

**Advisory Committee on International Studies  
Meeting notes May 2, 2007**

**In attendance:** Marie Alice Arnold, Cori Filson, Deb Hall, Kate Leavitt, Leslie Mechem, Rajesh Nagarajan, Mary-Beth O'Brien, Paty Rubio

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Deb Hall will revise Recommendations from Reintegration Workshop and present to CEPP.
- OIP will begin preparation of materials to reevaluate Approved Programs List in upcoming Academic Year.
- Deb Hall will speak to CEPP regarding ACIS configuration.

**Recommendations from Reintegration Workshop**

A reintegration workshop was held Friday April 20 from 3 pm to 5 pm. Approximately 10 faculty members attended. Many attended from departments that send good numbers of students abroad. Deb found the workshop very useful and worthwhile. It did bring to attention a number of questions as to how Skidmore is working with study abroad. Deb wondered if for a small Liberal Arts College Skidmore offered too many options for students to study abroad. We should look at utilization of approved programs and develop a process to prune the list, taking into account student interest. Cori felt some of the information regarding program options presented by Doug Reilly and Tom D'Agostino was confusing. It was hard to pin down how many options students at Hobart William Smith really have. She also pointed out that the culture at Skidmore may not permit a list as small as the one Hobart William Smith utilizes. Next year ACIS should reevaluate the list and program usage.

Paty Rubio is already looking to implement a stand alone one credit course in Foreign Languages and Literatures for students who are going and/or returning for a semester abroad. She recommended OIP gather syllabi to encourage other departments to do the same. For departments that are smaller, do not have adjunct lines, or where faculty are already teaching 20 credits per year this will be harder to implement.

Cori recommended that the committee review Deb Hall's list of talking points and prioritize those we can work toward.

On the pre-departure side it should be recommended to departments that they articulate their expectations on the abroad experience for their majors. Mary Beth O'Brien also recommended that student's be required to write a narrative on why they are going abroad. Some students feel it is an absolute right. The narratives could be read by departments.

OIP also asked ACIS for ideas on how to get students to participate more fully in the pre-departure activities that are already being offered. While pre-departure orientations are mandatory, actual attendance is erratic. OIP has no way to force students to attend. Changing the approval process to indicate that students do not receive final approval to study abroad until they have attended a mandatory pre-departure may help. OIP is already re-vamping the pre-departure orientation for the upcoming year. The workshop was very useful in providing some re-structuring ideas. The committee recommended OIP look for faculty who may be interested in putting together workshops on travel writing or digital photography.

The Committee also spent time discussing how to help returning students use their experience back on campus. The committee felt OIP should use returning students better. OIP could provide them with a list of ways they can get involved in activities. An example of an activity would be a gallery where student's art from abroad is displayed. The Gallery could be in the dining hall, admissions, or some other visible area on campus. The committee also felt that Skidmore should focus on ways to help students process their experiences and tell their stories. OIP already

employs a number of these activities but it should improve and enhance the opportunities. Of particular interest is student's completion of their post study abroad evaluation and the need to create a stick to get students to complete those evaluations. This is a serious concern with the advent of the approved programs as we need to document Skidmore students' experiences with these programs. The committee felt we should explore if student's grades could be held until they had completed an evaluation.

A complete listing of ACIS recommendations to CEPP can be found at the end of these notes.

### **Site Evaluation Workshop update**

The site evaluation workshop will be held May 14 from 10 to noon. The workshop was postponed from its original date of April 13 when it was discovered that it conflicted with events for Margarethe von Trotta.

