

NOTE: CEPP RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING PROPOSAL TO TERMINATE THE ACOP ON MAY 9, 2022. BECAUSE THE PROPOSAL ARRIVED AFTER CEPP'S LAST MEETING OF THE 2022 SPRING SEMESTER, THE ITEM WAS DELAYED UNTIL THE 2022 FALL SEMESTER. ACOP WAS INACTIVE IN THE 2022-23 YEAR; CEPP TERMINATED THE ACOP, EFFECTIVE THE END OF THE SPRING 2023 SEMESTER.

TO: CEPP
FROM: Erica Bastress-Dukehart, ACOP Chair
Cori Filson, Director, Off-Campus Study & Exchanges
DATE: May 9, 2022

RE: **Recommendation to eliminate Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Programs (ACOP)**

I am writing today to recommend that CEPP sunset the Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Programs (ACOP) at the end of this academic year. ACOP is a sub-committee of CEPP that was formed in 2004. In the almost two decades OCSE has been working with ACOP, the role of the committee has changed significantly from one of critical support while designing and implementing our current off-campus study structure to one of approving work OCSE is doing independent of the committee. Given that the original goals for ACOP have been achieved or subsumed under OCSE's daily operations, I propose that CEPP eliminate this subcommittee.

Below I have included the background of ACOP, as well as the rationale for sunsetting it at this time and recommendations for redistribution of ACOP's current work.

BACKGROUND

The Advisory Committee on International Study (ACIS) was developed as a CEPP sub-committee in 2004 to provide guidance to the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges (then OIP) as the College moved to our current off-campus study structure of approved programs linked to specific disciplines plus home school fees allowing broader student access and inclusion. In 2007, the committee was renamed the Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Programs to signal that it offered guidance on both international and domestic study opportunities.

The initial charge and membership was as follows:

Original Charge (September 2004)

The CEPP sub-committee on study abroad - the Advisory Committee on International Study - will serve in an advisory capacity for the Office of International Programs as Skidmore implements a new structure for overseas study. The plan for re-structuring emphasizes closer integration of the academic programs on campus with the programs our students attend overseas. With this in mind, Skidmore is moving to a "Partner Program" list. The list will be developed in conjunction with departments and programs to ensure coordination between coursework completed overseas and major/minor/graduation requirements at Skidmore. More importantly, Skidmore strives to develop a stronger link between students' academic and co-curricular work before and after study abroad and their work while abroad. The goal is to embed overseas study into the students' overall educational experience at Skidmore.

The Advisory Committee, consisting of faculty members appointed by CEPP for a two-year term, and the director of OIP, will be charged with (in order of importance):

- developing guidelines for vetting and approving "Partner Programs" that meet academic and administrative quality standards;
- determining the appropriate policy regarding transfer of credits from "Partner Programs";
- determining the appropriate policy regarding GPA from "Partner Programs";
- reviewing, evaluating, and possibly revising current policies governing overseas study;
- developing mechanisms for evaluating "Partner Programs" that allow us to maintain quality and variety in the portfolio made available to students;
- developing mechanisms for more thoroughly and formally preparing students for overseas study, and integrating their experiences into the classroom upon return;
- determining the long-term need for a permanent advisory committee to OIP.

The membership of the initial committee consisted of six faculty (each representing a division of the curriculum), one of whom was also a CEPP member and served as chair of ACOP, and the Director and Senior Program Coordinator of OCSE. Throughout the years, ACOP's membership has fluctuated significantly, with a high of nine members, with seven faculty participating, and the current low of two members, a faculty member appointed by CEPP (but not currently on CEPP) and the Director of OCSE.

The reduction in ACOP's size to a committee of two occurred in 2010 in response to FEC's request to reduce faculty committee duties across campus. With this reduction in participants, ACOP's charge was also narrowed to provide advice to OCSE on routine policy and procedural questions, new program development, shifts to the Approved Programs lists or structure, non-approved program petitions from students, and concerns or questions that might affect the faculty or academic programs. The official charge was streamlined to indicate that ACOP served "in an advisory capacity for the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges on issues defined by CEPP and/or OCSE. As an advisory body, ACOP crafts its agenda in direct and regular consultation with OCSE, and OCSE solicits advice from ACOP on a broad range of off-campus study abroad" (ACOP charge from 2008). Throughout its history, ACOP has been an advisory group and a standing sub-committee of CEPP, reporting to CEPP.

