February 20, 2008

Michael T. Brown
Chair of the Academic Council

RE: UCLA Response to the Report of the UC Joint Ad Hoc Committee on International Education

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the UC Expanded Joint Ad Hoc Committee on International Education dated November 2007. The Executive Board of the UCLA Academic Senate specifically requested that the Undergraduate Council, the Graduate Council, and the Committee on International Education (CIE) opine. The Executive Board discussed the Report at its meeting on February 19, 2008, considering the responses from the Senate Councils/Committee indicated. Although finding the three issues addressed by the Report—how to increase the number of UC students participating in study abroad, how to integrate the various international study programs UC now offers, and how to support both EAP and the expanded portfolio of study abroad programs that UC will offer—to be worthy goals, all three senate bodies were unable to support the Report as written. Furthermore, the sense of both Councils was to endorse the sentiments of the minority report written by Gayle Binion, citing insufficient information in the Report to support many of its conclusions and recommendations. The Executive Board expressed similar reservations and thus also was unable to endorse the Report.

More specifically, the Graduate Council argued that the needs of graduate students were not addressed in the Report and supports the recommendation of an empanelled faculty group, with expertise in both graduate and international education that would focus on the particular needs of graduate students and how best to respond to them.

The CIE had serious concerns regarding both the process followed in the development of the Report and the apparent haste in which its recommendations are being reviewed and possibly implemented. Given the magnitude of the proposed changes and the lack of compelling evidence that such haste is necessary, the CIE felt that more time should have been allowed for a fuller discussion of the Report. In its review, which is attached, the CIE expressed the concern that “a program that has been the flagship of UC International Education and the envy of other institutions throughout the world, that has a long and enviable history, could be seriously undermined by some of the recommendations.” Although having some concern about each recommendation, the CIE focused in his review on Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 6, and 12 of the Report, and the recommended Funding Structure, which it found to be flawed and in need of more work and opined that it would like to see a full economic analysis of the consequences of following any of the suggested funding models. In summary, the CIE had serious doubts that the construction of a more efficient, more streamlined, and fiscally robust EAP would result from the suggestions made in the Report.

The Executive Board supports the views of the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils and the CIE and endorses the request by CIE that the report on EAP and International Education be reconsidered with full faculty input as to analysis and conclusions.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.
Sincerely,

Elizabeth Ligon Bjork
UCLA Divisional Academic Senate Chair

cc: Maria Bertero-Barcelo, Executive Director and Chief of Staff, Systemwide Academic Senate
    Jaime Balboa, Chief Administrative Officer, UCLA Academic Senate
    Jan Reiff, Chair, Graduate Council, UCLA Academic Senate
    Stuart Brown, Chair, Undergraduate Council, UCLA Academic Senate
    Ian Coulter, Chair, Committee on International Education, UCLA Academic Senate
In Re: New Committee on International Education Response to the UC Joint Ad Hoc Committee on International Education

February 5, 2008

Elizabeth Bjork
Academic Senate Chair

Dear Elizabeth,

Thank you for the opportunity to opine upon UC Joint Ad Hoc Committee on International Education Report, dated November 2007. The Report attempts to address the issues of how to raise the number of UC students participating in study abroad, how to integrate the various international study programs the University now offers, and how to support both the Education Abroad Program (EAP) and the expanded portfolio of study abroad programs that the University will offer.

The CIE discussed the Report at its regular meetings on December 4, 2007 and January 29, 2008. The CIE faculty and student member voted unanimously that they are unable to support the Report as written. The vote was five faculty members in disfavor with zero opposed and abstaining. The student vote was one in disfavor with zero opposed and abstaining. The CIE also voted unanimously in support of this response. The vote was five faculty members in favor with zero opposed and abstaining. The student vote was one in favor with zero opposed and abstaining.

We wish to thank the Ad hoc Committee for its timely report on International Education. We share both the importance and significance accorded International Education by the Committee and the desire to reconsider how it can best be achieved within the UC system. We also share the concern about the number of UC students currently participating in International programs. Last, but not least we share some of their concerns regarding the current configuration of EAP and the relationships with individual campuses.

