

Advisory Committee on International Study Meeting notes from February 20, 2006

In attendance: Marie Alice Arnold, Michael Arnush, Sue Bender, Cori Filson, Deb Hall, Jim Kennelly, Kate Leavitt, Paty Rubio

Updates:

Michael has asked for the website from Deanne and has given her a suggested location. As soon as the website has been set up OIP will be informed. OIP will then upload all ACIS documents.

Action Items

- Cori will research with API the time commitment and expectations for board members on their new Academic Advisory Board and follow up with the appropriate chair(s).

Agenda Items:

1. Lorenzo de'Medici, Florence, Italy, (through Academic Programs International)

- Lorenzo de'Medici is an institution in Florence that provides courses to US and other international students studying abroad. They have beautiful facilities. However, for many reasons, there has been concern over their academic program.
- After Marie Alice's site visit last spring OIP did consider recommending the removal of Lorenzo de'Medici from the approved programs list because of these academic concerns. At the time Lorenzo de'Medici and API both recognized that there were problems with rigor. Lorenzo de'Medici then said improving the rigor was a priority. Since that time Lorenzo de'Medici has begun establishing an Academic Advisory Board to work with a newly appointed Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- The Vice President for Academic Affairs has been brought on to improve the academic qualities of the institution. Additionally Marist College has entered into a partnership that, on the surface, should improve rigor.
- Recently Academic Programs International (API) has approached Skidmore College regarding nominating a faculty member to serve on the new Lorenzo de'Medici board. OIP sought a recommendation from the committee to either remove the program from the list or nominate someone to the newly formed board. The committee recommended nominating someone to the board.
- In similar situations Cori works with the Chair of the Departments which have listed the program as an approved program to ask for recommendations. Cori will research with API the time commitment and expectations for board members and follow up with the appropriate chair(s).

2. London Junior Program Directorship

- The Skidmore in London Program has traditionally been housed at Regents College, one of the four universities with which Skidmore partners with for the program. This relationship is based on Skidmore sending students to Regents College to study.
- With the withdrawal of the First Year Experience from Regents concern has been raised on campus as to whether Regent's has appropriate academic rigor for the junior program. This spring Skidmore College had no students apply to Regent's College. Regent's asked Skidmore to not send a faculty member to the college. Skidmore agreed as it isn't fair to utilize Regent's resources when our students are not on campus.
- This year's director in looking at additional partnership options for students not currently served by our partner institutions in London and for ways to house and direct the program.
- There are three potential scenarios: 1) Seeing if we can find another teaching opportunity and office space with a current or new partner in London. 2) Skidmore can do away with the directorship. Most other programs in London do not have directors. Currently there is very little contact between program participants and the director except for small administrative duties in regard to cultural reimbursements, tube passes, and the weekly pub night. 3) Explore a teaching opportunity with ASE in Bath. The director would teach one day a week in Bath and handle the other director duties in London.
- A member of the committee asked about working with IES. When moving to IES for the London First Year Experience there was concern that we become too involved with IES. Although there have been no conversations with IES it would seem probable that Skidmore could use the same office space that we utilize in the fall during the spring.
- The committee began the discussion of what is the purpose of the Director for the Skidmore students. Is it pastoral care? What is the benefit to our students that a Skidmore faculty member director brings? The directors currently don't do any programming. Students could just direct admit to the partner institutions. Enrollment, registration, grade reporting, and

housing, all done directly through OIP and partner institutions. Additionally there is a drain on Skidmore resources. The Dean of Faculty has indicated that there has been a drain on departments. Sometimes requiring a full time replacement.

- Our partner institutions are finding it difficult to commit to office space and/or to a teaching position. Until their own enrollment/registration has been finalized they would not be able to guarantee a teaching spot for our director in their field. The timing of that would be untenable for our potential directors.
- If we want to continue to be able to offer a faculty opportunity is there another route we can take? Faculty have benefited from being involved with the Skidmore students in the study abroad environment. Developing the position differently may also open the opportunity further, decreasing the pressure on the departments from which the current directors traditionally come.
- How could the position be redeveloped? What about overseeing internship opportunities or collaborative research for senior thesis classes? The director could assist students in recognizing research opportunities while in London. Direct them on how to set up basis of work, gather research, for senior year projects. Would be a real advantage to going to the Skidmore in London. A reinsertion piece could also be developed. Pub nights could have more of a purpose.
- If there isn't a need for a Director in London why develop this there? There are lots of places where students go abroad and don't "get it". One reason is that many students who go abroad want to return. It might make sense to build upon the first year program and keep the program there.
- Cori introduced another consideration. From conversations with Skidmore's current partner institutions we could move the program to the fall semester. Our partners have said students would have better opportunities to enroll in the classes of their choice and have better housing opportunities. It would also give the students three semesters to build upon their experience once back at home. Skidmore could make a better connection between the first year students and the Skidmore in London students. This could make a very rich program.
- This would still leave questions as to how to structure the oversight for the program. Could the first year directors also oversee the junior group? This would mean losing a faculty opportunity abroad.
- Here the committee ran out of time. Although the committee felt that the Bath option would be problematic as the London Director should be in London, it felt that all options should be explored further.

Note: Since the meeting it became apparent that the call for applications for the London Directorship needed to happen quickly. The committee approved a recommendation to post for applications for the spring 2007 position indicating in the announcement that there will be "a teaching opportunity" without specific details. As people express interest Cori will be able to talk to them about the various possibilities and determine their willingness to be flexible until we have a solution.