OIE Faculty Advisory Board Meeting
April 4, 2013

Present: Dallas Kenny, Carol Lilly, Charlie Bicak, Matt Mims, Ann Marie Park, Sonja Kropp, Terry Gibbs, Scott Unruh, Patricia Cruzeiro, Ting-Lan Chen, Allan Jenkins, Wyatt Hoback, Maha Younes

Absent: William Aviles, Srivatsa Seshadri, Julie Flood

Brief report on Study Abroad at UNK
Ann Marie provided an overview on the Study Abroad Program. This program runs year round. The focus is on incoming freshmen. Newer programs include the World Leaders Camp and the Spring Break trip to Vancouver. Student numbers have increased. The APR did recommend an additional staff person for this program.

Q&A on International Ed topics with Dr. Bicak
Dr. Bicak – The Vancouver trip is a good stepping stone for other Study Abroad experiences.
October 28, 2009 the George Norris lecture outlined ten year goals:
- Every student of the three campuses will have a significant international experience
- Double the number of international students on each campus
- Reinvigorate faculty experiences
- Reinvigorate significant corporate connections internationally

Our student numbers have increased significantly. We have three challenges of time, space and funding. The Universities of Northern Colorado and Northern Iowa have programs worth looking at for direction. We will be transitioning from standard base funding to performance base funding. We have an opportunity to look at staff needs. Dr. Bicak takes the APR seriously. OIE is an important unit. He meets regularly with Dr. Kenny to discuss funding and staffing needs.

Carol – Noted that the recent International Office APR had called for 2 or 3 Immigration Advisor/SEVIS positions, but that the UNK’s only position has been vacant for over 5 months due to illness. She asked about the status of hiring to fill this position and meet the recommendations of the APR. These positions are critical to OIE.

Maha – Stated that the consequences of the empty SEVIS position are now being felt across campus. She noted that this issue had been raised in a recent Chair’s meeting.

Dr. Bicak – Reiterated that he was aware of the importance of having adequate SEVIS support on campus for international students. He also mentioned the H1B visa issue, which is related to international faculty. The attorney out of Lincoln, Dan Rock, is doing a good job on the H1Bs.

Dr. Kenny – Stated that UNK has also been unable to fill its vacant H1B position, 40% of which is devoted to H1B advising, because of the low salary level (by national standards) and the lack of local people with the qualifications to do it. 40% of this vacant position’s salary line is now being paid to a lawyer (Dan Rock) in Lincoln.

Allan – Asked about the possibility of the three campuses sharing the H1B position. He suggested possibly being able to offer a higher salary. It seems that this position is a system wide issue.

Dr. Bicak – Stated that the Chancellor is aware of this H1B resource issue and is talking to Tom Farrell.

Wyatt – As well as the challenges of time, space and funding, all of which require resources, there are solutions recommended by the APR that do not require any resources. He noted that a key APR recommendation was that the upper administration provide a clear statement of support for international education and the International Office as a top priority at UNK, echoing the NU President’s commitment, and wondered if something more could be done in that area.

Dr. Bicak – Stated that he is aware of this issue and has taken note of it, and that references to international education had now appeared in some planning documents.
Matt – Feels that the Office of International Education is too isolated; does not have a voice on campus. This office needs to be involved in planning and funding decisions. Solving this problem was one of the solutions proposed by the APR committee.

Dr. Bicak – Stated that he is aware of this issue and has taken note of it.

Allan – Suggested that there should be an increase in the importance of the international education and the Office. It would help to develop more faculty leadership and enthusiasm if we could duplicate the Pratt/Heins Award to show some direct recognition. This could provide a greater incentive for faculty to lead Study Abroad programs. He also suggested a reduction in the GS requirement from 45 hrs to 36 hrs for students who study abroad as an incentive.

Dr. Bicak – Thought that this sounded like an interesting idea.

Maha – Noted that there needs to be greater communication across campus. She suggested, as per the recent APR recommendations, that Dallas serve on the Dean’s Council.

Dr. Bicak – Noted her concern, but stated the Dean’s Council would need to be consulted.

Carol – Expressed concern that some funds from the Integrated Approach to Study Abroad NU Foundation grant had been inappropriately used for UNK expenses unrelated to the Grant’s intended purposes. As a member of the grant oversight committee, she asked if this funding had yet been replaced? ...

Dr. Bicak – Was aware of the issue and the need to address it.

Dr. Bicak – Spoke of the action plans:
- Short term – Fill the vacant SEVIS position so that the OIE remains in compliance.
- Mid term - Expansion of the Study Abroad Program and Office. Evaluate the China program.
- Long term – Central administration goals.

Matt – Asked: – How do we fund a program after we create it? This seems backward.

Terry – Asked for clarification on how the budget is done for international each year.

Dr. Kenny – Stated that there is a blind carry over from year to year, and that the budget was formulated in May for the following academic year.

Dr. Bicak - Any reallocation is done in the planning process. The APR is looked at in this planning. And that he has worked with Dallas on addressing mid-term challenges, such as recruitment.

[repeats information stated above]

Allan – Expressed gratitude for Dr. Bicak’s integrity and honesty.

Dr. Kenny – Thanked the members for their attendance and support. The Advisory Board has an impact. This effort is helpful. The APR document has been looked at by Central Administration but it has not yet adopted any of its recommendations. Charlie has indicated that he supports the immediate creation of a second position like Shirley’s SEVIS position, but that so far no funds have been identified by the administration that can be used for this purpose. Dr. Kenny reiterated that he has warned the Chancellors several times over the past 18 months that UNK’s lack of key full-time immigration professionals would put UNK out of compliance with federal immigration law, which could result in the revocation of UNK’s ability to issue I-20s and to host any international students. If audited by SEVIS, UNK could now be deemed out of compliance for failing to provide the resources needed to monitor international students.

Patricia – Feels that the culture at UNK does not appreciate the importance of the OIE. There seems to be a general lack of support for international students and study abroad across the administrative areas.
Maha – It is important to build bridges and educate the campus about the needs of OIE. She suggested that these needs should be communicated to the Faculty Senate and the Chancellor. Faculty Senate might then ask the Chancellor how these needs can be met.

Ting – Stated a concern about the vacant SEVIS position given the large number of international students in the Music Department. She said there could be many more international students in Music if more potential students knew about her Department’s generous scholarships. She was encouraged to speak to Jaekeun about how to get the word out to Korean students. She was asked about whom to contact about how to apply for these Music scholarship from her department.

Terry – Noted that there are faculty members who would like to lead a Study Abroad program but who are unable to take a leave from their department. If this were addressed, there would be higher faculty participation.