

USG Study Abroad Committee Meeting Minutes

Macon State College

August 27, 2004

Members present:

Richard Sutton (USG), Alison McCubbin (USG), Sue Watson (USG), Jim Anderson (Armstrong Atlantic), Dlynn Armstrong-Williams (North Georgia College & State U.), Bernice Nuhfer Halten (Southern Polytechnic S.U.), Beth Biron (Dalton State), Leigh Walker (GA State), Chris Bourdouvalis (Augusta State), Mid Brock (Dalton State), Dwight Call (Georgia College & State U.), Chaudron Gille (Gainesville College), Karen Guffey (Gordon College), Amy Henry (Georgia Tech), Alberta Johnson (Floyd College), Andrea Kiely (University of Georgia), Neal McCrillis (Columbus State), Carl McDonald (South Georgia College), Gerald McIntosh (Ft. Valley S.U.), Harriet Nichols (Georgia Perimeter College), Shirley Oakley (Coastal Georgia CC), Bill Schaniel (West Ga.), Bob Welborn (CCSU), Patricia Ryan-Ikegwuonu (Albany State U.), Irina McClellan (Valdosta State), Jeff Palis (Georgia Southern), Patrick Brennan (Macon State), Rob Gingras (Bainbridge College), Michael Kirkland (Bainbridge College), Colleen O'Hara (Kennesaw State), Richard Beaubien (Georgia Perimeter College), Betsy Arrington-Tsao (UGA), Colleen Larson (UGA)

Jim Anderson called the Council to order and asked that each member provide a **brief study abroad report** for his or her institution. Although institution-specific information varied, certain similarities emerged. Consistently, members reported a heightened interest in study abroad and other international program activities on their campuses. Specifically, interest in semester and yearlong programs has increased. However, it was noted that for the past two years, the numbers of students going abroad for the USG has remained basically "flat" due in part to SARS, the economy, the Iraq war, and security issues. The consensus was that the addition of many new programs, together with the already successful ones, would result in an increase in study abroad numbers for 2005.

Anderson then asked Rick Sutton to provide an update on **personnel changes in the USG Office of International Education**. Sutton explained that Sue Watson has been promoted to Assistant Director of International Programs. Sue also works with international projects, international students issues and international policy within the USG. She is also USG OIE rep to: International Students and Scholars Committee, the European Council, and the Americas Council.

Alison McCubbin now serves as International Services Coordinator and is also the USG OIE rep to the Study Abroad Committee, the Africa Council, and the Asia Council. Cristina Stephens is the Assistant Director and coordinates Special Projects, NSEP grant and study abroad data collection. Carrie Sloan is the new Assistant to the Director.

Alison McCubbin and Sue Watson led a discussion about the **on-line System catalog for study abroad**. They noted that the on-line catalog should be available within the next few weeks, and that a **CD of the information** will be mailed to all USG institutions. McCubbin commented that eliminating the hard copies of study abroad

catalog has saved the USG several thousand dollars. Another advantage is that the catalog can be continually updated, a feature that was impossible with the hard-copy version. The new on-line version will retain the same Web address as the hard-copy version (http://www.usg.edu/international_ed/catalog/).

Watson encouraged Council members to keep her informed regarding new programs and other information related to study abroad. Sutton underscored the fact that **all new study abroad programs must be approved** by the System Office of International Education, as well as by the individual institution.

Watson and McCubbin explained that the **STARS** program continues to be a successful initiative. They encouraged institutions to submit the 2003-2004 **STARS** report as soon as possible.

Next, Watson initiated a discussion of **study abroad insurance** and issues surrounding the renewal of the services of the current vendor. Feedback on the vendor currently in use (CISI) was consistently positive, but the System is seeking bids from others to make certain that the best coverage is made available to participants. She invited Council members to contact her with concerns or questions about study abroad, as well as international student insurance.

At this point, Watson distributed information about **ISEP, the international student exchange program**. Members were reminded that all USG students admitted to exchange programs with ISEP partner institutions automatically receive a \$500.00 credit toward ISEP fees. The Council felt that more information on the ISEP program and its implementation is needed since institutions vary in how the ISEP model is actualized. It was suggested that a general ISEP workshop be organized for System institutions, and that an ISEP representative be invited to provide essential information. In the meantime, Council members were encouraged to obtain more information from Sue Watson (USG) or from David Starling (Valdosta).

