Costa Rica Study Abroad

REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

Brief History of Issue - why the issue is being considered:

UWEC has offered a summer program in Costa Rica provisionally under the number INTA 409 for the past two summers. INTA 409 is the number associated with our Summer in Mexico program, but – we have not offered that program since the US State Department put Mexico on its Travel Warning List. That designation triggers a response in accord with our policy of not sending students to countries on that list. When Mexico was listed, we worked quickly with our CR partners to implement a replacement, and were able to re-direct the Mexico summer group to Costa Rica instead. The violence has not abated (if anything it continues to accelerate) and Mexico remains on the list. So, we continue to run the summer program with our partners in Costa Rica, and since this will be the third year into it, we should go ahead and get a new course designation that is specific to this different program. The curriculum has not varied at all, with the exception of the Costa Rican Culture course. All the courses have been approved by the Spanish Section of the Department of Foreign Languages. FL sends an accompanying faculty/IAS to teach one of the courses offered in this program, which follows the model we used for the Summer in Mexico program. The summer program in Costa Rica has been very successful; student evaluations are consistently positive, and interest remains high. The Costa Rica program had 43 applications two weeks before the application deadline.

Points Discussed by Committee:

1. This study abroad program will replace the Summer in Mexico program which has been suspended since Mexico was listed on the US State Department Travel Warning List in March of 2010.
2. The program is popular with students.
3. Students will take Spanish 301, 302, 352, 405 and Costa Rican Culture, which transfers back to UWEC as Upper Division Spanish Elective credit.
4. The courses in this program are taught by Costa Rican faculty, and by one accompanying UW-Eau Claire Spanish faculty/IAS member.
5. Students are placed in host families. This affords them the opportunity to experience Costa Rican culture first-hand, and to use their Spanish throughout the entire experience.
6. The program last 6 weeks and is held during the summer.
7. The estimated summer fee is $3,375, this includes instructional expenses, fees, housing, meals, and CISI insurance. Additional costs: passport, food, personal expenses, local transportation and roundtrip transportation from Minneapolis to San Jose. Estimate another $1,421 for these expenses. Total Wisconsin resident cost estimate: $5,156. Cost estimates are based on 2011 costs and exchange rates. Estimates may change at any time.
8. The program is open to all currently enrolled, degree-seeking UW-Eau Claire students. A minimum GPA of 2.3 and good academic standing are required at the time of application. Freshman may apply but must have sophomore standing and have completed four semesters of university-level Spanish by the time the program begins.
9. The program would fulfill the entire Foreign Language/Foreign Culture requirement.

Pros of Recommendation:

The popular, affordable, Costa Rica study-abroad program has proven successful and should therefore replace Mexico study-abroad program, which continues to be closed due to Mexico’s being on the US State Department’s Travel Warning List.

Cons of Recommendation: None

Technology/Human Resource Impact: None

Committee Recommendation:

APC recommends that course number INTA 409, previously associated with the Mexico study-abroad program, be officially applied to the Costa Rica study-abroad program.
MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The University Senate Committee:

by a vote of __6__ for to __0__ against on November 15, 2011.

Recommends that

course number INTA 409, previously associated with the Mexico study-abroad program, be officially applied to the Costa Rica study-abroad program.

Implementation Date: Immediate

Signed: ________________________________

Chair of the Committee

Send to: University Senate Office