

Global Engagement Program Council Minutes

6 November 2013

Council Members Present: Rachel Adler (Sociology), Winnie Brown-Glaude (African-American Studies), Luke Butler (Biology), Tara Carlin (Student), Seung Hee Choi (Finance), Jaimie DeMarco (Student), Michell Lin (Student), Cynthia Paces, Chair (History), Paula Rainey (Library), Ken Rubin (Student).

1:34p meeting called to order

1. Last meeting's minutes will be approved next time; too few people present at the start of the meeting.

2. Cynthia Paces reported on her recent meeting with Mark Odenwelder, Executive Director of CEDEI (Center for Interamerican Studies). CEDEI is a small and relatively affordable program that emphasizes internships. International students can work in the education programs for early childhood and adult learners of English. Small size of the program allows for some flexibility and personal support when designing/developing internships and independent research projects.

Q: How important is it to have a background in speaking Spanish?

A: The school teaches Spanish at every level. Many internships are in English. Some classes in English and some in Spanish.

Q: Details about living with a host family?

A: Some families have been involved for 20 years. CEDEI is careful about families the students are placed with.

3. Brian Potter, Director of the International Studies Program, and Matt Bender (History), joined the meeting to discuss how the International Studies Program fits in a required semester abroad. Students choose a focus area for their major or minor, e.g. the Middle East, and this focus area influences their choice of study abroad program. Students go abroad 2nd or 3rd year partly because by then they have the language skills, but there are also some programmatic constraints.

The group discussed influences that inhibit study abroad in different programs on campus: faculty attitudes, student lore, parent concerns, legitimate student perceptions based on their interpretation of our program planners.

The group discussed the strengths of going abroad early in the undergraduate career—1st and 2nd year could be the best time for some students to go abroad. Student committee members suggested that first and last semester at TCNJ are probably not going to be picked for study abroad because of the strong desire to be around campus during those semesters.

The group discussed the idea of having TCNJ “signature” study abroad programs. The group expressed a mild dislike for the term “signature program” in that it suggests some programs are not as important as others, but the general idea would be to identify study abroad programs that are especially promotable within particular majors at TCNJ as a way to show how easy/beneficial study abroad is, and as a way to demonstrate special alignments, supports, and leverages for students in particular departments. Another important characteristic would be that the programs could overcome possible faculty perceptions/attitudes about weak schools, boutique programs, and study abroad preventing students from staying on schedule in their TCNJ progress. It helps when TCNJ faculty visit programs. A student member suggested that cost is a big concern, and other members of the committee agreed that this seems to be a common myth.

The International Studies Program is working on a strategic plan to add geographic specialization in new areas, e.g., Africa, and add thematic concentrations, e.g. International Development, and to contribute to efforts to internationalize the campus. Discussion of Latin American specialization and if/how it could be related to the Caribbean and Winnie Brown-Glaude’s Trinidad program.

Brian Potter and Matt Bender left and the committee continued discussion:

4. Cynthia Paces updated the committee about Jon Stauff’s activities since the last committee meeting. He has been on an international tour, sponsored by the US State Department, to promote TCNJ as a study abroad destination for students from other countries. This is the start of a multi-year process that will need to be sustained over time.

2:51 meeting adjourned.