RATIONALE FOR SUNSETTING ACOP

When it was founded in 2004, ACIS/ACOP served a critical role in guiding OCSE in the development and implementation of procedures and protocols around the Approved Programs structure and policies. The guidance OCSE received from the first cohorts of faculty serving on the committee was invaluable and informed decisions that led to the system now governing off-campus study at Skidmore. As our current structure was widely adopted across all disciplines and off-campus study became embedded into the on-campus curriculum, the role of ACOP shifted significantly – it went from development to maintenance. The committee's role shifted again when ACOP was reduced to one faculty member (not a member of CEPP) and the Director of OCSE – after this point, OCSE appropriately managed the day-to-day operational decisions while the faculty member was called on to provide guidance on academic questions.

Over the past almost two decades, different committees and offices began collaborating more closely with OCSE and various roles outlined in ACOP's initial charge no longer fell under ACOP's purview. For example, revisions to off-campus study policies now include discussions with the Committee on Academic Standing, the Dean of the Faculty's office or the Director of Risk Management; mechanisms for changing Approved Programs lists have long been established, implemented and assessed; OCSE's

Director, who is a permanent member of the Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding (CIGU), collaborates directly with the committee regarding questions of equity, inclusion and access; collecting and assessing data, developing plans to manage student enrollment increases/decreases, evaluating existing programs, supporting students before, during and after their off-campus study, developing and supporting faculty opportunities abroad; etc. are all managed as ongoing responsibilities of the leadership and staff of OCSE. This has significantly reduced the work managed through ACOP and has brought into question the ongoing need for the committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDISTRIBUTION OF ACOP'S WORK

Currently, ACOP's responsibilities are few and include reviewing new program proposals for Skidmore and Approved Programs, participating in the review and selection of Travel Seminar and London FYE proposals, and occasional feedback regarding student petitions for non-approved programs abroad. While OCSE highly values the faculty guidance we receive from the ACOP member, we have well-established, sustained connections with department chairs and program directors with whom we work closely on questions around academics and faculty opportunities. In addition, each of ACOP's current duties has multiple faculty contact points for feedback and guidance. Below I indicate the faculty role in each of ACOP's responsibilities and recommend an alternative should CEPP support sun setting ACOP.

- New Program Approval: New Approved Program proposals are developed with department chairs who review and approve the proposals before they are presented to ACOP. OCSE provides extensive information about the curricular and co-curricular aspects of the potential Approved Program for faculty consideration. Both OCSE and the sponsoring department must approve the potential program prior to submission to ACOP. New Skidmore program proposals are also developed with department chairs and faculty who review and approve the proposals before they are presented to ACOP. OCSE works for many months/semesters with sponsoring departments/programs before proposing a new Skidmore opportunity to ensure there is faculty support and that the program meets department and institutional needs. The proposals for Skidmore programs are also vetted by the Dean of the Faculty's office prior to being reviewed by the ACOP faculty member. Before ACOP existed, the final review of such proposals was done directly by CEPP or the CEPP chair; I recommend that we return to that process. Note: OCSE proposes 2-5 new Approved Programs annually and one new Skidmore program every 2-3 years, resulting in very little additional work for CEPP.
- Review and Selection of Travel Seminars and London FYE: Currently, the ACOP faculty member is one of several reviewers for these proposals; the other reviewers are the Associate DOF for Student Academic Affairs, the Associate DOF for Diversity and Faculty Affairs, the Director of OCSE, the Program Managers for OCSE responsible for each program, and, for the London FYE, the Director of FYE. Prior to submitting the proposals to OCSE, faculty obtain approval from the department chair (and program director if applicable), and they meet with OCSE and, often, the ADOFs regarding the content and viability of their proposed program. Proposals that are selected by this review committee are forwarded to Curriculum Committee for final review. The process has many touchpoints for faculty review and feedback and will not be weakened by the absence of the ACOP faculty member.
- Student Petitions: In practice, student petitions for non-approved programs are reviewed and approved by OCSE staff and reported to ACOP. OCSE has refined our advising around non-approved program petitions to the point where students typically do not petition unless it is a program OCSE supports. In the rare case that a student does not follow OCSE's advice and petitions for a program that OCSE does not support (maybe one every other year), the petition

is reviewed by the ACOP faculty member. I recommend this role be taken on by the Associate DOF for Student Academic Affairs, as the person who works most closely with OCSE.