

ANNUAL REPORT
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COMMITTEE NAME

University of North Alabama
Florence, Alabama

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Date submitted

Submitted to: SGEC Chair
Title/Committee (if applicable)

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Date received

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

ANNUAL REPORT

2015-2016

I. Executive Summary

In 2015-16, the committee continued to fulfill its charge of reviewing and assessing study abroad scholarship applications. This was handled by sub-committees who made recommendations to the committee as a whole, which voted on the recommendations. We added a new non-voting member (Study Abroad Coordinator), with the aim of working with him to share information and coordinate the development of policies and procedures. We discussed issues relating to recruiting international transient students for study abroad in a year that saw the first one enrolled, and supported Chungsheng Zhang in his efforts to implement a policy that would encourage such students to enroll by offering them a scholarship to slightly offset the cost of tuition faced by international students. Other units we worked with to review and develop policies and procedures included the Office of the President, the VPAA's Office, and the SGA. Through this consultation process we significantly streamlined the process by which students are awarded their scholarships.

II. The Committee's Charge (from the Shared Governance Document) **Charge**

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 handle any proposals the committee may make affecting university policy according to section C.2 "Shared Governance Procedure for Policy Change Recommendations"
6. To submit a final written report electronically by the first day of the fall semester to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost with a copy sent to the Chair of the SGEC

III. The Committee met on the following dates: 8 Sept., 2015; 14 Oct., 2015; 18 Nov. 2015; 27 Jan., 2016; 24 Feb., 2016; 27 April, 2016; also subcommittees for spring and fall scholarships held meetings, and the committee as a whole conducted e-business via Canvas

- IV. What were the Committee's actions and accomplishments this year relative to each of the items of the charge?
- As usual, most of our time and energy went into assessing student and staff applications for study abroad scholarships, in the fall and spring semester.
 - We evaluated participation in Alabama A&M University's Study Abroad Fair and decided not to make it a priority this year, as in past years no student has ever been recruited for our programs as a result of attendance/participation at the Fair
 - We asked SGEAC to change membership of the committee to include Study Abroad Coordinator as non-voting member by position
 - We held meetings with members of the SGA executive to discuss the possibility of levying a study abroad fee from students. These discussions were wide-ranging and helpful, but we could not find a model for doing this that would be acceptable.
 - We identified the current method of announcing and confirming individual scholarships as extremely cumbersome, and we worked with the President's Office and the VPAA's Office to review and revise this method. A new method was implemented in the spring round of scholarships, and it worked much better for all.
 - Supported efforts of Study Abroad Coordinator to create benchmarks for faculty leading study abroad trips.
 - We identified the following challenges: 1) the study abroad website is inadequate. For instance, it does not host information about the various study abroad programs being offered in a given year. Students do not have one place they can go online to find this out. 2) Scholarships are received by the committee in a highly unwieldy format which makes processing them very inefficient.
 - Worked closely with faculty, staff, and students, when required, to support those who had been offered scholarships for trips that had to be cancelled (Paris, e.g.)
- V. What were the Committee's formal recommendations?
- That there be human resources allocated to update the study abroad website, to provide clerical assistance with processing study abroad scholarship applications, with supporting faculty who wish to lead study abroad programs, and with assisting trip leaders with such chores as registering students for iNext insurance.
 - That an application process specifically for staff needs to be identified and added to the website. Currently staff have to try to follow or adapt the instructions/rules addressed to students.
 - That we explore ways to expand recruitment of international transient students to study abroad programs, to follow up on new policy proposed by Chungsheng Zhang and approved by COAD.

- That faculty be made more aware of benchmarks, timelines, expectations, and resources for study abroad programs
- Continue working with SGEC, COAD, and VPAA's Office to explore funding models that will help the Study Abroad program to grow. The cost of participation is the biggest single obstacle to students.

VI. What does the Committee plan to accomplish

A. In the coming year?

- Work with Study Abroad Coordinator Scott Infanger as he finalizes the draft faculty handbook
- Work with Study Abroad Coordinator Scott Infanger to review and to publicize benchmarks and procedures for faculty conducting study abroad programs
- Continue working with SGA and COAD to review funding models that will help relieve study abroad students of their financial burden and help ensure reliable funding for such costs as faculty expenses and iNext insurance. Student workers were one option that was discussed.
- Continue working with VPAA's office and President's office for clarification and support re: study abroad scholarship cap: we have hit the limit of what we can give out
- Work with Registrar's Office and Business Office to streamline the system whereby on-campus-only fees are waived for study abroad students
- Work with Office of International Affairs and Study Abroad Coordinator to update website
- Continue to support Dr. Craig Christy in his work to recruit and support students participating in the Magellan program
- Work with all relevant parties to review policies for study abroad faculty compensation to ensure that they are consistent, equitable, transparent, accessible, and in line with the Faculty Handbook

B. In future years?

- Continue the above as needed.

VII. What are the Committee's weaknesses?

The biggest challenge the committee faces in addressing its charge is the fact that, even with implementing the 2014-15 committee's initiative to review and make recommendations on scholarship applications in sub-committees, so that not every member of the IPO committee has to read and assess every single application, the time demanded for dealing with these is great. These leaves less time and energy for more forward-looking initiatives. Clerical and/or IT support would help a lot.

A. What can the Shared Governance Committee help you do to address the weaknesses?

VIII. Comments