Council on International Studies and Programs
Minutes of Meeting
March 8, 2017

I. Approval of the Minutes of the February 8, 2017 Meeting

John Wood noted that both Professor Biehl and Professor Dunnett were not able to attend today's meeting. He welcomed several guests—Professor Irus Braverman of the Law School and her student Melanie Prasad; Dr. Mara Huber, associate dean for undergraduate education and the director of the Academies. The minutes of the February meeting were approved as distributed.

II. Study Abroad Programs: New Initiatives—Mary Odrzywolski and Trevor Poag

Dr. Wood invited Mary Odrzywolski, Director of Study Abroad Programs, to report on current study abroad statistics. Referring to handouts showing recent data on UB students abroad on various programs in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, Ms. Odrzywolski highlighted differences in the two cycles, particularly the enrollment changes between summer and winter programs. She explained the different types of programs available at UB, including non-SUNY programs offered by other institutions outside SUNY. Among the factors affecting participation in study abroad, concerns about safety are clearly at the top, and cost continues to be an issue. A possible "tit-for-tat" decision to impose an EU requirement for US students to have visas to European destination countries is a potential concern that Study Abroad is keeping an eye on. Up until now, students have been able to study abroad for up to 90 days in Europe without a visa, but this may change.

Professor Irus Braverman reported on her program to Israel and the West Bank during the winter "Bridge" session. She referred to her fall 2016 course on Environmental Justice to which the trip to Israel was appended, noting the heavy workload that served as preparation for the trip, with a good background in environmental law and justice. A little over half of the class participated on the trip. Scholars and NGOs don't typically see environmental justice issues as part of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Using Skype during the course in fall, the class could establish virtual contacts with folks on the ground. Professor Braverman outlined what the trip covered in terms of environmental issues, zoning and planning issues, the West Bank wall and separation of communities, water conflicts impacting different groups, the dying of the Dead Sea, and social justice issues relating to the environment.

Professor Braverman provided a presentation to overview the trip, pointing to issues of natural preservation and land ownership, the complicated status of the residents of East Jerusalem, the security measures involved in moving between the West Bank and Israel, and the role of Israel Defense Service. The group's walk through the Old City of Jerusalem highlighted the role of archaeology in conflict zones. The students were struck by the presence of the military. The group conducted visits to Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories, on the eastern side of Jerusalem. Israel's designation of nature preserves on Palestinian land obliges Palestinians to pay to access the land and to cultivate it for agriculture. The group spent a night near a center for eco-peace near Jericho. The famous Jordan Baptism site is disappearing due to water management issues. They also visited the Dead Sea, which is shrinking due to evaporation. This is a major environmental justice concern linked to water management. There is a plan to pipe water from the Red Sea to replenish the Dead Sea. During the last day and half, the group visited Bedouin communities

who are citizens of Israel. However, their villages have been demolished by Israel many times. Bedouins reported to the group on their situation and struggle. The students shared a meal with Bedouin family.

Professor Braverman's student, Melanie Prasad, reported on her experience participating in the program. "The most amazing thing I have ever done in my life," she said. "It was like another world. Nothing else mattered while we there. It was jarring to see soldiers everywhere, the overwhelming militarization of the region. We got to go to places where Israelis couldn't go and where Palestinians were not allowed. The monastery in the desert we visited was the most beautiful place I've ever seen. The people we met and the stories we heard were amazing. The firsthand experiences were extraordinary." Ms. Prasad noted that the media in the US tends to be pro-Israel and thus their hearing personal stories directly from the Palestinians provided an alternate perspective.

