

Minutes of the March 9, 2016, IEC meeting

Present: Alva Butcher, Lisa Ferrari, Lea Fortmann, Kriszta Kotsis, Pepa Lago-Grana, John Lear (co-chair), Eric Orlin (co-chair), Roy Robinson, Mike Spivey, Kazu Suzuki, Peter Wimberger (guest).

The meeting was called to order at 11:03 a.m. by Orlin.

The minutes of the February 24 meeting were approved.

Orlin began by discussing some of the remaining IEC charges.

Subcommittee 1 said that they may have an emergency response document prepared by the end of the year.

Subcommittee 2 is still examining which programs to cull but is doubtful that a definite decision could be made by the end of the year.

Subcommittee 6 may have a revised questionnaire ready by the end of the year.

We then turned to a discussion of the IEC presentation at yesterday's full faculty meeting. Orlin thought it was a good informational session. The resolution in favor of providing merit aid for the Pacific Rim program passed the faculty. Wimberger thought good questions were asked. Lear wondered whether the faculty would have passed a resolution in favor of changing the entire financial aid policy, not just for the PacRim program. Orlin and Spivey said they thought they would have, but the PacRim resolution was narrow enough that it would be more likely to be implemented as policy. Orlin said he would follow up with Dean Bartanen as to next steps, now that the resolution has been passed. Butcher thought that bringing the problem to the attention of the faculty was important.

Ferrari said that incoming students are told in their financial aid letters how much of it can be applied to study abroad.

Kotsis asked whether IEC existed when the financial aid study group was formed that changed the policy on whether students can use their merit aid for study abroad. Ferrari said yes. Wimberger said that the IEC at the time was not involved with this study group and did not support the policy change. Kotsis wondered whether the IEC could recommend re-examining the financial aid policy as a self-charge to the Senate for next year.

Ferrari said that the amount of money available for study abroad for next year will be unchanged from this year. She said that the administration is open to a change in the policy, but it would need to be budget-neutral.

Wimberger asked for a clarification of the meaning of “budget-neutral.” Ferrari said that she thought that this meant that the study abroad budget would not grow and the university would not be taking in fewer tuition dollars.

Orlin reported on some estimates from Martin Jackson as to the average per-student cost of study abroad. He also said that IEC would like to be involved in any group that re-evaluates the financial aid policy for study abroad.

Ferrari discussed the meaning of “discount rate.” She also noted that the number one reason students cited for not studying abroad was that it would interfere with their major requirements. She wondered whether changes in the student body, such as the increase in the number of science majors, might be helping to cause the decline in study abroad enrollments and/or the increase in summer enrollments.

Orlin said that maybe IEC could do a better job of reaching out to departments that do not traditionally send their students on study abroad.

Fortmann asked whether incoming students are asked if they plan to study abroad. Ferrari said that she thought so.

Orlin said we might have two actions steps going forward: (1) Find out what majors tend not to go on study abroad, and (2) ask if the IEC can be involved in some future study group addressing the financial aid policy.

Ferrari said that the IEC might want to do some more work to find out exactly why the study abroad enrollments are declining.

Lear suggested that it might be worth having some future group consider additional questions, such as putting a cap on the cost of study abroad programs, having faculty lead more programs, or raising the academic requirements for students who study abroad.

Orlin said that a future group considering study abroad should do a re-examination of the entire study abroad policies.

Suzuki suggested that we consider ways to market study abroad and make its benefits more widely known. Orlin said that maybe we could have local PacRim graduates come to an information session and describe their experiences.

Fortmann said that we could add a reflection piece to study abroad that would help students connect their experiences to their learning. Robinson suggested creating a course for activity credit that would focus on study abroad. Such a course could include a reflection of this kind. He said that Lewis & Clark currently has a course like this one.

Robinson said that because of the hard ceiling on the financial aid budget for study abroad we may have to make some difficult choices going forward.

Robinson gave an update on the Davis Scholars program. The Office of Admission submitted an application to be a part of this program last year, but it was deferred. We don't currently admit enough students from the UWC group of schools that Davis focuses on. They state that the biggest challenge we have "is that we are not able to meet the full need of David Scholars given institutional discount rate and revenue goals." (The quote is from an email from Director of Admission James Miller to Roy Robinson.)

Robinson gave a short update on having an outside consultant to review study abroad. The cost estimate for having such a consultant ranges from \$8500 to \$13,000.

Butcher said that she thought we should focus on possible changes to the financial aid policy at Puget Sound first, but Lear said that the group considering such changes might benefit from having an outside consultant review our process beforehand.

Ferrari said that there is already a mechanism in place to review programs at Puget Sound. Given that, it might be hard to make the argument that spending \$8500 to \$13,000 would bring that much more value.

Robinson said that two Reed students are going on the Madrid summer program, and he thinks this is a good step forward for Puget Sound in terms of having a study abroad consortium.

The meeting was adjourned around 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Spivey