We do however have some grave concerns about this report, about the process which was followed in its development and what we consider unseemly haste in implementing its recommendations. Given the magnitude of the changes being proposed and the lack of any compelling evidence that such haste is necessary we believe more time should be allocated for full dissemination and discussion of the report. There is a very real danger that a program that has been the flagship of UC International Education and the envy of other institutions throughout the world, that has a long and enviable history, could be seriously undermined by some of the recommendations. Given the time frame we are being asked to work within our response will focus on those elements of the report which give us most concern.

Our report is predicated on the following:

1) EAP has been the flagship program for International Education in the UC system and should continue to be so. That in this era of globalization, the UC system should be seeking the means and resources of expanding programs that offer students the
opportunity to immerse themselves in the culture, language and institutional environment of other nations.

2) It is the only current program with full UC Senate oversight for both its academic quality and administration and that oversight should be the norm for all international education programs offered by UC.

3) EAP currently is the most experienced in the development of bilateral agreements with credible universities and is the depository with the most knowledge and experience with international legal and technical requirements related to international programs.

4) EAP is also the most experienced UC institution for evaluating international program offerings both initially and through its regular 5 year and 10 year reviews.

5) The EAP exchange program has been a unique achievement and is both desired and highly regarded by our foreign partner institutions.

6) That the full year programs remain the richest immersion program available and should remain as the top priority for international education. While other programs are fulfilling import niches and needs, they are in fact inferior in terms of cultural immersion which we continue to feel should be the priority objective of our programs.

7) The EAP program has been built around the concept of exchanges. It is not just a program of locating UC students overseas but of locating international students (and faculty) on our campuses. It has also been a mechanism for keeping international experience affordable for our students. It should continue to be an exchange program.

8) EAP is an academic program with all that implies including full Senate oversight.

9) As such it should be funded in the same manner as other academic programs. We do not expect other academic program to be self sustaining nor should we expect EAP to be so.

Preamble

The report documents that in a time of the global society, the number of UC students incorporating international experience as part of their program is disappointing. Out of a total of 163,000 students and 45,900 graduate students only 4,500 students annually are enrolled in EAP programs. This should be considered an unacceptable figure. The report contains many possible explanations for this and some suggested remedies. While many of these revolve around EAP itself, it should be stated that this is not a problem that can be solved by EAP itself.

It requires in the first instance, that International Education be given a priority within the President’s office commensurate with its importance. Second, it requires that it be given the same priority at the level of the Chancellors of the campuses. Thirdly, it requires that at both levels it be given the resources to significantly change the number of students that go overseas. This requires both a strong central Universitywide Office of EAP (UOEAP) and strong campus EAP offices sufficiently staffed and resourced to carry out expanded functions. Fourth, it requires that academic units make it possible for students to study overseas and get credit, to list such international offerings as part of the home campus offerings, and to actively advise and recruit students for the programs. In short it will require an integrated and coordinated effort throughout the system.

Issues in the Ad Hoc Report

1. That UC should set a five-year goal of doubling the participation rate at each UC campus in study abroad.

While the aim to increase participation is the correct one it cannot occur without both increased resources and a change in the way students are recruited at the level of departments and faculty. At UCLA we have
for many years operated with an informal cap on the number of students. This simply reflects the fact that the informal cap is all our EAP office and staff can handle. EAP at UCLA operates in inadequate space and is inadequately staffed and resourced. Giving the concern expressed in the report about the EAP deficit and the need to cut staff and funding it is both contradictory and naïve to suggest the numbers could be doubled. The potential to increase is clearly there but not without a system and campus wide change in how students are recruited. At UCLA, if over night the faculty all began to recruit additional students; the EAP office could not presently handle them.

2. That the President of the University should issue a statement on international education expressing commitment both in educational and financial terms and request release annually of a paper on international education at UC.