Professor Irlam asked where the Bedouins go once they are displaced and become homeless. Professor Braverman said that Bedouins are shifted into block housing to better manage them, but this is very alien to their traditional way of life. Some Bedouins are now serving in the Israeli military. Dr. Wood asked if there were things Professor Braverman would do differently the next time she conducts the program. She said she would better prepare the students for the experience. Some of the things on the program are very familiar to her as an Israeli, but totally new for the students. The program has to deal with logistical challenges that are more frequent than in many study abroad programs—for example, the cancellation of a meeting with a Knesset member at the last minute, and of a plan to meet with other law students in Haifa. One has to have the ability to be flexible. Going forward, there may be a need to adjust the itinerary and limit the scope of the program. The challenge of having to administer all the logistics added another layer to the process. All told, the program cost about $3,000, which limits participation. On a personal level, the program reconnected Professor Braverman to her scholarly interests in nature preserves and the occupation, the intersection of environmental and social justice issues—the focus of a book she is working on.

Dr. Mara Huber spoke about her involvement with experiential learning at UB and efforts to maximize the impact of these opportunities. Dr. Huber described her longstanding program in Tanzania, beginning in Dar es Salaam. The original focus was on the Mara Region in Northern Tanzania, through connection with nuns running a school in that area. Dr. Huber first went to Tanzania with various UB colleagues in 2009 to explore possibilities. Professor Dan Nyaronga, a faculty member from Mara Region who is with Empire State College, has collaborated with her on the development of the program. Since 2009 more than 100 Western New Yorkers have traveled to Tanzania. The community organizations have been involved under the umbrella "Buffalo-Tanzania Educational Project." Four consecutive cohorts from UB did winter session programs in Tanzania with an experiential learning focus. The program is open to a variety of students from different disciplines and levels, both undergraduate and graduate. Community development is the focus, though some tourist and cultural opportunities are part of the program including a safari to the Serengeti. The program has evolved with experimentation in mind. The trip is 10-12 days, with classes both before and after. Multiple lenses are used to shape the student experience. Value rubrics such as those from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASC&U) are used to design and assess the program—to bring out constructs and see how the program realizes these. The student outcomes have been exceptional in terms of subsequent achievements, such as scholarships, awards and graduate school applications. The trips have paid a huge return on investment. The Tanzania trip ends up costing more

than $6,000 for 12 days; usually it is budgeted for 8 students. Faculty colleagues have accompanied Dr. Huber on several trips. The possibilities of experiential learning can be overwhelming. Currently, there are new experiential learning initiatives being developed in Ghana and Jamaica. Dr. Huber's office has joined the COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) network in SUNY and will work with units to help mount COIL courses. The School of Social Work has been using COIL with international partners for several years. A potential COIL partner is the Aga Khan University in Tanzania, and COIL training with colleagues there is underway. Anywhere our faculty have connections can potentially be a base for study abroad. There is undeniable interest among students, but program design matters and requires the right expertise. Professor Irlam asked for a definition of experiential learning. Dr. Huber said it referred most generally to learning outside of the classroom, but this needs to be properly designed and guided—through faculty mentoring and guidance, and it needs to be assessed. Students have become interested in humanitarian initiatives of their own. Their questioning of their path and what difference they might make. Dr. Poag asked about global economic inequality and the connection to study abroad programs like Tanzania. In light of the cost involved, is there a need for US students to go to Tanzania, where students are so lacking in resources? Dr. Huber said she is comfortable with the value-added by the program. It is not a service trip. It is not aimed at "converting" students. The students see a different way of life inhabited with joy and contentment. At UB we want to better appreciate the stories told by host communities. Indeed, an environment of trust with local communities is vital.

Dr. Poag described a new initiative to recruit faculty colleagues and staff leaders for study abroad. He is designing a faculty development workshop to be delivered in Costa Rica, where he has worked extensively in the past. It will focus on developing the range of skills needed to mount faculty-led programs—program design, logistics, on-site leadership, experiential learning, and out-of-the-classroom activities. The aim is to engage and energize faculty and staff around these kinds of opportunities. Professor Horne raised concerns that there were still major impediments to faculty getting involved in study abroad. Dr. Poag acknowledged the impediments Professor Horne noted, but pointed out that there are a number of faculty he has spoken to who are interested and plan to apply for the opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

John J. Wood, Secretary

COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND PROGRAMS

Attendance at the Meeting, March 8, 2017

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