International Education Program Council

September 29, 2010 Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Katelyn Crawford, Holly Didi-Ogren (chair), Julianna Kopakowski, Elizabeth Mackie, Nicholas Manno, Susanna Monseau, Michael Shenoda, Jon Stauff, Thulsi Wickramasinghe, Kristan Zalan

Excused: Larry McCauley, Simona Wright

Also in attendance: Ben Rifkin (Dean, School of Culture and Society)

1. Holly Didi-Ogren called the meeting to order at 1:40 and introduced our new committee members from Student Government. She asked that the meeting minutes from September 15 and September 29 be presented for approval at the October 6 meeting. The committee agreed.
2. Short-term, faculty-led study abroad program approval – Jon Stauff shared with the committee a set of guidelines sent to him the previous week by Simona Wright. The guidelines differed significantly from those passed down to him by Beverly Kalinowski, Assistant Dean of International and Off-Campus Programs and the Summer School, and he related how a number of faculty members had been working with Beverly’s office to develop new programs or revise current programs for new locations, with the expectation that they would be able to offer these programs in May/Summer 2011.

Stauff stated that he felt the guidelines to be good ones, but he questioned the fact that the guidelines had obviously not been made available to the faculty at large in a systematic way, nor could they be found on the policy guide on the TCNJ governance website. He brought this up to his supervisor, Vice Provost Mark Kiselica, and both felt the need to consult with Assistant Provost Nancy Freudenthal. She confirmed that the guidelines, in their current role, serve as an advisory document to the Center for Global Engagement and do not represent “policy.” The reason for this is that the guidelines had not gone through the CAP committee to the Steering Committee.

Stauff related that he and Kiselica had talked at length and agreed to make the following suggestion to IEPC:

* For May/Summer 2011, the Center for Global Engagement should work with those faculty who had been working with Kalinowski and Stauff under the assumption that another set of guidelines existed and attempt, with IEPC review of the faculty’s proposals, to implement these programs for May/Summer 2011
* IEPC should review the guidelines sent to Stauff by Wright and codify these guidelines as policy. These guidelines would then be posted on the governance website and provide the transparency needed for faculty to prepare proposals for May/Summer 2012 (with an assumed proposal deadline of March 1, 2011).

Didi-Ogren led discussion about this issue, and those present arrived at a consensus that the IEPC would review the guidelines and send them through governance to become a standing policy for all to follow, and the IEPC would review proposals for 2011 programs and provide the Center for Global Engagement with recommendations for May/Summer 2011.

1. Meeting schedule – Didi-Ogren suggested, and the committee agreed, that IEPC would resume meeting once a month, on the first Wednesday of the month. An additional slot in the governance schedule on the third Wednesday of the month remained available, but everyone agreed that one meeting per month was likely to be enough. Stauff thanked the committee for their sacrifice in September.
2. Russia proposal – Dean Ben Rifkin, who is also a Professor of Russian at TCNJ, presented his proposal to lead a short-term program in Moscow and St. Petersburg in May/June 2011. The 1-unit class, RUS 171, has been approved by the curriculum committee in the Modern Languages department, and Rifkin explained that courses numbered “71” in that department may be taught in English. Prof. Deborah Hutton from the School of Arts and Communication would provide expertise from art/art history and serve as a second instructor.

The class would begin on the TCNJ campus, with two eight-hour sessions devoted to 1) the presentation of a historical framework for contemporary Russia, and 2) a language experience, with the introduction of the Cyrillic alphabet and key phrases and words that will be useful from the first day of the travel segment of the course. Students would come from different disciplinary backgrounds, and they will meet with the instructors to determine the focus of their course project and develop a strategy for gathering information about their topics during the travel segment of the program. Once in Russia, there would be a combination of “seat time” (classes every other day for ninety minutes to present course material and focus student attention on site visits; discussions after periods of reflection; guest lectures by native specialists) and “feet time” (on-site interpretation, provided by guides, native specialists, and the two TCNJ faculty members). Upon return to the US, students will meet again on campus for an all-day, eight-hour session (featuring oral reports from each student about their project topic) and complete a substantial written assignment on or before July 1. The combination of traditional classroom-bound instruction and instructor-guided experiential learning at various sites in Moscow and St. Petersburg would actually exceed the number of contact hours (37.33 hours) of an on-campus course, and certainly the location of the program in Russia would go far to achieve the goals of the recently-approved 171 courses in the Modern Languages department to stimulate interest in various world regions where modern languages taught at TCNJ are spoken.

Didi-Ogren asked Rifkin to contextualize the course evaluations, and Rifkin explained that there would be daily objective quizzes (focused on facts presented to the students the previous day) in addition to class participation/discussion and the course project. Rifkin emphasized the freshness of Hutton’s perspective as an art historian experiencing many of the works for the first time, coupled with his vast experience and expertise in Russian literature and history, would provide students with an interesting education experience that may inspire them to begin or continue language study.

Rifkin explained that there was the intent to offer the experience to TCNJ alumni, reflecting his interest in developing ties to alumni and exposing them to the learning activities of our students.

Rifkin explained that the tour was limited to St. Petersburg and Moscow because those two cities are the ones that essentially generate “Russian Culture.”

The discussion was lively and congenial, and several student members expressed the support for the idea of offering programs in different times of the summer to accommodate different student constituencies. There was even interest from both student and faculty members in participating in the program.

Didi-Ogren called for a vote of the committee, and all present voted to approve the Russia program for May/June 2011. Didi-Ogren added that Simona Wright, although not present, expressed her support for the program if everyone else present was in favor.

Faculty members on the committee encouraged the student members to bring concerns and issues to IEPC and to spread the word about IEPC activities to fellow members of Student Government. The student perspective is often crucial to the success of our various programs and policies, and all agreed to do what was necessary to have a good working relationship between IEPC and Student Government.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00pm. Next meeting on Wednesday, October 6, at 1:30pm in Bliss 145.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Stauff