### **Committee Make-up**

ACIS further discussed the make up of the committee for the next academic year. Raj will be unable to continue on the committee. Deb may have to resign due to her role as Chair of CEPP. The committee felt that the committee would function best if comprised of three faculty members in addition to the OIP staff. Deb will bring this proposal to CEPP for review.

~~~~~  
ACIS (Advisory Committee on International Study)  
Recommendations to CEPP

May 7, 2007

Members of ACIS fully support the need to increase intercultural and global understanding across the community in order to sensitize students to a complex and diverse world and develop increased appreciation of the value of difference in our community and society. Goal number two of the Strategic Plan states: "We will challenge every Skidmore student to develop the intercultural understanding and global awareness necessary to thrive in the complex and increasingly interconnected world of the 21st Century." ACIS offers the following observations and recommendations to help achieve that goal.

Tom D'Agostino and Doug Reilly, as recipients of a Mellon Grant, established the Center for Global Education in 2000. Working with Hobart William Smith and Union College they have created an Integrated Program Design with the intent of framing the study abroad experience with pre-departure and re-entry programming in order to provide a continuous and intentional international experience. Last month, OIP and ACIS invited Tom and Doug to Skidmore to conduct a workshop on Integrated Program Design with members of our faculty and staff. After the workshop, members of ACIS met to discuss some of the techniques and ideas presented. We recommend to CEPP and the administration the following strategies that would increase an international awareness and presence on campus and further engage students in the global community. While some of the recommendations may take place within the coming year the committee realizes that others may require additional time and resources.

### **1) One Credit Courses**

Identify and encourage departments to offer freestanding one-credit courses to prepare students academically for their experience abroad. The Foreign Languages department intends to discuss this idea in the fall for their majors. A one-credit course may include readings, writings and discussions, or preparation for a more in-depth research project while abroad.

## **2) Review and Evaluate Approved Programs**

Next year ACIS should review and evaluate the Approved Programs list and remove under-utilized programs and, if necessary, add programs in under represented disciplines or geographic regions, and/or supplement opportunities in desirable regions and disciplines.

## **3) Require and Enhance Orientation**

Support is needed from faculty and administration to require orientation for study abroad. Currently, student participation in orientation is not mandatory and attendance is erratic. Additionally, it is recommended that only one orientation session be provided (with one make up session). ACIS recommends that a student must attend the orientation program before their study abroad experience is approved. Further, ACIS recommends that the orientation session be enhanced. Faculty, guest speakers and alumni may contribute to the orientation experience by providing expertise on:

- digital photography
- travel writing or journaling
- digital sketchbook

## **4) Create Global Ambassadors**

Utilize students who have studied abroad to a greater degree by creating a more formal global ambassador program. Global ambassadors are students who have already studied abroad and then contribute to the international community upon return. They can offer the following:

- active participation in the orientation sessions
- help with gallery
- advising and support for students in pre-departure and re-entry

## **5) Establish an International Gallery**

Create more opportunities for students, faculty and staff to exhibit their photographs taken abroad. A highly visible location such as the Admissions Office, the Dining Hall, OIP or the Intercultural Center, were mentioned as possibilities. A gallery would provide greater visibility for students studying abroad, raise awareness of diversity and the advantages of study abroad.

## **6) Provide Research Opportunity Funds**

Provide research funds for students to study a special topic abroad. Students would then be required to present either in a classroom and/or at the Academic Festival. Can this be implemented through the Student Opportunity Funds mechanism already in place? Can the DOS set aside funds to be used specifically for this purpose? ACIS would review all the proposals and make recommendations. Would advancement be able to provide us with additional resources in this endeavor?

## **7) Establish an International Writers Workshop and Journal**

Can we enlist the new Writing Director to create a weekly workshop on international writing? Students need help in telling their stories. William Hobart Smith and Union College also produce an annual journal of international writing. This is a useful tool to promote international study abroad, create awareness of different cultures and provide students with an opportunity to write and publish. The journal is also used as a valuable public relations tool. (The cost of publishing 1500 journals is approximately 6500.00.)

Students can also be directed to publish their articles and experiences in study abroad magazines such as Glimpse, Abroad View, and Transition Abroad.

## **8) Create Online Orientation Sites**

We would benefit from the use of online orientation sites. What is the cost? For examples please visit: <http://academic.hws.edu/pge/globe.html> and <http://academic.hws.edu/pge/infocus/vietnam/> Research indicates that these sites, which can include bibliographies, photos and recommendations, help to educate students and parents about the programs.

#### **9) Require student evaluations**

Student feedback is a valuable resource. Currently, students rarely complete an evaluation form. What steps can be taken to insure that students provide needed feedback about their experience and the program? Can these evaluations be required before the student registers? Before they graduate?

#### **10) Resources and OIP**

ACIS finally recognizes that OIP already services over 120 programs and special petitions, in addition to other responsibilities. Also, Skidmore, through OIP sent fifty-six percent of its student body to study abroad last year. ACIS asks that the administration and CEPP be mindful that these new initiatives, including the implementation of the NSE program, stretch an already small staff. Can a mechanism be established so interns could be used for OIP? Can faculty recommend outstanding students from London FYE for student employment at OIP?

Other suggestions included:

- Develop career opportunities and internships abroad enlisting the help of career services and alumni.
- Prepare a list of courses students can take upon their return to further enhance their experience.
- Encourage departments or advisors to have students complete a pre-departure, one-page proposal or complete an academic interview.

Finally, ACIS recommends that the committee be comprised of three faculty members (preferably from the disciplines that send most students abroad), the Director of OIP and the Senior Program Coordinator.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Hall  
*Chair, ACIS, 2006-07*  
Associate Professor of Art  
Skidmore College  
815 North Broadway  
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866  
518-580-5048  
dhall@skidmore.edu