

COMMISSION ON OUTREACH AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Minutes

August 30, 2018; 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Gateway Center; 902 Prices Fork Road; Suite 120

Attendance: Andrea Brunais, Urs Buehlmann, Wayne Crotto, Gregory Daniel, Shelley Martin, Juan Luis Nicolau, Valerie Ragan, Brett Shadle, Tom Thompson, Kang Xia, Xiaowei Wu

Absent: Cheng Chen, Guru Ghosh, Ed Jones, Karen Munden, Heinrich Schnoedt, Susan Short

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Brett Shadle welcomed the group, self-introductions were made. The charge was made to the group: *To study, formulate, and recommend to the University Council policies and procedures concerning the engagement of the University in service, outreach, and international affairs. Areas for consideration include: Cooperative Extension, continuing and professional education; economic development including community resource and leadership development; liaison with affiliated corporations and institutes; international programs; and other matters affecting service, outreach, and international affairs. The Commission on Outreach and International Affairs will liaison with the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies with issues regarding study abroad and international exchange programs.*

2. **Agenda Approval**

Brett made the call for motion to approve the agenda; motion made; was seconded; all were in favor and the agenda was approved.

3. **Call for Announcements**

The call for announcements was made; there were no announcements.

4. **Announcement of Approval of Minutes, May 10, 2018**

The minutes from the May 10, 2018 meeting were sent out electronically for updates; were approved electronically; were sent to University Council and will be posted to the University Governance website upon approval by University Council. Minutes can be found at: <http://www.governance.vt.edu/>. The main web page for COIA is: <https://www.outreach.vt.edu/VP/CommissionsAndCommittees/coia.html>.

5. **Chairman's Report**

Brett announced that there was no University Council meeting as of yet, the first meeting will be on September 17, 2018.

The Engagement Leadership Council meeting scheduled for June 7, 2018 was cancelled, there is no report.

6. **Election of Vice-Chairman**

Brett described the Vice-Chairman's duties as running the meeting when the Chair is unavailable, and the Vice-Chair organizes and chairs the sub-committee for the Alumni Awards for Outreach Excellence (both individual and team). Brett asked for nominations/volunteers for members to serve as Vice-Chair. Urs Buehlmann volunteered to serve as Vice-Chair; he will serve as Vice-Chair for 2018-2019; and serve as Chair of COIA for 2019-2020. The selection committee for review of the Alumni Awards for Outreach Excellence will need to be formed.

7. **Reports**

a. **Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)**

Ed Jones was unable to attend, Tom Thompson gave an update. Tom announced that the VCE working group met with regard to on-going international exchanges aimed at Extension agents. Currently there is a group of four (4) going to Senegal in November for 1-3 weeks and more will go

in the spring. Initially the project was under USAID, but it is now led by Tom Archibald through a grant. There is an exchange program with Ireland; the program with Brazil is not as active and will be re-evaluated; and discussion included forming a program with a Spanish speaking country, perhaps the Dominican Republic.

b. University Committee on International Affairs (UCIA) Meeting

Tom Thompson, Chair of UCIA, reported from the UCIA meeting held on August 27, 2018. He indicated discussion included a new way of conducting meetings; that reports wouldn't come from each area, and that colleges and departments would be given an opportunity for a 10-15 minute update, but not every meeting. UCIA identified topics to make progress on for the upcoming year; 1) Dual Degrees with international partners; 2) Housing for international visitors; 3) Bring forth more information about international rankings and the effect by international students; 4) The need for Advancement, Development; Internationalization and Education Abroad. Guru Ghosh is to attend the September 24th UCIA meeting to speak to questions UCIA has for the upcoming year. Tom asked what UCIA could do in order to support COIA. Discussion included the UCIA reports that are discussed at COIA; exploring department goals and issues; gathering information from departments and colleges; and what should the future look like. Other important area of concern include the Global Education Office (GEO) and need for scholarships; and the Advancement and Alumni pieces discussed last year with COIA. The intent is not to duplicate efforts between UCIA and COIA; and to work on the new strategic plan to fill gaps within the different groups; as well as initiating new issues. The resolution process is still the appropriate way to bring up changes in policy, etc. with first and second readings. Additionally, to bring information to corresponding constituents to include the Dean's Council and Faculty Senate will be important.