While this is a laudable objective it must involve at least two different things. First it should establish clearly what the policies will be for UC in International Education. This would include such things as the purpose for which we conduct international education. If all we are concerned about is students going overseas then using third party providers or giving students directions to campus travel offices might suffice. If however UC is committed to cultural immersion and education that is the equivalent in quality to UC programs the policy should say so. If we are committed to both sending our students overseas as well as bringing foreign students to UC then the policy should clearly articulate EAP as an exchange program. The policy should also clearly state that EAP is an academic program with full Senate oversight and approval.

Second it must be matched by adequate resource allocation. More than any other factor, resources clearly indicate what priority a program has. Expressing commitment is not the same things as enacting it. We are judged by what we do not just by what we say.

3. The use of third party programs

The report on International Education through the EAP seems driven almost entirely by the goal of cost containment. There is an underlying assumption that the UC-EAP as it is presently constituted is too expensive and that the presently overriding need is to undertake administrative reforms that will both reduce costs and transfer some of the cost burden (and functional responsibilities) to the level of individual campuses. In developing this point of view, the report fails to recognize the vast differences in complexity and scale between the UC Education Abroad operation and those of other major public universities where cost per student seems less. Other major public universities in this country, most especially the University of Michigan and the University of Texas, operate as single campus universities. [The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, for example, has no operational connection to its sister campuses at Flint and Dearborn.] We operate on a different basis: the principle that a UC student from any campus can apply to enroll and be accepted at any UC Abroad location. For this reason alone, the challenge of coordinating the flow of students to overseas sites is inherently 10 times more complex.

So is the process of transferring credit into the UC system. If each UC campus were a clone of all the other campuses, the challenge of transferring credits would be a relatively simple matter: course A at the host university would become course A-prime at each of our respective campuses. But the curriculum at each of our campuses varies greatly as do major and minor requirements of departments and units that confer the BA degree. Course A at a host country university might well be course A-prime, and carry both major and graduate credit at one of our campuses but fit very differently into departmental major and graduate requirements at other campuses. Thus UC students from different campuses enrolled in the exact same course at a host country university would find that it transfers in very different ways to their home institutions, satisfying a major and unit requirement at one campus in very different ways than at another.
This greater institutional complexity of our university should be acknowledged more fully and treated as an asset of our system, not as a cost liability.

Third party providers, cited by this report as a potential cure for a costly program, are not in fact a cure at all. And it would be all too easy to find ourselves ensnared in a host of difficulties with these organizations. No evidence is produced that offers any objective evaluation of these programs. From personal, albeit limited experience, they are more expensive and in all ways inferior to the EAP programs. There has been significant press coverage to the effect that the deficiencies of many of these programs are so egregious that the programs themselves border on the fraudulent. Among their many failures are the failure to insure that host country academic credits are properly evaluated so that they can be accepted at the UC campuses, failure to transfer credits and failure to provide for adequate student security. So if we are to consider going this route it should only be after an independent assessment. This would include reviewing the costs.

At the very least it will mean that these programs do not have any Senate oversight. Furthermore if each campus pursues its own policies with regard to third party programs this will become an administrative nightmare. At the moment each campus can call on UOEAP for information about institutions, grading practices, legal requirements. Much of this is information built up over time and experience. If this is now going to be replicated on each campus it will be both wasteful and inefficient.

If the conclusion is that programs outside those offered by EAP are needed to meet student demand and needs, then the option of partnering with other universities who run credible programs is a better option.

There is also a major issue here about whether UC should be in any way supporting private enterprises and particularly whether such programs should qualify for student aid.

For our part we are not convinced that it is necessary to move to third party providers. First we would like to see the evidence that UC students want this service. Second we would want to be convinced it would be in their best interest. Most students who do the full year immersion will tell you if they had been offered the option they would have chosen a shorter program. They will also tell you they were delighted after the year that that was not an option. Should we be accommodating student demands for what are inferior programs? We would not do this in any other part of the academic program so why should we be contemplating it for international education?

4. Faculty and administrative leadership of the university must articulate the goals of international education and take steps to integrate a global perspective into commonly held belief systems about higher education.

