

ANNUAL REPORT
2022-2023

International Programs and Offerings Committee
University of North Alabama
Florence, Alabama

Committee Co-chairs

Dr. Stephanie Coker

Dr. Butler Cain

Shared Governance Executive Committee Chair

Dr. Kristy Oden

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University of North Alabama
International Programs and Offerings Committee
Annual Report 2022-2023

I. Executive Summary

The International Programs and Offerings (IPO) Committee was active and effective during the 2022-2023 academic year. It approved several procedures and recommendations to improve Education Abroad, global learning, and international travel for UNA employees and students. Applications for 2023 Education Abroad programs represented a 160% increase from 2022 applications. The \$200,000 scholarship budget was depleted after the fall application cycle, so the Committee collaborated with other campus groups to provide funding for students who were unable to receive a scholarship.

The committee's charge from Shared Governance includes the following:

1. To serve as an advisory committee to international programs/offering on campus;
2. To assist the Office of International Affairs with information related to international programs/offering on campus;
3. To provide a mechanism for coordinating all programs/offering within various colleges as well as other areas on campus;
4. To serve as a mechanism for international offerings/program development;
5. To appraise and approve the education abroad scholarship applications;
6. To handle any proposals the committee may make affecting university policy according to section C.2 "Shared Governance Procedure for Policy Change Recommendations";
7. To submit a final written report electronically by the first day of the fall semester to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs with a copy sent to the Chair of the SGEC.

II. Meetings

The committee met on Sept. 2, Oct. 7, Nov. 4, December (E-business), and April 18 & 20 (virtual meeting). The committee also conducted E-business related to the Education Abroad scholarships throughout February and March.

III. Committee Actions and Accomplishments Relative to Each Item of its Charge

Relative to the first charge, the Committee approved the following during the 2022-2023 academic year:

- All UNA faculty, staff, and students who are engaged in university-related international travel should purchase insurance coverage through UNA's iNext contract for the duration of their trip or program.
- All Education Abroad programs should submit lists of participating students to the Office of Student Conduct to perform background checks on each student before the program's departure.

- A FERPA Release Form that all Education Abroad programs must require all students to sign prior to program departure. The release form was reviewed and approved by Ms. Amber Fite-Morgan prior to IPO Committee approval.
- Students must attend at least two semesters at UNA before they are eligible to participate in a long-term exchange program.
- An international travel liability waiver.
- Revising the Education Abroad Scholarship Application process by establishing only one submission deadline for applications. The deadline will be in late January of each year, and the specific date will be determined year-to-year by the Committee.
- UNA's academic colleges give final approval to their respective upcoming Education Abroad programs by mid-October of each year. This will create a consistent approval deadline among colleges, and it will give all Education Abroad programs a similar amount of time to recruit and prepare students.
- All Education Abroad program leaders submit their program plans to the IPO Committee by mid-September of each year for IPO review of proposed program locations. The Committee will not approve or deny programs. Instead, it will look for common locations and may suggest programs consider working together or sharing resources.
- Participants in international education programs should neither be required nor expected to share bedding during their programs. Each participant should have their own bedding. This recommendation places no constraints on types of physical sleeping spaces (hotel room, hostel room, apartment, tent, etc.), and it places no constraints on participants' personal and consensual decisions about bedding.

Relative to the second charge, the committee provided direction to the Assistant Vice Provost for International Affairs regarding the Education Abroad Scholarship process.

Relative to the third charge, the committee maintained its advisory role to UNA's academic colleges regarding their Education Abroad efforts. It also approved several recommendations (listed above) to provide better coordination of international travel across campus.

Relative to the fourth charge, the committee promoted and assisted with the inaugural Education Abroad Poster Session, which was held in Collier Library during UNA's 2023 Scholar Day event. The committee also considered reviving discussion of providing site visit grants for faculty/staff who wish to explore potential Education Abroad sites. The committee also approved recommendations (listed above) to improve UNA's Education Abroad processes.

Relative to the fifth charge, the committee managed unprecedented demand for UNA's Education Abroad Scholarship. During the fall 2022 application cycle, approximately 125 scholarships were awarded, totaling \$200,000. That was the entire budgeted amount for all scholarships. During the spring 2023 application cycle, approximately 106 viable applications were submitted for consideration, totaling an additional \$169,600 in scholarship demand. Applications for 2023 Education Abroad programs represented around a 160% increase from 2022 applications. The committee concluded the 2022-2023 academic year by switching to one application deadline in late January of each year. The committee will continue discussing whether the student scholarship model is still viable or whether Education Abroad funds should be awarded directly to Education Abroad programs.

Relative to the sixth charge, the committee did not submit any formal proposals for Shared Governance consideration. However, it submitted approved recommendations to COAD and the SGA.

Relative to the seventh charge, this final report was submitted to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and a copy sent to the Chair of the SGEC, on May 3, 2023.

IV. Formal Recommendations

This committee did not make any formal recommendations directly to Shared Governance this year. However, the committee's recommendations are listed in Section III of this document.

V. Plans for the Upcoming Academic Year

The primary issue awaiting additional considering in the 2023-2024 academic year will be the Education Abroad Scholarship and how it is awarded. Increased demand and complexity have shown the current disbursement process is flawed, inefficient, and unsustainable.

The committee continues to maintain an aspirational goal of providing programming for faculty, staff, and students who are interested in Education Abroad.

Long-term future goals are not especially relevant during this time of increasing demand and change in how Education Abroad is evolving at UNA. The committee is monitoring and evaluating what appear to be current trends, and it will address those matters as quickly and efficiently as possible.

VI. Committee Weaknesses

Similar to last year's report, a built-in committee weakness is that 100% meeting attendance and participation is difficult to achieve. The committee's makeup continues to contribute to this; it is difficult to find a time when all members can get together at the same time for a monthly meeting. This challenge is particularly acute for a committee whose membership consists of representatives from university administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Another remaining potential weakness is the committee's requirement for its membership to have been involved in some type of international education program. The rationale is sound and appropriate. However, the university has not yet built back a level of Education Abroad experience after the global pandemic. The Shared Governance Committee can help address this matter by appointing faculty and students who have participated in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) courses.

Finally, there appears to be no restriction on the number of committee members allowed to serve from the same academic department. This year, the IPO Committee included three faculty members from the same department. They were excellent committee members who brought a wealth of perspectives and experiences. They also fulfilled different roles: one represented

CASE, one represented faculty who had conducted an Education Abroad program, and one served as “Faculty at large.” However, the Shared Governance Executive Committee should consider limiting committee members from the same department to a maximum of two.

VII. Comments

The IPO Committee fulfilled its duties as required by UNA Shared Governance.