The next item on the agenda concerned information on the success of the Study Abroad Development Grants awarded last year. Shirley Oakley (CGCC) distributed flyers on their program to Argentina, one of the many new initiatives resulting from the development grants. Irina McClellan (VSU) reported on their program to the Czech Republic, and explained that a brochure and website for the program will soon be available. Leigh Walker (Georgia State) commented on the Rio Experience, and explained that brochures will soon be available. Next, Patricia Ryan-Ikegwonu (Albany State U) provided a report on the Brazil (Bahia) program co-sponsored by Albany State and Savannah State. This trip focuses on Afro-Brazilian culture and history. Jeff Palis (GA Southern) commented on their new collaborative program to Czech Republic and provided brochures. Jim Anderson gave information on the new Americas program to La Serena and Santiago, Chile.

The discussion then moved to the concern regarding **behavior of study abroad students**. It was noted that the recent New York Times article entitled "Colleges Tell Students the Overseas Party's Over" (August 23, 2004), explains that "consciousness and concern about (study abroad) student behavior is at an all-time high." It was announced that UGA is planning a fall study abroad program for their faculty and will be including this issue. The conference is open to faculty from other institutions. Gerald McIntosh (Fort Valley) encouraged System schools to share information regarding how their institution is addressing the problem. Jim Anderson encouraged Council

members to make maximum use of the Council's listserv to share helpful information.

The next agenda item was introduced by Dwight Call (GCSU), who provided an overview of **SERVAS**, a home stay program that provides personal contact among people of diverse cultures and backgrounds in over 130 countries worldwide. More information may be obtained directly from Dr. Call or by writing to info@usservas.org. or by consulting <http://www.usservas.org>.

Anderson then directed the attention of the Council to the USG Office of International Education's **CHARGE TO THE COMMITTEE ON STUDY ABROAD** (copy enclosed).

As a part of the discussion of items for the Committee Charge:

1. Gerald McIntosh (Ft. Valley), Dwight Call (GCSU), Betsy Arrington-Tsao (UGA), Alberta Johnson (Floyd), and Chris Bourdouvalis (ASU) volunteered to serve on a committee to select the underserved regions of the world and disciplines that will be the focus for this year's Study Abroad Program Development Grant Competition.
2. Topics suggested for the mini-study abroad workshops were: admission of transient students, alcohol issues, website development, dealing with learning and mobility disabilities, ISEP, developing new study abroad programs, recruiting, orientation, and welcome back programs. It was also suggested that sessions be scheduled for the personnel from the following offices: registrar, admissions, financial aid, and foundation.
3. Rick Sutton noted that this year the committee will most likely be working with the USG Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance in issuing new guidelines/procedures for financial management of study abroad programs.

Shortly before the conclusion of the meeting, Anderson allowed time for Council members to make **special announcements**, as follows:

- Karen Guffey (Gordon College) announced the availability of her new book **BARCELONA for STUDENTS**. For more information, contact Karen at k_guffey@gdn.edu.
- Patricia Ryan Ikegwuonu provided an overview of Albany State's study abroad program in **South Africa**. For more information, contact Professor Ikegwuonu at patricia.ryan-ikegwuonu@asurams.edu.
- Sue Watson and others announced **grant opportunities** available through NAFSA and Fulbright-Hays. Watson reminded Council members of the Gilman Scholarship deadline.
- Council members were reminded that **International Education Week** will take place November 15-19. Visit <http://exchanges.state.gov.iew/> for more information.
- Richard Beaubien (Georgia Perimeter College) announced the **GA International Leadership Conference** scheduled for January 28-30, 2005. For more information, write to Beaubien at rbeaubie@gpc.edu.

In closing, Anderson reminded the Committee that **more collaboration is needed** in the areas of study abroad orientation for both students and program leaders, implementation of ISEP, risk management, and study abroad

behavior of students. He encouraged members to keep networking and building partnerships among themselves, as well as with their external partners.

Anderson adjourned the meeting at noon.

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