It is our belief that this is the only way that we can turn around the lack of participation. EAP has been pursuing this objective with its approach to integrated curriculums. But there seems to have been little understanding of this effort in the report. In summary this would result in every EAP program being listed in the course offerings where appropriate as an integral part of the program. A student enrolling in marine biology at UCLA would know from day one that there are three international programs in marine biology that they can take and be given credit. We may even look forward to the day when some programs might make overseas experience mandatory.

At the moment there are barriers to doing this. First some departments are reluctant to credit courses taken outside of their program. Second many will not let the students take units to count for their major. Third some programs will not let students take any such programs in the third or fourth year of the program. This is where the articulation of UC policy would make a difference. Some departments have impacted programs - in effect programs that will not take exchange students. It is a time consuming effort to create
an Integrative Curriculum and without more resources and the commitments of the individual campus the Integrative Curriculum will take some time to complete.

However it does require a new mind set on the part of the faculty. It requires them to accept that other institutions can educate at the level of UC. With EAP all the institutions we sign contracts with have already been vetted as equivalent to UC (and approved by the Senate) and in fact EAP is quite selective about whom it has agreements with. In many countries this list is much shorter than those who would like an affiliation. It would also require the faculty to be more active in talking to students about the international programs and recruiting students. At the moment EAP is not well known to the faculty.

5. In order to establish an integrated framework for international education at UC, comprised of a broad portfolio of programs, an International Education Leadership Team, appointed by the Chancellors and the President, will be charged with overseeing integration of the University’s various study abroad programs, including EAP.

As a means of signaling the priority and importance being given to International Education within the President’s Office, this high profile committee would be a positive step. But beyond bringing attention to this issue a committee of such high status and busy individuals will do what? What is needed is not only the articulation of a vision for International Education and particularly a vision for the future but also the establishment of policies as discussed above. It is difficult to see that this team will do that. Furthermore such policy must be developed in conjunction with the Senate which has the responsibility for ensuring the quality of all education programs at UC. It is not clear what relationship this committee will have if any, to the Senate or to EAP itself which currently reports to the Senate. We think the recommendation by Gayle Binion to create a consortium among the campuses could provide a working group of knowledgeable individuals both academically and administratively who could work with EAP on planning issues and issues surrounding the implementation of policies.

6. Funding Formula

It is difficult to know what to say here other than this needs more work. It is clear though there was consultation between consultant Dr. Jerry Kissler and EAP and with the campuses, none of the concerns expressed appear in the report. From reports it is also clear that even when Dr. Kissler was apprised of difficulties they did not result in any alteration to his report. But the whole approach to financing seems to us to be flawed and seems to have been driven by being overly concerned about the deficit.

The deficit is lamentable but it needs to be put into context. A deficit of $2,500,000 on total revenue of $27,886,000 is .09 of the current budget. Secondly it is stable. Thirdly EAP has come up with a plan to retire it. Fourthly it is not clear if the cause was inefficiencies and management or inadequate funding. As EAP notes they were required to cease expansion and had a cap imposed.

But more important than all of this is that until you resolve certain fundamental issues such as: should this be a cost recovery program, should it be an exchange program, should it be based on student tuition, what is EAP supposed to be doing, this type of budgeting is clearly the cart before the horse. If as we suggest this is an academic program like any other program then being tuition driven should not even be discussed or it should be established why this program is being treated this way as opposed to other academic programs. A clear articulation of the functions and tasks of EAP should precede any discussion of its budget. Given those functions, then it would be possible to construct a budget that would allow UOEAP to complete those tasks.
Conclusion and Recommendation

Given all of the above, we think it imperative that the report on EAP and International Education be reconsidered with full faculty input as to analysis and conclusions.

Be that as it may we would like to see a full economic analysis of the consequences of following any model being suggested. We would like to see a full economic analysis of a tuition based formula.

Summary

If a more efficient, more streamlined and fiscally robust EAP can be constructed along the lines of some of the suggestions of this report, then clearly this would be a positive outcome. But we have sufficient concerns with the report to question whether this will happen.

