

## **Advisory Committee on International Study Meeting notes from November 11, 2005**

In attendance: Marie Alice Arnold, Michael Arnush, Sue Bender, Cori Filson, Jim Kennelly, Kate Leavitt, Monica Raveret-Richter, Paty Rubio

### Action Items:

1. Michael asked the group if the committee members could commit to meeting more than once a month next semester. There are still many things that need to be addressed on the agenda.
2. Kim will contact the group regarding scheduling a meeting twice a month in the spring semester. December 2 will be the last meeting of this semester.

### Announcements:

1. Deborah Hall will be formally joining the ACIS group as the CEPP representative. Hopefully she'll be able to attend the next meeting on December 2.
2. A sub-group has been formed to address the questions surrounding short term program concerns. The members are: Cori Filson, International Programs; Ruth Andrea Levinson, CEPP; Michael Ennis-McMillan, Assistant to the Dean for Curriculum; Sarah Goodwin, Dean of Faculty; Michael Arnush, ACIS; and Jordana Dym, Curriculum Committee.

### Agenda Items:

1. Site Review Guidelines:
  - Discussion surrounded two main topics in the site review process: how to prioritize sites to evaluate and how to choose who does the evaluation.
- A. Site Selection:
  - The committee was in agreement with the proposed criteria for site evaluation selection. They did consider the possibility of faculty wanting to use the evaluation process to review potential program offerings. It was determined that new program evaluation could not be a priority given the number of programs that need to be evaluated and the financial resources available. If someone was going to evaluate a program in an area where there were other program options they could look at those other programs as an add-on.
  - When considering who should conduct the review, ACIS will determine if a site needs an academic review or an administrator review. This would be based on whether any red flags have been raised in the academic or administrative areas of the program. Where possible or necessary, we would try to have the program evaluated by both an administrator and a faculty member at the same time. The committee consensus was that an administrative review could be sufficient and considered valid as long as there were no concerns about specific academic elements.
- B. Faculty selection:

- Members of the committee felt that the wording in faculty selection was too absolute. A better choice would be “preference” as it would provide OIP with flexibility when absolutely necessary. (The revised text would be: Preference will be given to faculty from departments/programs already using a specific Approved Program will be eligible for participation on site reviews for that program.) There could be a case where there is a fantastic, gung ho, faculty member from a department that has not approved the program but might draw the department in or create an energy with this opportunity versus faculty members from departments who approve the program but aren’t strong evaluators.
- The committee suggested shortening the nominating letter to one page and including the committee’s advisory role in selecting evaluators in the document. Cori will make recommended changes to document and redistribute.
- OIP’s concern with less precise language is that it causes lots of trouble when someone is unhappy with the final decision. The committee thought that there may be mechanisms that will diffuse the likelihood of those situations. The role of this committee as an advisory body is one. The nature of the evaluations themselves and how much work they require is another. Once people realized how much is involved there will be a self selecting process.
- The committee ultimately decided that some people will get upset at the decisions made no matter what the guidelines state. That the existence of stricter guidelines won’t necessarily protect one from the decisions made. It would be better to at least give oneself some flexibility just in case it is needed.
- It was mentioned that having this flexibility might allow the cultivation of interest in study abroad among faculty. OIP strongly believed that it should not be seen as a faculty development opportunity. Several committee members said the trouble with not allowing it as any type of development opportunity is that there aren’t many people on campus that have the skills or experience to do these evaluations. They see this as one more opportunity to internationalize the faculty and help foster study abroad. In addition, participation in an evaluation might be very useful for faculty who might need an epiphany. We shouldn’t forget that there will be a workshop to train the faculty and a product will be required of them. It was determined that in these cases OIP would look for provider opportunities that are more structured.
- The committee expressed concern regarding the role of the chair in the selection process. Chairs may not want to perhaps take on the role of gate keeper. This portion of the proposal should be brought to the Dean of Faculty’s Academic Staff for review. The site review could be seen as a welcome opportunity or as something that might be divisive within a department. OIP strongly prefers to have input from the department /program chairs and Dean of Faculty and not make the decision itself.

C. Preparation for site review:

- Part of training would be to work with the chairs of the departments that have approved the program. That would help ensure the validity of the evaluations.
- When discussing the process that the evaluator would undertake in preparation of the program the committee discussed the issue of assessment and outcomes in Skidmore programs. As a group the ACIS committee could recommend that there be an institutional requirement to build in student outcomes and an assessment piece to the Skidmore programs. It was recommended that OIP consult with the assessment task force and put together a small task force early in the spring term to develop an assessment rubric for all Skidmore programs.