

COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND PROGRAMS
Minutes of the Meeting, March 28, 2018

I. Approval of the Minutes of the February 2018 Meeting—Peter Biehl

Professor Biehl welcomed the Council. The draft minutes of the February meeting were approved as distributed.

II. Report from the Chair—Peter Biehl

Professor Biehl reported on his trip to Turkey where he worked on his archaeological excavation in Catalhoyuk for ten year. He traveled with Steven Shaw, Director of International Admissions, and was very impressed by the work Mr. Shaw and his colleagues do on the recruitment circuit. Professor Biehl was pleased to shadow Mr. Shaw and learn about the programs and the information they share with prospective students. He also noted how challenging the work is. Next to UB at an event was UC Irvine representative, who showed off the southern California weather. Professor Biehl was surprised by how many Canadian universities there were compared to US institutions, and the number of European institutions, including some from Russia, Ukraine, Poland and the Baltics. However, there was still a lot of interest in US higher education among the students at the recruitment events. Dr. Christine Human from SEAS also joined them in Istanbul, where there were presentations about UB to show off the campus and UB programs. It's no longer a level playing field in a sense. There are many more institutions now competing for students. Thanks to the Dual Diploma Programs (DDP) and the affiliation with ITU, SUNY and UB are well known among students and others.

Mr. Shaw thanked Professor Biehl for accompanying him to Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir to give seminars about UB and to participate in recruitment fairs, some of which lasted as long as 8 hours. The three UB representatives also visited ITU to meet with DDP students. Professor Biehl met with colleagues in the Social and Natural Sciences at ITU to discuss possible collaborations. It was helpful to have Professor Biehl and Dr. Human to represent CAS and SEAS. Turkey is an extremely price-sensitive market, and this tends to hurt US institutions. The Turkish government discourages going to the US and encourages Europe or home institutions. Ordinary people in Turkey seem friendly enough. Certainly, higher education people are welcoming. Ms. Dussourd asked about the political orientation in Turkey. Professor Biehl noted that things seem to be getting better. After being banned Austria is excavating again in Ephesus despite its opposition to Turkish membership in the EU. Ordinary people in Turkey favor Trump, who resembles their own leader, Erdogan. Universities like ITU still prefer to collaborate with US rather than EU institutions. Professor Hess noted that Turkish students are studying in Lithuania. He visited Turkey several years ago to visit Bilkent and ITU. Professor Hess noted that the chair of architecture from Bilkent will visit UB on April 20 to give a talk. Could Mr. Shaw discuss politics with the alumni he visited? Professor Kemal Guruz, the former head of the Turkish Higher Education Authority, is now facing a capital trial for espionage due to his opposition to President Erdogan. Professor Biehl reported on speaking with prospective graduate students in CAS. There was interest in both the humanities and social sciences.

III. Darkening Horizon for International Education and Exchange

Professor Biehl reported that prospects for fall enrollment are troubling. In particular, the yield for international graduate applicants is very much in question. UB needs to invest in new programs and new recruitment techniques including social media in support of enrollment efforts. An improvement of UB's global ranking would also help a lot. There is scary news even for schools like Engineering and Applied Sciences that have done relatively well in recent years. Professor Biehl emphasized the value of prestigious affiliations such as Istanbul Technical University in Turkey, which confers greater visibility on UB. He is consulting all of the CAS departments about future international student markets. Professor Biehl reported that many programs have been proposed in the College and at least a dozen are moving forward; these are being shepherded by Associate Dean for Academic Initiatives & Innovation Kate Ferguson. Microcredentials are being launched in the coming year, and these should appeal to international students.

