

ANNUAL REPORT  
2021-2022

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

Committee Co-chairs

Dr. Lorie Johnson

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Shared Governance Executive Committee Chair

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## I. Executive Summary

The International Programs and Offerings (IPO) Committee introduced a co-chair format this year to accommodate the new position of Assistant Vice Provost for International Affairs and Director of Education Abroad. That position will serve as the committee's permanent co-chair along with the traditional rotating chair (now co-chair) position. Considering increased COVID-19 vaccine availability, decreasing coronavirus rates nationally and locally (through spring 2022), and improved COVID-19 monitoring globally, the University of North Alabama began offering faculty-led Education Abroad opportunities this year. The university also continued promoting semester-long and academic year-long exchanges through the university's student exchange partners. The Education Abroad Scholarship application process, therefore, was reopened during the spring 2022 semester. At the time of this report's submission, 97 Education Abroad Scholarships were awarded, totaling \$155,200.

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

1. To serve as an advisory committee to international programs/offerings on campus;
2. To assist the Office of International Affairs with information related to international programs/offerings on campus;
3. To provide a mechanism for coordinating all programs/offerings 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. 24, Nov. 4, Dec. 1, Jan. 26, Feb. 25, and May 3. The committee conducted e-business in March.

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

Relative to the first charge, the committee established that faculty-led Education Abroad programs should be approved and administered by the academic colleges and departments as directed by their respective Dean's Offices. For now, colleges are responsible for developing risk management procedures for faculty-led programs. They are also responsible for enrolling participating faculty, staff, and students into the iNext insurance program for coverage during international travel. The Assistant Vice Provost for International Affairs assists with the iNext

payment process. The committee also recommended UNA research and evaluate third-party organizations that may be able to provide risk management and risk assessment assistance for all international travel associated with UNA.

Relative to the second charge, the committee provided direction to the Assistant Vice Provost for International Affairs regarding previous scholarship application processes and other potential priorities for Education Abroad as UNA re-establishes international travel for faculty, staff, and students.

Relative to the third charge, the committee concluded that it cannot function in the way an Education Abroad office with full-time staff and support would operate. Therefore, the committee has adopted the position that it will serve an advisory role and will provide assistance, as needed, in matters related to faculty-led Education Abroad efforts. The committee will also advise the Assistant Vice Provost for International Affairs and Director of Education Abroad.

Relative to the fourth charge, the committee is reviewing its role in Education Abroad programming development now that international travel has resumed at UNA.

Relative to the fifth charge, the committee approved a newly-revised web-based Education Abroad Scholarship Application form, promoted the scholarship's availability, vetted 100 scholarship applications, and approved 97 for a total of \$155,200 in scholarship awards. The committee also re-established application deadlines for the Education Abroad Scholarship, which have been set for Nov. 1 and Feb. 1. The committee also agreed to review those deadlines and make changes, if needed.

Relative to the sixth charge, the committee did not submit any formal proposals for Shared Governance consideration. However, it is currently investigating the need for a third-party risk management/risk assessment program and may make a recommendation, if necessary.

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 10, 2022.

#### IV. Formal Recommendations

This committee did not make any formal recommendations to Shared Governance this year. However, the group made the following informal recommendations:

- Faculty-led Education Abroad programs will be approved and administered by their respective colleges and departments for the immediate future.
- UNA should investigate risk management/risk assessment organizations to provide such services to the university, especially for international travel.
- UNA should consider establishing site visit grants for faculty and staff who plan future Education Abroad programs, particularly in locations where program leaders have not traveled or conducted previous programs.

## V. Plans for the Upcoming Academic Year

In the coming year, the committee co-chair(s) will investigate risk management/risk assessment options during summer '22 and will report to the full committee at the start of the '22-'23 academic year. The committee will also begin the new academic year with a discussion of site visit grants for faculty and staff. As usual, the committee will continue administering the Education Abroad Scholarship process. The committee has an aspirational goal of providing programming for faculty, staff, and students who are interested in Education Abroad.

The committee has not yet established long-term goals for the future. The committee focused almost exclusively on re-establishing current procedures and processes after a disruptive pandemic period, and those efforts will continue during the '22-'23 academic year. However, it is likely that the committee will be in a much better position at that time to consider some long-term plans.

## VI. Committee Weaknesses

Perhaps the most obvious weakness of this committee is that 100% meeting attendance and participation likely will never be achieved. The committee's makeup contributes to this; it is difficult to find a time when 13 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 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, when the pandemic occurred, it made finding members with experience in this area difficult. This is likely to change as international travel resumes. The Shared Governance Committee can help address this matter by appointing faculty and students who have participated in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) courses.

## VII. Comments

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