

USG Study Abroad Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday, March 14, 2003

Clayton College and State University

Continuing Education Building, room 203

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Members in attendance: Nancy Shumaker, Chair, Georgia Southern University
Jim Anderson- Armstrong Atlantic State University
David Adewuyi- Albany State University
Neal McCrillis- Columbus State University
Alberta Johnson- Floyd College
Joanna Marks- Georgia Institute of Technology
Harriet Nichols- Georgia Perimeter College
Chaudron Gille- Gainesville College
Dwight Call- Georgia College & State University
Dan Paracka- Kennesaw State University
Andrea Kiely- The University of Georgia
Julie Escobedo- The University of Georgia
David Starling-Valdosta State University
Susan Leisure- The USG Office of International Education
Sue Sugarman- The USG Office of International Education

The Study Abroad Committee listserv is: SAC-SCIE-L@listserv.uga.edu

The meeting was called to order by Nancy Shumaker. Nancy reiterated the highlights of the January 10, 2003 meeting that took place in conjunction with the System Council on International Education meeting, and these highlights included the 4% study abroad targets for 2007.

A reminder and request to submit institutional study abroad reports to the Institute of International Education's Open Doors Survey was made. The deadline for submission is March 17, 2003. Those who do not know the individual designated to report the data for their campus may contact Hey-Kyung Kohn at IIE: hkoh@iie.org or (212)984-5348. It is important for USG institutions to report accurate study abroad figures, and members were urged to please do so. (To check individual institutional data, go to: <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=28633> or see the attached data sheet.)

Nancy reminded committee members that the System office will analyze study abroad data for each campus, and this information can be useful when approaching deans or colleges. Nancy uses the breakdown of study abroad data by college and major to inform deans of the number of students going abroad from their particular college, and this highlights areas on which recruitment and program development should focus.

To further assist the study abroad office in accurately tracking study abroad participants, Georgia Southern uses

a course identifier for study abroad in Banner so that the prefix number and section reflects that the course was taken abroad. For example, "SPAN3195s mx" indicates that an upper-level Spanish course was taken as a study abroad course in Mexico.

The question about salary determinations for faculty who teach abroad was raised, and the committee was reminded that the Faculty and Curriculum Committee had that information.

The committee was reminded of several scholarships for study abroad with deadlines that have not yet passed: The IIE Southern Regional Office Study Abroad Scholarship (March 16 deadline); The Gilman Scholarship (April 15 deadline); The ATJ Japan Bridging Scholarship (April 3 deadline); The Freie Universitat summer university program scholarship for freshmen (March 31 deadline); and various ISEP scholarships and grants: the Annette Kade Scholarship for study in Germany or France, the Korea Travel Scholarships, the Leiden University Scholarship, the Thailand Travel Scholarship (April 1 deadlines) as well as the Board of Regents ISEP Exchange Grant (no deadline).

A review of the new funding programs was made, and several institutions have confirmed that they have taken advantage of the new funding opportunities. Some committee members indicated that they hoped the Regents Scholarship criteria would be clarified in writing for next year's competition, and that eligibility criteria would not be changed halfway through the school year. Committee members were reminded that decisions about final scholarship recipients would be emailed on Friday and the notifications should be in their email in-boxes as soon as they returned to campus.

David Starling gave a brief report on the System membership in ISEP. Currently, students from all USG institutions who meet ISEP criteria can participate on an ISEP exchange or ISEP-direct program. USG consortium ISEP members (institutions who host incoming ISEP exchange students) are: Valdosta, Columbus, Georgia College, North Georgia, and West Georgia, and ISEP has just approved Kennesaw as a receiving institution beginning with the 2003-2004 school year. Armstrong also plans to join ISEP as a consortium member this coming year. David reviewed the requirements for membership as a receiving institution (housing, a meal plan or similar meal stipend arrangement, and an appropriate level of academic programs, plus an annual payment of \$600).

Students in the USG can go abroad through ISEP by sending their application to Valdosta, and Valdosta assigns the students transient status to one of the ISEP consortium institutions. All transient students (in-state and out-of-state) pay the \$4900 ISEP fee, and this fee includes tuition, meals, housing, and mandatory fees while on the exchange program. (Students who attend ISEP consortium institutions pay their institution's in-state tuition, meal plan cost, and fees.) All ISEP students who participate on an ISEP exchange will receive a \$500 grant from the Board of Regents, bringing the cost of a semester exchange to \$4400. This is a terrific price for students, especially out-of-state students or students who attend the research institutions as their tuition and fees are higher than the ISEP member institutions' tuition and fees. This is a good promotional point to stress when recruiting certain students for ISEP programs.

Study Abroad Orientation sessions have been proposed in lieu of the main USG orientation session that has

taken place in Macon for the past several years. Regional sessions were discussed with the feeling that this would make it easier for students to attend. However, it was felt that regional sessions were equally problematic since program directors would have a tough time getting students to attend if the sessions were not offered on the students' own campus. Since the earliest study abroad programs depart May 5, the committee felt that there was too little time to prepare an orientation video to distribute to various USG campuses, but perhaps a GSAMS presentation which could be taped would be a suitable alternative. A generic handbook for study abroad program directors to use and tailor to their own program needs has been developed and is in the final revision stages now. This handbook should be ready for dissemination (hard copies and electronic copies) in a few weeks. A program directors orientation session was proposed, and this will be considered for next year. Susan and Sue will be available to come to campus to assist with orientation sessions in the interim, before a GSAMS or video presentation is developed, so campuses who are interested should contact the System Office. Advisors were encouraged to videotape orientation sessions so that students who miss the mandatory sessions could watch the video as a makeup session and still fulfill the requirement that they attend an orientation.

