



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
MĀNOA

August 1, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Reed Dasenbrock
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

FROM: John Gasken, Chair, Council on Study Abroad
Sarita Rai, Director *Sarita Rai*

VIA: Edward J. Shultz *EJ Shultz*
Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor for International and Exchange Programs

SUBJECT: Response to the Undergraduate Education: External Program Review (July 11, 2012): Study Abroad

The responses and comments below to the Final Report on Undergraduate Education by the three external reviewers are based on input from members of the Council on Study Abroad and the Study Abroad Team.

The report was surprisingly brief on the Study Abroad Program compared with space given to Honors, IS, and ROTC. However, overall it was a positive report and it was heartening to read that "...the program operates effectively with an unusually high level of academic connection to the UHM faculty. This integrated strategy undoubtedly enhances student experience and faculty development..." (Page 8)

Council members concurred with the reviewer's statement that, "The operational/administrative staffing fall well below typical university levels so that more senior ranks end up regularly engaged in duties which don't fit their advanced training and skill levels." (Page 9) A similar statement has been made in every official program review of the Center but has "stimulated little or no changes despite a nearly doubling of enrollment levels in the program." (Final paragraph page 9) Council members feel that this lack of support and non action from the Administration critically affects the ability for program expansions, further increase in student enrollment, and the inclusion of more faculty researchers in the programs.

We do have three concerns with the Report:

1. The error on the time taken to graduate for students in Study Abroad;
2. The suggestions regarding faculty in the program;
3. The comments on the costs of the program.

1. Time Taken to Graduate by Study Abroad Students

The Report states that “There was also concern that it actually slowed graduation times for students to do Study Abroad; it should not and need not do that.” (Page 9, third paragraph, last line) There is no evidence to support this statement. All 34 pages of student comments enclosed in Appendix B of the Self-Study Report do not indicate any such claim from the Study Abroad students.

On the contrary, Study Abroad program students graduate more quickly than those students who chose to study exclusively on the Mānoa campus. Therefore this section of the Report should reflect what the data shows on time to graduation progress not an unsupported opinion. As evidence we cite the data below – information that was available to the external evaluator.

APPENDIX C (data provided by the VCAA’s Office)

Graduation Rates

AVERAGE TIME TO DEGREE IN YEARS (Academic Year)	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Institutional Average (First-Time freshmen)	5.08	4.89	4.90	5.16	5.15
Study Abroad Program Degree Earners (First-Time Freshmen)	5.25	4.58	4.18	4.53	4.68
Institutional Average (Transfers)	3.68	3.67	3.65	3.77	3.78
Study Abroad Program Degree Earners (Transfers)	3.00	3.21	3.63	3.54	3.18

Additionally, the response provided to the Self-Study Report Questionnaire (material that was also provided to the review team) is excerpted below.

Graduation (Page 18; Study Abroad Center Program Review Self-Study 2006-11)

11. What factors inhibit your students from graduating in 4 years? What data support these assumptions?

On the contrary, the comparative data provided by the VCAA’s office indicate that first time freshmen students who attend Study Abroad programs graduate faster (4.68 years) than those first-time Freshmen students who remain at UHM. (5.15 years). For example, between 2006 to 2011 Mānoa’s average time to degree of first-time freshmen increased from 5.08 years to 5.15 years and transfer students from 3.68 to 3.78. During the same time period, students who participated in Study Abroad for first-time freshmen students’ time to degree shortened from 5.25 to 4.68 years. While transfer students in Study Abroad programs increased from 3.0 years to 3.18 years, this time to graduation rate is more favorable than the institutional graduation rate. (Appendix C) The Center encourages students to participate in Study Abroad programs during

their sophomore year to graduate within four years. In other words, mapping out of classes in Study Abroad programs and planning ahead by the student concerning the applicability of classes toward their Mānoa degrees with the help and mentoring of an SAC Advisor facilitates a four-year graduation.

2. The suggestions regarding faculty

There are two concerns here. The first is the possible use of faculty from other universities to teach in the program. On page 9 a sentence ends with "...it appears to discourage recruitment of faculty from other institutions who might represent disciplines or sub-specialties not found in the UHM faculty." The sentence indicates a lack of understanding regarding how the Study Abroad program is run, and that one of its strengths is the involvement of UHM faculty from diverse disciplines. From the onset UHM Study Abroad programs are developed to meet two key foci of the UHM campus: 1) Study Abroad curriculum responds to the UHM curriculum so that UHM students may fulfill degree requirements abroad and; 2) provides a forum for UHM tenured or tenure- line faculty to develop courses, teach, and conduct research abroad. Therefore it is rare to have students from other universities participate in our Study Abroad programs and likewise it would not make any sense to recruit faculty from other universities.

The second concern is the reference to UHM faculty. Council members find the following comments reflect a major misunderstanding of how the programs are developed.

"We also think the strategy of depending on volunteer faculty proposals from which particular study abroad programs are chosen might be strengthened with longer-range, more stable, strategic planning of the curriculum menu. The current strategy appears to be a bit haphazard."
(Page 9)

First we would note that Study Abroad programs are not developed based on "volunteer faculty proposals." As noted earlier, programs are developed in response to, and to fulfill UHM undergraduate degree requirements to be offered at an appropriate partner university overseas. UHM Faculty members are appointed based on the appropriateness of their research proposals and the location-based courses in their discipline that enhance the Study Abroad overall curriculum. Programs were never meant to have the same faculty member be appointed multiple times. The Council's strategy has always been to increase the number of UHM faculty to teach and conduct research abroad in order for UHM to benefit as a whole.

The Council on Study Abroad is constantly reviewing the overall programmatic and strategic needs of the campus and then actively focus on recruiting UHM faculty for its programs. For instance we have been working to strengthen our offerings in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) curriculum. This has resulted in two additional linkages in the UK (Kingston and Oxford Brookes) and the promotion of the STEM curriculum offered in Australia (Flinders). Additionally, we developed a partnership engineering program in France (Université Catholique, Lille). It also resulted in faculty members from STEM fields applying to these programs.

3. Costs of the Study Abroad Program

The penultimate paragraph refers to the cost of the program, suggesting that “From the student perspective, the largest barrier appears to be the high cost.” (Page 9; third paragraph, first sentence) We agree that there is a common perception that Study Abroad is costly though when all the data is reviewed, the perception is not reality. The Council is constantly looking at ways of reducing the costs to the students, for instance, it has repeatedly suggested that the Outreach College fee be waived for Study Abroad. Scholarship support is also another area that the Council believes is vital if the campus is to thoroughly embrace the concept advanced by President Greenwood as expressed in the Draft Progress Report of the UH System Office submitted to WASC:

“Another initiative involves promoting international engagement at our University by preparing its students to be internationally engaged citizens, enriching the educational experience of students and faculty, and connecting the citizens of Hawai‘i with ideas, talent, and economic opportunity from the vibrant cultures and economies of the Asia-Pacific. “

In a final comment on the Report, the Council does wonder whether the Mānoa Campus would be better served by having these evaluations performed by our own colleagues. Certainly the costs could be less, even if the faculty members are reimbursed. More importantly, our colleagues would have a much better understanding of what is happening here in our myriad programs than someone who jets in and jets out and never fully grasps the Mānoa experience.

Finally the Council looks forward to working with you and Chancellor Apple to find ways of maximizing the impact of the Study Abroad on our students and faculty so there can indeed be more involvement of both groups in the Study Abroad experience.