coming year.

FACULTY EVALUATION PROCESS

OCSE continued to implement the formal faculty site evaluation initiative. Programs selected for site evaluation were prioritized as follows: number of participating students, programs about which we have heard problems or potential problems, and programs that have never been evaluated. OCSE did not consider supporting an evaluation of a program that is not on a departmental approved program list. OCSE also made every attempt to not have the same department evaluating a multitude of programs. Also, a new site-report template was developed, which will prove useful to departments and OCSE in advising students.

This year ACIS and OCSE work together to identify programs in need of evaluating. A joint call for nominations of evaluators was sent to all faculty. Nominations were submitted to ACIS directly from department chairs and ACIS reviewed nominations and selected evaluators.
Initially, ACIS and OCSE hoped to have 15 sites evaluated each year. This could include several sites evaluated by the same faculty member on one site visit. However, throughout the process it has become clear that this number is unrealistic. There were several site visits for which ACIS received no nominations – this even after OCSE solicited nominations from specific chairs and program directors. Overall, faculty seemed interested but unable to commit the time needed to conduct these evaluations. OCSE continued to stress the importance of faculty involvement and participation on these evaluations, as they are critical to the success of the approved program structure.

ACIS discussed this struggle and the fact that programs need to be evaluated to maintain the kind of quality control necessary for the approved programs structure. Recommendations included having ACIS members conduct the evaluations as part of their service to the committee; having OCSE staff conduct evaluations that faculty are not willing/able to conduct; moving the faculty training workshop to the beginning of the school year (when faculty are nominated) to allow OCSE to educate faculty of the seriousness of the commitment they are making when agreeing to conduct a site evaluation; allowing departments and academic programs to nominate programs they are interested in rather than assigning programs each year; having Cori Filson approach the chairs of the departments to encourage nominations; having Cori talk with chairs and program directors to determine how they would like to utilize the evaluations (visits and subsequent reports); having Erica and Cori present issue to chairs and directors at an Academic Staff Meeting to stress the importance of the initiative and to get feedback.

This issue is still under discussion and will be continued in the fall.

SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

ACIS reviewed several issues regarding short-term faculty-led programs. This year the amount of time taken for faculty short-term program proposal review was problematic. It took three months to review two proposals for the 2008/2009 Academic Year. The current process is cumbersome and ineffective causing many problems within OCSE and with faculty.

OCSE proposed that in the future, ACIS take over the responsibility of short-term program proposal review, and include with the Director of Summer Programs, Jim Chansky, to ensure that there is no summer/semester program overlap. OCSE recommended that 1) ACIS and the Director of Summer Programs review proposals and report approvals of expressions of intent to the Associate Dean of Faculty; the Associate Dean of the Faculty would review them with an eye toward any institutional curricular and resource issues; 3) ACIS and the Director of Summer Programs review final proposals; 4) ACIS forward approved proposals to the Associate Dean of the Faculty for final review; 5) the Associate Dean forward final proposals to curriculum committee for final approval. ACIS supported this proposal. ACIS also supported the current timeline and felt that each approval stage should take no more than one month.

This proposal will need to be reviewed and approved by CEPP, Curriculum Committee and the Dean of the Faculty. If ACIS does take on this initiative, they will need to also consider several policy issues: the possibility of repeating certain short-term programs, incentives for faculty involvement and the possibility of offering stipends to faculty who lead these programs, and, most important, financial aid levels for participants. Regarding this last policy, ACIS would like to propose to the IPPC sub-committee on admissions and financial aid that full financial aid apply to two experiences abroad, which is a change from the current policy and would allow greater access to short-term programs. This could be for a combination of a short-term program and a semester program, two semesters abroad, or two short-term programs abroad. ACIS will bring the proposed policy change to the IPPC sub-committee in the fall.

INVESTIGATION OF STUDY ABROAD BY NY ATTORNEY GENERAL
ACIS continually discussed, and was updated on the New York State Attorney General’s inquiry into study abroad practices at US accredited colleges and universities. The subject of the inquiries appears to be the financial practices of the institutions in relation to the program providers. Skidmore College, to date, has not been subpoenaed.

NON-APPROVED PROGRAM PETITIONS

Following the OCSE policy, applicants to non-approved programs needed to show a strong academic rationale as to why none of the approved programs met their academic needs. A lengthy program questionnaire was also required. This year, the committee determined that they would like to review only those applications that OCSE determined to be questionable or problematic.

PETITIONS FOR OFF-CAMPUS STUDY IN SPRING 2008:

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APPROVED FOR SPRING 2008:

Dublin:
*IFSA-Butler, Trinity College*, Dublin, Ireland (Devin Landry ’09)

Multiple Cities:
*International Honors Program, Health and Community*, India, China, South Africa (Julia Bienstock ’09)

St. Petersburg:
*Bard College in Russia*, St. Petersburg, Russia (April Bukoski ’09)

Suva:
*SIT Multiculturalism and Social Change*, Suva, Fiji (Sara DeBrule ’09)

PETITIONS FOR STUDY ABROAD DURING ACADEMIC YEAR 2008-2009 (The Spring 2009 petitions are from students requesting advanced approval. They will also be reported on next year’s ACIS annual report.)

PETITIONS FOR OFF-CAMPUS STUDY-FALL 2008:

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APPROVED FOR FALL 2008:

Cairo:
*American University Cairo*, Egypt, Cairo, Egypt (Jessica Haley, ’10)
*American University Cairo*, Egypt, Cairo, Egypt (Jonathan King, ’10)

Cape Town:
*Interstudy- Cape Town*, South Africa, University of Cape Town, South Africa (Raina Bretan, ’10)
Dublin:
  NYU Tisch School of Arts, Dublin, Ireland (Elissa Nadworny, '10)

London:

Merida:
  University of Minnesota in Merida, Merida, Venezuela (Cory Shaw, '10)

Oulu:
  University of Oulu Finland, Oulu, Finland (Rachel Haas, '10)

Paris:
  Wells College in Paris, Paris, France (Jamie Wieseman, '10)

Prague:
  CIEE Prague, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic (Kyle Bogaert,'10)

Seville:
  CIEE, Seville Spain Education Program, Seville, Spain (Emily Gordon, ‘10)

DENIED FOR FALL 2008:

Cape Town:
  Arcadia, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa (Raina Bretan, ’10)

Paris:
  Wells College in Paris, France (Tara Smith, ’10)

Kyoto:
  Antioch College, Kyoto, Japan (Jason Takahashi, ’10)

PETITIONS FOR OFF-CAMPUS STUDY-SPRING 2009: (Complete list still pending until next semester)

Total Approved: 3
Total Denied: 0
Total Petitions: 3

Multiple Cities:
  International Honors Program, Cities in the 21st Century (Christopher Garis, ’10)

Shanghai:
  CIEE, Shanghai, Shanghai China (Hali Alpert, ’10)
  CIEE Shanghai, China (Xue-li Kwok, ’10)
  NYU Shanghai, China (Xue-li Kwok, ’10)

ACIS MEMBERSHIP

The membership for 2008-2009 will consists of:

Erica Bastress-Dukehart, History, Chair and CEPP representative
Sylvia Franke, Biology
Leslie Mechem, Classics
New Faculty Member, TBD