The next item of business was the discussion of the revised NAFSA health and safety guidelines for study abroad. The System Council on International Education endorsed the 1998 version of the guidelines, but a new revised version has been published by NAFSA, and this new version may need endorsement. Nancy distributed the old and new guidelines, but it was determined that reading both versions of guidelines during the meeting was impractical, so the new and old guidelines comparison will be posted to the listserv for review prior to the next meeting.

Committee members were reminded that it is important for study abroad program directors to read and be familiar with the NAFSA guidelines before they depart for Maymester and summer study abroad programs. Each campus study abroad committee should also review and endorse these guidelines and be clear on campus safety procedures.

A review of the procedures for cancellation and/or early termination of study abroad programs in the event of a military conflict or other action was discussed, and to date, no USG programs have been cancelled or relocated. In the event of a conflict with Iraq, it was suggested that any military engagement would likely conclude by the time USG programs depart. Nancy reminded the committee that every USG program should have a clear refund and cancellation policy in effect, and that students, parents, and staff should be very familiar with the policy. The European Council programs have a clearly stated policy which they offered to share with the committee, and the UGA study abroad advisors also agreed to share their policy. UGA also offered to share risk management training information. In addition, all program directors and study abroad advisors should have clear "talking points" to refer to when communicating with worried parents of study abroad participants. Also, program directors should be clear and very frank about anti-American sentiment overseas and should prepare students and faculty participants accordingly. Presenting a conservative demeanor and attitude and full avoidance of "ugly American" behavior will be very important.

Committee members were reminded of the benefits of CISI insurance, the Systemwide policy that was negotiated for any USG study abroad program participant (student or staff). All program directors should include

comprehensive insurance coverage as part of the study abroad program cost - **CISI insurance**. Rates for coverage for study abroad participants (regardless of age): \$18 for a program up to 14 days in duration; \$30 for monthly coverage, and \$46 for a six-week coverage period.

It has been suggested that fall workshops should replace the annual USG Study Abroad Conference held at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education in Athens. With increased budget cuts and travel funds slashed, many staff find it impossible to give up a day out of the office to travel to Athens to attend, and the prevailing sentiment for those who are not study abroad advisors (financial aid officers, registrars, etc) is that the conference is mostly for study abroad advisors, and therefore once someone has been once, there is no need to go again. The fall workshops would replace the conference and would be a means to deliver much-needed services to campuses without requiring staff to travel. Some suggested topics were: promoting study abroad; development of programs in non-traditional areas; financial aid and applying scholarships, loans, and other aid to study abroad programs; credit transfer and credit equivalencies for transient students; and how to recruit study abroad participants. In the process, the USG should be able to call on expertise of various campuses to develop best practices for all USG campuses to follow in these areas. Smaller workshops would be better than large, regional workshops, and the committee felt that early fall (September) would be the best time for these workshops to take place.

These fall workshops should be timed in conjunction with the study abroad fairs, which will take place on the following dates:

UGA	Oct. 7
Georgia State	Oct. 8
Georgia Tech	Oct. 9
Georgia Southern	Oct. 14
Armstrong	Oct. 15
Valdosta	Oct. 16
Georgia College	Oct. 22
Columbus	TBA
Augusta	TBA
Kennesaw	TBA

Some USG institutions used to hold spring study abroad fairs, but all have discontinued this practice. Do's and don'ts for fairs was discussed. Some do's are 1) to give participants a bag so they can collect materials. Georgia Southern gives away small "goodies" from the campus bookstore, so students feel they have gotten something in return for their time (this is also a good way to keep an accurate count of the numbers who attended) 2) to make sure program directors know how to recruit for their programs 3) a prize drawing for attendees (Georgia

Tech raffles a Eurail pass from STA Travel).

Other than recruiting at the study abroad fair, Columbus recruits by collecting prospective students' emails and then invites these students to attend financial aid workshops for study abroad. The best recruiting tool is still class visits, especially for commuters who would be unlikely to attend the fair. This is a particularly good strategy when professors must be absent for class- study abroad presentations, especially in conjunction with promotional videos such as the European Council's Paris, London, or St. Petersburg videos, are a great way to present material to a captive audience who may not have otherwise considered study abroad. Georgia College is allotted time during the freshman orientation seminars and gives a multimedia presentation, in conjunction with testimonials from study abroad returnees, to all freshmen. Materials are also provided in orientation packets and in parents' packets. UGA sets up study abroad displays at parent sessions, and suggested that returnees (or parents of returnees) give testimonials at the parent sessions as well to quell anxieties about study abroad.

The committee determined that it did not wish to meet during the summer months, but reiterated that the best time to meet was on the same Friday as another System meeting (the Committee on International Students and Scholars or the Faculty and Curriculum Committee, for example) so that travel costs and time out of the office could be minimized. The next meeting date and time will be determined after consulting with various USG committee chairs.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

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