

University of North Alabama
International Programs & Offerings Committee

April 2023
Virtual Meetings
April 18, 2-3 p.m.
April 20, 9-10 a.m.

Final Version of Meeting Minutes

4/26/23

Attendees

Alvarado-Brizuela, Cain, Coker, Harris, Howell, Looser, Oglesby, and Vance.

Meeting Location

The Committee held meetings via Microsoft Teams.

Scholarship Disbursements

This was listed under old business and was a simple acknowledgement that the \$200,000 scholarship budget had been fully awarded to Education Abroad Scholarship recipients from the fall '22 application cycle. Applicants during the spring '23 round were funded through a combination of financial resources from across the university.

Education Abroad Scholarship Process

The Provost recommended, and committee members agreed, to establish one submission deadline for Education Abroad applications. It would be in late January. That would be plenty of time for academic colleges to approve their Ed Abroad programs and allow faculty/staff adequate time to recruit students. One deadline would also enhance equity for all scholarship applicants.

Butler described the recent Education Abroad scholarship award and disbursement process as “a nightmare.” He said current practices are inefficient and problematic, and there have been numerous instances where students have accepted a scholarship, it was awarded to their respective programs, and then the students withdrew from their programs. UNA Student Accounts has to match scholarship awards to recipients, and when a recipient withdraws, it creates significant headaches for removing the student’s name as a scholarship recipient and withdrawing funds from the Ed Abroad program.

Butler initiated a discussion about removing the scholarship application process requirement in favor of a process in which Ed Abroad Scholarship funds are deposited directly into programs’ financial accounts. Committee members supported further consideration of this idea through additional investigation into how such a process might function. A primary concern centers on how funding amounts would be determined for each program, particularly because they will have different numbers of student participants.

Later in the week, Butler had an opportunity to share the IPO Committee's discussion of this matter with colleagues in the Provost's Office and Student Financial Aid. All supported the committee's discussion and agreed the Education Abroad Scholarship award process needs to be adjusted.

Education Abroad Program Deadlines

Committee members support a recommended timeline for academic colleges to approve Education Abroad proposals. Members recommend mid-October as the deadline for colleges to grant final approval to Education Abroad programs that are planned for the following calendar year.

Committee members also support adding a mid-September deadline for Education Abroad program leaders to submit their plans to the IPO Committee for prior review. The committee will not approve or reject programs. Instead, it will review programs' proposed locations to determine if groups are traveling to the same places. The committee likely would suggest that the programs consider coordinating with each other.

Transient Student Participation in Education Abroad

Committee members noted that non-UNA students may participate in UNA-sponsored Education Abroad programs. They would need to [request transient student status](#).

Sharing Bedding During International Travel

The committee agreed it would be prudent to issue a campus-wide recommendation that participants in international education programs should not be required or expected to share beds during their programs. The committee would express the expectation that each person has their own bedding. This recommendation would not apply to the sleeping space (hotel room, hostel room, apartment, etc.), and it would not restrict students' personal and consensual decisions about bedding.

Additional Items

No votes were taken during these meetings. Committee members recommended that voting items be provided and voted on via email. Butler volunteered to draft and send the voting proposals to all committee members.

Voting Items and Results

The following items were submitted to committee members via email and were approved via email and in-person voting.

Voting Item #1 – UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED (13 of 13 members voting)

The IPO Committee recommends 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.

Voting Item #2 – UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED (13 of 13 members voting)

The IPO Committee recommends that 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.

Voting Item #3 – UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED (13 of 13 members voting)

The IPO Committee recommends that 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.

Voting Item #4 – UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED (13 of 13 members voting)

The IPO Committee strongly recommends that 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.