8. Commission Board Member Comments

Shelly Martin asked what are the next steps since we have not received a response back from President Sands about the Scholarship letter that was sent last spring (this letter was sent out to members prior to the meeting today, and is **attached here**). Shelly asked if it would be possible to show a visual that included numbers dropping to display a better picture. Brett indicated he would find a tactful way to follow-up. Erin McCann will be attending the October meeting for a Strategic Planning follow-up discussion. The suggestion was made to invite the Provost and/or President to a COIA meeting in the future.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, all in favor; adjourned at 4:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Rhodes
Recording Secretary

TENTATIVE MEETING DATES FOR 2018-2019-(All meetings will be from **3:30-4:30 p.m.** and will take place at the Gateway Center-902 Prices Fork)

- September 20, 2018
- October 18, 2018
- November 15, 2018
- December 13, 2018
- February 21, 2019
- March 21, 2019
- April 18, 2019
- May 9, 2019

- NO JANUARY MEETING



May 23, 2018

Dear President Sands,

Since your arrival at Virginia Tech, you have expressed a welcomed appreciation for the life-changing experiences students undergo while studying abroad. Similarly, you quickly recognized that Virginia Tech should be proactive in reducing obstacles to study abroad and global engagement, for both faculty and students. In your remarks at your installation as president of Virginia Tech, you stated, “Every undergraduate who wishes to participate in study abroad should have the opportunity to do so without delaying progress toward degree goals and without financial hardship.” Unfortunately, this has yet to be realized, especially concerning the latter issue. It has recently come to the attention of the Commission on Outreach and International Affairs (COIA) that study abroad scholarships will soon decrease dramatically.

Following your installation speech, Outreach and International Affairs Division’s (OIA) self-support operation, the Language and Culture Institute (LCI) initiated a scholarship program offered by the Global Education Office (GEO), also within OIA. Last year, for example, LCI provided \$100,000 to GEO, which represents 35% of overall scholarship funding and 71% of the funding allocated to students participating in a non-Steger Center (Riva San Vitale, Switzerland) experience.

International student enrollment in LCI’s programs has dropped precipitously due to our nation’s evolving global priorities; in turn, so too has the Institute’s ability to support GEO. LCI has agreed to honor the \$7,500 scholarship commitments GEO already offered for the 2018-19 academic year, but the loss of further funding means that GEO will be unable to offer significant financial aid to our students. The number of non-Steger Center students who receive scholarships (small though the scholarships have been, between \$1,500 and \$6,500) will drop from around 50 to under 20. The result will be that students from affluent families will go abroad, while others will be excluded from this transformative opportunity. GEO’s ongoing efforts to reach out to students from groups traditionally hesitant or unable to engage in study abroad programs—including first generation college students, students from underrepresented minority groups, athletes, and STEM majors—will be for naught.

We are approaching you with two requests. The first is short-term. We ask that the President’s office commit funds to make up for the loss of LCI’s support to GEO. Without a sustained infusion of funds to GEO, many of our current students will be precluded from studying abroad. An annual commitment of at least \$150,000 over the next five years will permit GEO to continue to recruit students who, due to financial limitations, would not otherwise even consider studying abroad.

Given the critical importance of study abroad to the institution—to students and faculty alike, and to our mission to be a global land grant university—it is deeply concerning that GEO has had to

rely so heavily on soft money funneled through another office within the OIA division. Medium and long term planning is compromised, and it is difficult for us, as faculty, to advise students when we cannot assure them that scholarships will in fact be available. Scholarships must also be larger, since at current levels they can defray only a portion of study abroad costs and for a limited number of students. For low-income students, scholarships that cover fifty or seventy-five per cent of costs can be insufficient to make study abroad realistic; without significant increases in the number and size of scholarships, we will never be able to approach our goals of expanding study abroad.

This reflects poorly on the university, suggesting that we are not truly committed to our students and to our global mission. Thus, our second request is for you and your advancement team to work with GEO, OIA, and COIA to establish a robust philanthropic plan that will generate substantial funds for study abroad scholarships for Virginia Tech students.

The Commission looks forward to your response and to working with your office on this critical issue in the coming months.

Sincerely,



Brett Shadle, Current Vice-Chair and Incoming Chair
Commission on Outreach and International Affairs (COIA)
Professor of History, Virginia Tech

cc: Cyril Clarke
Guru Ghosh