

IES committee: Study Aboard program put on "hiatus"

Date: 01.24.24

Time: 11 am-noon

Attendance: Ann Bliss, Ya-Fang Cheng, Adry Clark, Rosario Peralta Cortez, Tim Cowart, Feier Hou, Danielle Lane, Rajeeb Poudel, Ricardo Pelegrin Taboada, Sean Roush,

- Ya-Fang Cheng welcomes attendees to a discussion on adding a study abroad program, with many people sharing their thoughts in a Google doc.
- **Supporting study abroad programs.**
 - Rajeeb Poudel, originally from Nepal, studied in India and emphasizes the importance of international experiences for students.
 - Ya-Fang Cheng, Kristen Klay, Kate Connolly, Danny, and Feier Hou are all members of the committee and introduce themselves.
 - Feier Hou shares her personal experience as an international student in the US, highlighting the transformative impact of studying abroad.
 - Ya-Fang Cheng seeks input on how to take action and communicate the value of study abroad programs to decision-makers.
- **Study abroad program's uncertain future.**
 - Kate Connolly expressed concern with the Provost's lack of detail on the reasons for putting study abroad on hiatus and the actions being taken to address the issue.
 - Rajeeb Poudel agreed with Kate and added that the President is supportive of study abroad, and faculty and staff can creatively problem solve to move forward.
 - Rajeeb Poudel and Ya-Fang Cheng discuss the timeline for a strategic plan for a study abroad program
 - Kate Connolly suggests sending out a survey to gather faculty support for the program, and Ya-Fang Cheng added to send out a presentation report to the Faculty Senate
- **Study abroad program at Western**
 - Adry coordinates study abroad programs, but lacks budget and decision-making authority.
 - Confusion about who started the hiatus and who to work with persists, with Provost unsure of purview.
 - Timothy Cowart suggests engaging with the provost to gain support for the strategic plan, and Kate Connolly agrees.
 - Committee members discuss gathering information to ramp up study abroad programs after COVID-19.
- **Retaining study abroad program at Western Oregon University.**
 - Kristen Klay expresses concern about provost's views on study abroad being inaccurate and unavailable to discuss.

- Kristen Klay suggests reaching out to Deb Patterson, a legislature worker and personal connection, to help maintain study abroad opportunities for Oregon students.
- **Study abroad program logistics and administration.**
 - Adry and Rajeeb discuss ways to advocate for study abroad programs, including lobbying the Board of Trustees.
 - Rajeeb Poudel and Adry discuss the importance of having a dedicated professional in study abroad advising, as it requires a significant amount of brain power and concentration.
- **Challenges with providing mental health support for international students during pandemic.**
 - Sean Roush and Adry discuss challenges with providing mental health support to international students during the pandemic, including liability and risk concerns, and the need for dedicated infrastructure and accreditation notifications.
- **Study abroad program coordination and responsibilities**
 - Study Abroad coordinator must manage expenses, maintain website, advertise programs, and build connections with third-party providers while ensuring student support and safety.
 - Developing study abroad programs requires dedicated professionals with training and experience.
- **Study abroad programs and potential for improvement.**
 - Timothy Cowart suggests modeling successful study abroad programs from sister institutions, highlighting the potential for a "clean slate" to build something new.
- **Study abroad program in Germany with stipend for students. [42:32](#)**
 - Kristen Klay discusses concerns about the study abroad program in Germany, specifically the loss of tuition funds and the value of the experience for students.
 - German universities are tuition-free, but students receive a stipend to cover living expenses abroad.
- **Study abroad program's impact on enrollment and retention. [47:26](#)**
 - Western University offers a study abroad program that entices students to stay and enroll in the university after their study abroad experience.
 - Rajeeb Poudel and Kristen Klay discuss the potential impact of increased tuition fees on student enrollment and retention at the University.
 - Adry shares that there is a lot of interest among students in the University's services, with 75 students attending an orientation session recently.
- **Reinstating language requirement for college graduation. [52:05](#)**
 - Kate Connolly notes decline in language study at college level due to lack of incentive, leading to decreased study abroad awareness.
 - Faculty propose reinstating language requirement for BA students to enhance international perspective and language skills.
- **Supporting a new international programs director. [55:26](#)**

- o Committee members seek to support Joseph Macade, a faculty member with experience, in their efforts to address issues related to study abroad programs on campus.
- **Committee meeting and presentation.** [57:57](#)
 - o Committee members discuss recruitment efforts and upcoming meeting to create presentations for the Faculty Senate.