

OVERSEAS STUDIES PANEL

MINUTES

April 17, 2006

1:00-3:00 pm

TSC 203

I. MINUTES OF MARCH 2006 OSP MEETING

Approved with the correction noted that Stacy Geck *did* reply to the email.

II. REVIEW SEMESTER/YEAR PROGRAM:

ARCHITECTURE

Req. by Robert H. Timme

France Foreign Studies Program, Saintes, France [16 unit program]

FROM THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 2005 OSP MEETING:

- **APPROVED for one year, with comments.** Good work is produced by students in this program, but this program is not as popular as the other two overseas programs offered by the School of Architecture. One problem is the location; it is far from Bordeaux and Paris. Its major claims to fame are the market and the cathedral and that seems limited. It was noted that all the students were given grades or 'A' or 'A-' in ARCH 316. Panel members indicated displeasure with the French language instruction. It seemed preferable to require that the students take French here at USC, rather than a series of night classes at the Alliance Francais. The student evaluations included comments from students indicating they would have liked to have learned more French. The lack of complete program evaluations made a thorough program review impossible. The standard overseas evaluation form should be used, with additional qualitative questions provided by the School. However, it was clear that students had trouble telling the difference between ARCH 424, 425, and 426 and they got the same grades in all three courses. The panel recognizes that architecture students are challenged by a very intense program, but students should be encouraged to make use of USC's resources and take French here.
- **APPROVED.** All three ARCH semester programs will be put on the same review cycle and should be reviewed next in Fall 2008, unless there are significant changes or problems before that time. Architecture has ambitious goals of sending many of its undergraduates overseas, and has had some challenges in the past in standardizing programs which meet in different locations, and that attempt to fit a semester's work into the summer. They have not always provided timely and thorough documentation. However, this report was extremely complete (in fact, perhaps longer than necessary), and the School is thanked for providing such a thorough review. It appears that some of the issues that had previously been considered possible problems (lack of French language training, location in Saintes, grade inflation) are being dealt with, or are not in fact problems at all (eg, the Saintes location has clear advantages).

III. ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION, NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Tom Hollihan said that the Provost had asked his opinion about what role OSP should play, if any, in reviewing courses which send students overseas as part of the course for 1-2 weeks. This has been done in both graduate and undergraduate courses that have not been reviewed by OSP. It is understood that Student Affairs (through Tony Tambascia) needs basic information about all such programs. In addition, OSP would like to receive information about them on a courtesy basis, not in order to review them, but as a means of disseminating "best practices" and providing advice to schools that may lack experience in sending students overseas.

Jim Ellis said that USC is working on a plan to send *all* students overseas for at least a brief period. For some schools, having students go overseas for a semester causes tuition problems, but a 1-2 week trip does not. This plan does not imply that the semester programs will become less important. Two issues to consider are the importance of providing funding so that all students who wish to go overseas can afford it, and the difficulties with visas that some international students have.

Some schools and departments need assistance in setting up an overseas programs. Some existing programs may be overly dependent on one "champion," whether faculty or staff. It might be useful to provide a template for what is requested in the reviews of programs. The Curriculum Office plans to develop a new form for overseas programs (replacing the ISP and the 201), and will seek faculty input.