Proposal to Open Study Abroad Semester at University of Marburg, Spring 2011

RATIONALE: After 10 years at the Institut für deutsche Sprache und Kultur in Wittenberg (1998–2008), UW-Eau Claire moved its annual spring German study-abroad program to the Herder Institut in Leipzig for spring 2009. For several reasons, our program enrollments for 2009 and 2010 turned out to be lower than the minimum (10 students) required to stage the program. In both these years, UWEC sent our German students, in collaboration with UW Stevens Point, to the University of Marburg. In spring 2009, nine UW-Eau Claire students studied in Marburg. At present, another 8 of our students are studying in Marburg.

Dr. Jeff Vahlbusch (UWEC) visited Marburg for the first week of the Spring 2010 program to review the program, and, based on his evaluation and the German section’s endorsement, the CIE proposes to replace the Leipzig program with a program in Marburg.

ENROLLMENT LIMITS: No enrollment limits, but more importantly, no minimum enrollment, either.

CURRICULUM: German Language, Culture, Civilization.

Placement Test. Students complete a placement examination before leaving the U.S. The test results determine student placement into (currently) one of 6 language course levels taught by certified German as a Foreign Language instructors. The available levels are
- Stufen 5/6
- Stufen 1–4
- Grundstufe

Courses in Marburg. The Grundstufe is for students who have no prior knowledge of German. Levels 1–4 are for students whose knowledge and skills in German extend to the B1 / B2 levels of the European language proficiency protocol. The level 5/6 prepares students to take a qualifying examination for non-native German speakers to be admitted to German universities as regular students. This semester, 4 UW-Eau Claire students placed into level 2; 3 into level 3; and 1, amazingly, into level 5/6. Their classmates come from all over the world.

The program is divided into 3 parts. Students take 1 comprehensive language course for approximately 6 weeks, then have a week of vacation. Students then take another comprehensive language course, typically at the next highest level for a second period of 6 weeks, and then have another week of vacation. Each of these first two courses culminates in 4 graded examinations that test listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and composition. During the second and third parts of the semester, students also take a multi-hour-per-day literature / reading course taught and graded by Studienkolleg instructors.
FACULTY INVOLVEMENT: The Marburg program as currently designed does not require the accompaniment of a faculty member from UW-Stevens Point or UW-Eau Claire. However, we anticipate that occasionally, not regularly, a UWEC faculty member may wish to lead the semester-long program. Marburg is willing to work with us to meet that occasional interest.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Students are placed in single rooms in regular university dormitories, a bus-ride away from central campus. Marburg’s Office of International Relations avoids “clustering” our students on a floor, on a wing, or in a single dormitory. Both German and other foreign students live in these dormitories. All but one dorm in which our students are currently housed has wireless internet access and all have common kitchens. Our students reported satisfaction with the living arrangements. Students may cook for themselves or eat in any of the cafeterias in Marburg. Students are also provided with bus and train passes that provide free travel on most public conveyances in the entire state of Hessen.

CALENDAR: early January – late May

FEES: The estimated Spring 2011 Wisconsin resident charge is $6,577. This includes full-time tuition, student fees, housing, a local transportation pass, residence permit, CISI insurance, and administrative fees. MN residents may apply for reciprocity, while non-residents should add $900. Additional costs: passport, food, personal expenses, and roundtrip transportation from Minneapolis to Frankfurt. Estimate another $3,728 for these expenses.

Total Wisconsin resident cost estimate: $10,330. Cost estimates are based on 2010 costs and exchange rates. Estimates may change at any time.

ELIGIBILITY: The program is open to all currently enrolled, degree-seeking UW-Eau Claire students. A minimum GPA of 2.5 and good academic standing are required at the time of application. Freshman may apply but must have sophomore standing and have completed three semesters of university-level German by the time the program begins.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE/FOREIGN CULTURE REQUIREMENTS: The program would fulfill the entire Foreign Language/Foreign Culture requirement.