

Study Abroad Sub-Committee Meeting (In Person Meeting, Macon, GA)

System Council on International Education

Friday, September 29, 2023

### **Attendees**

Funwi Ayuninjam (GGC), Gwendoline Ayuninjam (GGC), Lexie Baker (KSU), Kris Beck (Gordon State), Laura Boudon (GSU), Tsu-Ming Chiang (GCSU), Sasha Cokuslu (Clayton State), Yana Cornish (UGA), Cassie Danekes (System Office), Christie Flatt (Ana Gaquere (West Ga), Annalease Gibson (ASU), Brian Hibbs (Dalton), Leah Hicks (UGA), Joseph Holloway (South GA), Raphael Jackson (ASU), Heather Jarema (UNG), Lorie Johns Paulez (GT), Joel Johnson (ASU), Cassandra Jordan (ASU), Prathibh Joshi (Gordon State), Jyotisha Kalawar (GGG), Kristin R Kasting Karam (Ga Southern), Kimberly Mascara (KSU), Herb Mattord (KSU), Kelly Nichols (KSU), Carmine Palumbo (East Ga State), Clement Quinones (GGC), Erin Rasche (GT), Brooke Reed (KSU), Kendra Russell (MGA), Tammy Rosner (System Office), Mike Savoie (VSU), Rayton Sianjima (FVSU), Charles Ubah (GCSU)

**Meeting called to order at 12:36pm** by Lorie Johns Paulez.

**Review of minutes from January 27, 2023.** Minutes approved.

### **Elections (Lorie)**

Currently all officer positions (Chair, Vice-Chair) and two at-large positions are vacant and open for election in January 2024. Nominations opened for vacant positions.

- Chair: Leah Hicks (UGA) self-nominated, seconded by Yana Cornish.
- Vice-Chair: Sasha Cokuslu self-nominated.
- At-Large Member positions: Laura Boudon (GSU), Christie Flatts (Gordon), Heather Jarema self-nominated.

### **Study Abroad Committee Health and Safety Series (Lorie)**

Three-part series, next session October 4<sup>th</sup> 10-11:30a, final session December 7<sup>th</sup> 10-11:30am. Lorie will send additional information and registration soon. Reviewed topics and opened for questions.

Leah Hicks (UGA) added that registration includes space for topics of interest.

### **Topics of Interest (Lorie)**

Question from ?(KSU) regarding how many universities are sending or considering sending students to China.

- GT allows travelers to their campus in Shenzhen but has suspended exchanges in mainland China and has not restarted. Other locations in China require risk review.

- GSU has several programs proposed for China and will re-evaluate in January.

Comment regarding challenges in visas for China and Taiwan.

- GSU mentioned similar problem with Russian faculty and travel to Latvia.

Question from ASU regarding how to avoid trouble with travelers pursuing difficult topics in host country.

- Recommendations from UGA regarding building or leaning into partnership
- Recommendations from GT about security services, leaning into OSAC community, professional organizations
- Recommendations about leaning into existing resources such as Fulbright offices

Question from GSU about GT's "clear list" and clearances for travel to specific countries.

- Clarification from GT about specific GT travelers and requirements for individuals with national clearances that may be unique to the institution and nature of grants and research.
- Follow-up question about visual compliance (Education Abroad) and who provides clean laptops (not Education Abroad). Requirement based on location of travel and the person, but general advice is not to take university IP outside of country.
- UGA added that they have an Export Control office which completes this process.
- GSU has a travel laptop loaner program similar to UGA process.
- KSU does the same as GSU through the IT office.

Question regarding visa requirements (ETIAS) for European countries in 2024.

- Still waiting for official announcement. What is known is that 7 euro fee, online process that will create additional steps for travelers. Some exceptions for age or those with EU family relations.
- Potential for delay until 2025 due to Olympics but not formally announced, so will look for any official announcements and recommend send to listserv once announced.
- Considerations for potential delays on last-minute passports and ability to be in the ETIAS system.

Question about passport processing during government shutdown and potential backlog in the short-term.

- Comment about backlog since COVID still impacting processing.
- Comment about expedited renewal turnaround time being unpredictable.

Question regarding supporting student who needs constant power supply to a location that has rolling blackouts.

- Recommendation to loop in Dean of Students and Legal (if applicable) to discuss as well as ADA office to make sure offering reasonable accommodations and exploring alternate locations.

Question about limits of accommodations on respective campuses.

- Seems to be a hot potato for funding as hard for individual programs to bear that cost.
- GT had a student requiring interpretation and accommodation adjustments for a semester abroad.
- GSU has had similar challenges with deaf students on programs needing interpretation.
- KSU has had one student go on three programs requiring two translators and worked with right offices to make sure all bases were covered.

Questions regarding housing accommodations.

- Gordon working with ADA on student with anxiety issues needing a single room and question about who should pay.
- Question regarding inclusive housing for trans student on program and how to solve. GT working to try to make all housing options inclusive, work with Housing on campus and rely on their guidance and policies.

Question regarding liability if student doesn't disclose to you ahead of departure.

- If not disclosed, did you do your due diligence and are you take reasonable steps once you know? Make sure you bring in your experts and make those decisions with them. Financially, have that emergency reserve.

Question on if any institution collects health information.

- GSU is only institution that has medical clearance form requirement for all travelers.
- KSU and GT have a self-disclosure form.
- UGA weighs heavily on timing and questionnaire launched after acceptance so not discriminatory.
- Self-disclosure is acceptable as long as optional and not required.

Question regarding applicants who had behavioral concerns on previous programs.

- Talk to Dean of Students. Can't prevent participation if no violations but can discuss how to set expectations and manage challenges. Dean of Students Office may know more about what is going on behind the scenes.

Question regarding creating document that could address these concerns.

- Study Abroad Handbook on USG website. Lots of best practices that exist through field in professional resources.
- If committee wants to review and update Study Abroad Handbook, this is what audit will look at so if need to make changes can create group from committee to look at.

### **University System Updates (Tammy)**

Study abroad insurance RFP has gone out, was delayed by Procurement. Anticipate to have a new insurance plan in place early 2024. Goal is to have a more encompassing plan that includes not only health insurance but also safety and security benefits. Updated timeline for RFP committee coming hopefully next week.

Received questions from:

- CISI
- On Call International
- GeoBlue
- International SOS

System-wide audit of study abroad programs set to take place in 2024. Audit requested by leadership due to concerns related to health and safety. Health and safety workshop series created and being offered as a resource in advance. Institutions will be contacted in January but auditing will not begin until February, with a goal to end in April. Use audit as opportunity to advocate for support. Audit will be attending virtual meeting in January to provide additional information and answer questions directly.

Reminder to go into USG directory to updates programs as it is used by several departments and upper administration and needs to be up to date. This is an ongoing project. Contact Tammy if need help with access.

Community of practice focused meetings had very limited attendance. A survey was sent out with only three responses. At this time, no longer moving forward as interest low.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:01pm.**