



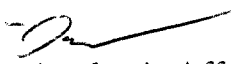
UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII
MĀNOA

October 26, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: ✓ Sarita Rai
Director, Study Abroad Program

John Casken
Chair, Council on Study Abroad

FROM: Reed Dasenbrock 
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Study Abroad and the External Program Review

As you know, Study Abroad was temporarily reassigned for a while to the AVCUE but now that temporary assignment has been cancelled. The period of the temporary assignment corresponded to the period when Undergraduate Education was undergoing its periodic program review, so Study Abroad constituted a small part of that report. The normal process for follow up on such reviews is a meeting with the dean or cognizant administrator, after which his or her response to the review is finalized and then a response by the VCAA is developed. All of these documents are ultimately posted on the web as part of our public record of program review which is absolutely decisive for WASC accreditation.

Given the oscillations in administrative structure, we need to modify our normal procedures somewhat in this case. We have your response to the review from Study Abroad dated August 1. This memo will stand as my response to the August 1st Study Abroad response to the report, and we can conclude this part of the process. One final process comment is that we will not be considering the suggestion at the end of the report to go back to the old model of internal program review. This was widely seen as quite ineffective and is strongly discouraged by WASC; our new model, in contrast, has been well received by those units who have undergone the process and has been upheld by WASC as a model for other universities to follow.

Your response focuses on three areas of disagreement with the report. I agree with your response on one point, find it less convincing on two others. These are all issues that are likely to persist, so are worth some comment.

First, in your response, you claim that the concerns expressed by the committee concerning Study Abroad possibly slowing time to degree are invalid. The argument advanced in your response is a straightforward one: since Study Abroad students graduate on average more quickly than the Mānoa average, Study Abroad is not slowing down time to degree. But it is easy to list reasons why the kind of student attracted to Study Abroad is far more likely to graduate more quickly than the average Mānoa student: they are probably more motivated, have better academic records, are more focused on what they wish to accomplish, and on average have more financial resources since they can afford not to work in the period they are on Study Abroad. The comparison is therefore not a valid one because the samples are not comparable. This does not prove that Study Abroad slows students down: we simply don't know the effect participating in Study Abroad has on time to degree. It would be good to design a study that tests the question more rigorously and objectively than anyone has to this point.

Second, the response rejects the ideas advanced by the report about including faculty from other universities. I agree with the response that the report reflects some misunderstanding about how faculty are chosen. It is clear that the Study Abroad program has made a clear decision to have essentially stand-alone Mānoa programs, not consortial programs, and that the suggestion in the report about faculty from other universities is not compatible with that. Obviously, many universities use a consortial approach, and I assume Study Abroad has considered the arguments for such an approach in the past. I think this is a decision best made by the program, so I am comfortable with your response on this point.

Third, the report is concerned about the cost of Study Abroad for students and their families. I share the report's concern, as we need to make Study Abroad accessible to students of all backgrounds, and I don't think this concern can be dismissed as quickly as your response does as an inaccurate perception. I also have a little trouble with the language in the response that "The Council is constantly looking at ways of reducing the costs to the students" given that it has endorsed a fee increase at a time when Study Abroad has a cash balance of well over \$1 million (which increased substantially over the past year). I agree that scholarship support for Study Abroad is an excellent idea, and both Vice Chancellor Hernandez and I have proposed that in the brainstorming that has taken place over the new comprehensive campaign.

You also endorse the comments of the Program Review concerning the level of staffing in the program and argue that this stems from a "lack of support" for the Study Abroad program. Given the very comfortable and growing level of financial reserves of the program (approximately twice the balance in the OVCAA and larger than several of the largest colleges on campus), the program itself certainly has the funds to hire additional

Sarita Rai & John Casken

October 25, 2012

Page 3 of 3

staff or engage in other additional investments. The discussion with CSS suggests that program expansion is on the horizon for Study Abroad, a development we welcome, but the evidence available to me suggests that the fee structure is such that an increase in students participating in Study Abroad should along with your growing reserves be able to fund any increase in staff which is needed to facilitate that increase. As the program grows, I would encourage you to consider more sites in Asia to complement the already rich and successful menu of programs in Europe: a program on the mainland in China and one in SE Asia are concepts that I particularly urge you to consider seriously.

c: Asst Vice Chancellor & PAS Dean Shultz