Professor Dunnett noted that while UB is trying to update curricula there is a big time lag due to the cumbersome approval process at SUNY and SED. Some schools and departments that are more entrepreneurial have been more successful. In GSE, for example, the problem is that there has been a massive “credit-creep” over time, making programs longer and more expensive, which is a deterrent to cost-conscious international students. Without a renovation of such programs, UB will not be very attractive to the student market of today. Units have to be more responsive to international student interests and needs. Professor Siaw-Asamoah asked about UB recruitment in Africa. Mr. Shaw said the market hasn't been well developed in Africa and most UB recruitment there is indirect. There aren't large-scale recruitment circuits in Africa, but private ventures are now starting in Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana, the three largest source countries. The recruitment infrastructure in Africa is beginning to mature. There used to be a North Africa recruitment circuit but that unfortunately went away following the Arab Spring due to safety concerns. Professor Siaw-Asamoah noted that some leading schools recruit in Ghana and she has recruited there for the School of Management and has liaised with the US Embassy in Ghana.

Dr. Oak asked about Turkish students' interest in Optional Practical Training (OPT) and post-graduation opportunities. Canada is again a key competitor since it's easier for international students to gain landed immigrant status there. Professor Dunnett said that Joe Hindrawan reports that his fairs in China have been well attended and the yield events mainly had questions about gun violence and general safety. Joe still feels optimistic about the Chinese market. The news that there might be restrictions on Chinese visas is obviously a concern—this would not hurt China but it certainly would hurt the US. We can expect a rebound eventually but short-term predictions are not encouraging. Mr. Shaw said that for students it always comes down to return on investment. This is problematized by uncertainties about post-graduation and the future job market in the US. The range of choices at UB does help us, but our rising costs have hurt us. Trends in terms of cost and ranking are not helping UB. Other schools are offering more generous scholarships.

IV. Report from the Vice Provost for International Education—Stephen C. Dunnett

Professor Biehl invited Oscar Budde, Esq., Director of UB Immigration Services, to update the Council on recent developments. Mr. Budde has three updates that cannot be considered

positive news—first, compliance reviews; second, employment-based green card interviews; and third, an issue of the past week, affecting persons who have run out of time for green-card petitions due to faculty oversight. In the past, green card interviews were not required. This change is especially impacting persons from China and India. The compliance reviews are being done by DHS locally; it used to be that UBIS would be approached only about 4 or 5 times a year, and Mr. Budde worked with the units on confirming the duties and salaries of the folks in question. Now the compliance reviews are much more frequent and average at least once a month. The government aims at preventing foreign nationals from taking jobs from US citizens, or depressing wages. Mr. Budde has gotten repeated requests from one particular DHS officer for compliance reviews. UBIS has not had a problem in the past with the reviews. Mr. Budde had a problem with a recent case where there was an H-1B approval, but the unit failed to issue the first paycheck. Mr. Budde is troubled by this problem, particularly in light of potential penalties that could potentially impact UB and him personally. The green card interviews require Mr. Budde to accompany clients downtown, which is a mild inconvenience. This started in late November 2017. They are happening now more frequently. Three more family interviews are pending this semester. In such cases, Mr. Budde represents both UB and the individuals. So far the interviews have gone well and the adjudicators have done a good job. Mr. Budde does his best to prepare the folks being interviewed. The third issue of note is the visa bulletin, which guides the university on when it can file for green cards for first-preference. There has typically been problems toward the end of the fiscal year (August, September), but now this is happening six months out. UB has to be more concerned about clients maintaining status and this may become more expensive.

V. Reflections on International Student Experiences, Services and Support over the Past 20 Years—Ellen Dussourd

Ms. Dussourd said it has been her privilege to serve as director of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) for 19 years. It has been exhilarating—for the work never gets boring, or remain the same. She has enjoyed all aspects of the job. ISSS has done a lot of programming during her tenure. She is proud of the comprehensive international student orientation program that is looked to as a model by other institutions. Students are pleased with the information and preparation they receive. Of course, ISSS needs to do more to involve domestic students in programming. Caitlin Rioux recently succeeded Chris Bragdon in leading the inclusion and engagement activities for ISSS. Ms. Dussourd described the programming highlights, and the engagement of faculty and others across campus. The ongoing workshop series and trips and cultural events have also been well received. UB has to do a great job in this way to promote retention. Ms. Dussourd has really enjoyed International Education Week and other special programming throughout the year. UB has been relatively lucky in terms of emergency management, including the illness or death of students, accidents in cars or as pedestrians, and victims of crime. There is a challenge in educating students about local laws and conditions. UB has an advantage in the mandatory SUNY medical insurance policy which provides better coverage than many other policies. The health and wellness support is outstanding, as demonstrated by the example of a student who was paralyzed in a car accident and had to be flown home to Taiwan.