Thank you again for the opportunity to opine. Please contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ian Coulter
Committee on International Education Chair

Cc: Jaime Balboa, CAO Academic Senate
    Tom Nykiel, Principal Policy Analyst
February 8, 2008

Elizabeth Bjork
Academic Senate Chair

In Re: Undergraduate Council Response to the UC Joint Ad Hoc Committee on International Education

Dear Elizabeth,

Thank you for the opportunity to opine upon UC Joint Ad Hoc Committee on International Education Report, dated November 2007. The Report attempts to address the issues of how to raise the number of UC students participating in study abroad, how to integrate the various international study programs the University now offers, and how to support both the Education Abroad Program (EAP) and the expanded portfolio of study abroad programs that the University will offer. The Undergraduate Council supports these worthy goals.

The Council discussed the Report at its regular meeting on January 25, 2008. Professor Ian Coulter, Chair of the Committee on International Education (CIE), and past Country Director in the Education Abroad Program, briefed the Council on the Report and the preliminary view of the CIE.

The Council faculty and student members voted unanimously that they are unable to endorse the Report as written. The vote was zero members in favor of endorsement, ten faculty members opposed, and zero in abstention. The student vote was zero for endorsement, four opposed, and zero abstaining.

The main concern of the Council members is that there is too little information provided in the Report to support many of its conclusions and recommendations. For example, the Report recommends using third party providers as a means to increase participation in international programs without identifying, nor confronting, any complications that could arise. Further evidence for insufficient input to the Report is persuasively articulated in a minority view written by Gayle Binion. The Council is opposed to making changes that are not more thoroughly researched and vetted.

Thank you again for the opportunity to opine. Please contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Stuart Brown
Undergraduate Council Chair

Cc: Jaime Balboa, CAO Academic Senate
    Tom Nykiel, Principal Policy Analyst
February 11, 2008

Elizabeth Ligon Bjork
Academic Senate Chair

Re: Graduate Council’s Response on the Report on International Education

Dear Elizabeth,

The Graduate Council reviewed the Report of the University of California Joint Ad Hoc committee on International Education currently under systemwide Academic Senate review at its meeting on January 18, 2008. Thank you for the opportunity to opine.

The sense of the Council was to endorse the sentiments raised by Gayle Binion in the November 7, 2007 response memo which was appended to the Report for review. Binion wrote: “While the report refers to the importance of ‘graduate students’ being able to study abroad, there was no attention paid to the very different needs of that cohort.” The Council found itself in agreement with Binion’s assessment that:

The standard immersion programs rarely work for these students, especially the more advanced post-MA level students, who need to be placed in a more precise learning environment, often in a specific department abroad with an identified mentor or research program. ‘Third party providers’ may even be less useful than standard EAP programs for these students. It would be advisable to recommend that a group of faculty be empanelled to explore the ways in which UC as an institution can best facilitate study abroad for graduate students. It simply needs to be noted that apart from technicalities such as visa facilitation, there is a far different set of considerations involved with respect to ‘how to make the opportunities available’ to graduate students at UC and the ad hoc committee has not explored them.

Such an empanelled faculty group would focus on the particular needs of graduate students and the ways the UC (or individual campuses) can respond to them. For example, are there models for exchanges with graduate programs and labs that exist that can be emulated or expanded? The Council believes an empanelled faculty group would be ably situated to explore models that already exist (the UCDC program) that provide ways to incorporate graduate student instructors to improve the quality of undergraduate education abroad even while providing valuable research time and cultural immersion for graduate students.
The Report acknowledges the advantage of admitting global undergraduates for creating a learning environment for the 21st century. The Council believes this is even more pronounced for graduate students. Which begs the question, ‘How does this relate to the complex issue of NRTs?’ This response to this question is critical, and would best be formulated by an empanelled faculty group with expertise in both graduate and international education.

Sincerely,

Jan Reiff
Graduate Council Chair

Cc: Jaime Balboa, Academic Senate CAO
    Kyle Cunningham, Sr. Policy Analyst, Graduate Council