Unfortunately, the bread and butter of ISSS is regulatory compliance. US institutions are deputized to do the work of the government in monitoring students and making sure they stay in status. ISSS has to ensure F-1 and J-1 students stay in compliance and can avail themselves of immigration benefits for which they are eligible. Thus, there is a divided loyalty in that ISSS staff also seek to be advocates for international students. Before 9/11 there was an easier regulatory environment and compliance was not such a challenging proposition. Because student visas were targeted for scrutiny after 9/11, the compliance imposition was much greater. The perception of international student involvement stemmed from the first World Trade Center attack in 1994. There were rumors throughout the late 1990s that an online database for student tracking was coming, but ultimately only 9/11 prompted its implementation in 2003. There were a lot of implementation problems early on. This changed how ISSS offices operated subsequently, which involved advising and supporting students as well as informing on them through SEVIS. Violations like falling below full-time registration had to be reported. In the early days SEVIS created a lot of extra work in terms of providing the information required. Many technical issues have made compliance much more complicated. Ms. Dussourd commends ISSS staff for their diligence in maintaining compliance.

The role of ISSS has changed because staff have to perpetually warn students about the risk of non-compliance. This has created a zero-error environment due to the ramifications for students. How has Trump affected things? His rhetoric has been harmful in that he makes the US appear less welcoming in general. Other than the travel ban, the Trump administration has not taken specific steps that have caused specific harm. Ms. Dussourd said it has been a labor of love to serve the students. She thanked her colleagues in International Education and her colleagues throughout UB, who have supported ISSS efforts in so many ways. It has been a great pleasure for her to serve and she looks forward to retirement.

VI. Council Business

Dr. Wood reminded members of the Council Award nomination process. Nomination materials for the 2018 award were distributed in the meeting packets, with a deadline for nominations extended to April 13.

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Attendance at the Meeting, March 28, 2018

Present:	Tilman Baumstark	Faculty Affairs
	Peter Biehl, Chair	Anthropology
	Oscar Budde (ex officio)	UB Immigration Services
	Filomena Critelli	Social Work
	Kathy L. Curtis	English Language Institute
	Stephen C. Dunnett (ex officio)	International Education
	Ellen Dussourd (ex officio)	International Student and Scholar Services
	David M. Engel	Law
	David Fertig	Linguistics
	Daniel Hess	Architecture and Planning
	Junhao Hong	Communication
	Maria S. Horne	Theatre and Dance
	Christine Human	Engineering and Applied Sciences
	Wei Loon Leong	Alumni Engagement
	Meredith Kolsky Lewis	Law
	Zhiqiang Liu	Economics, Confucius Institute
	H. Lorraine Oak	College of Arts and Sciences
	Trevor Poag (ex officio)	International Education
	Steven L. Shaw (ex officio)	International Admissions
	Dorothy Siaw-Asamoah	Management
	Claude E. Welch, Jr.	Political Science
	John J. Wood, Secretary	International Education
Excused:	Janina Brutt-Griffler	Graduate School of Education
	Barbara B. Bunker	Psychology
	Yu-Ping Chang	Nursing
	Colleen Culleton	Romance Languages and Literatures
	Christian Flaugh	Romance Languages and Literatures
	Graham Hammill	Graduate School
	Joseph J. Hindrawan (ex officio)	International Enrollment Management
	Christopher Hollister	University Libraries
	Mara Huber	Undergraduate Education
	Shaun Irlam	Comparative Literature
	EunHee Lee	Asian Studies
	Donald McGuire	Classics
	Mary Odrzywolski (ex officio)	Study Abroad Programs
	Mulchand S. Patel	Biochemistry
	Jessie P.H. Poon	Geography
	Pavani Ram	Community for Global Health Equity
	Othman Shibly	Dental Medicine
	John H. Stone	Public Health and Health Professions
	Lillian S. Williams	Transnational Studies