**Undergraduate Council Member’s Feedback on the Proposal to Accept International Transfer Courses from UA Study Abroad Partner Institutions as University Credit**

*April 10 – 18, 2019*

Summary of concerns, suggestions, and questions for UA Global:

1. The time required from faculty to evaluate (i.e., determine UA equivalencies) for multiple courses from 20 partner institutions, every 3 – 5 years, is substantial.   This is extra work for faculty beyond evaluating current transfer course work that is mainly “department elective credit.”  A timeline might be helpful for departments, along with UA Global’s compensation for this labor-intensive work.  It is suggested that UA Global start with 5 partner institutions, then increase the number as the faculty becomes more comfortable with the process.
2. Likewise, academic advisors are concerned about the increased workload during student appointments: differentiating one kind of transfer credit from another, deciding how the transfer courses (University Credit vs. regular transfer credit) will apply to UA degree requirements, etc.  Although procedures aren’t part of the policy that needs faculty approval, the implementation process should be spelled out in the proposal so that faculty and advisors know what to expect.
3. If the courses to be transferred as University Credit were all evaluated/approved in advance, this would be a big help to faculty and advisors upon the students return to the UA.
4. Another big concern centers around the UA’s policy that only 30 University Credits are needed to earn a UA degree. The proposed policy opens the possibility that all 30 units of University Credit could be earned at other institutions, which raised the question: what does it mean to have a UA degree:  30 University Credits, 30 units taught by UA faculty, or some mix of the two? UA Global should set some boundaries, such as a 15-unit maximum of transfer University Credit. If there’s a 30-unit maximum (as UA Global requests), it should be specified that the student’s final semester must include at least 15 units of course work from UA faculty (see the UW-Madison COE stipulation that students cannot complete their degree with courses from a partner institution).
5. To help UGC understand what’s meant by a “designated partner institution,” examples should be provided in the proposal, along with the approval criteria and review process. A sampling of courses to be evaluated as University Credit would also be helpful. In other words, the proposal should specify how the Study Abroad partner institutions are selected, who will evaluate them, and how frequently.  More transparency on these processes is needed.
6. What impact will the proposal have on the Transfer Articulation Office, the Registrar’s Office, and UITS, which has to make system adjustments in order to provide proper notations on student transcripts? These offices need to be included in ironing out the proposal details.
7. Clarification is needed to differentiate the credit earned from UA student-exchange programs, micro-campuses, and study-abroad programs at partner institutions.  Which offers University Credit vs. transfer credit?   How is University Credit justified for one or two of these but not others?
8. The proposal should address whether the students earning University Credit from study abroad partner institutions could file (when back on Main Campus) grade appeals, GRO requests, or retroactive withdrawal petitions.
9. Could a study abroad student at a non-partner institution petition the UA to award University Credit for the course work? If this proposal is approved, students bringing transfer work from other study abroad programs and domestic institutions will request University Credit/grades.  When students are allowed to petition a policy, that’s a burden on the General Petition Committee.  UGC should consider making the policy non-petition-able.
10. If there’s a cap on the number of University Credits to be accepted (e.g., 15 units), but students exceed the cap in the first semester (e.g., 18 units), could students decide which ones would count (e.g., only those with high grades, only those that meet major requirements)? This needs to be addressed even if there’s a 30-unit cap.
11. Has UA Global surveyed students to find out the actual obstacles to studying abroad: expense or need for grades to improve GPA? If it’s primarily the expense, and students don’t care about grades, this proposal could be simplified.
12. If students pay UA tuition to take courses at the partner institution, will UA college deans see any RCM benefit?
13. The proposal should include the student qualifications to participate in Study Abroad at a partner institution (e.g., minimum GPA, minimum number of earned UA credits).
14. The proposal should specify that courses for “pass/fail” are not allowed to transfer as University Credit.
15. UA “Special Topics” courses have unique themes within each department and shouldn’t be used as a “catch-all” transfer course title.
16. The proposal should begin with the University-wide policies, followed by specific college policies.  For example, a college might limit the number of transfer “University Credits” from partner institutions that can apply to their majors.
17. The UW-Madison registration procedure—that students enroll for a “Study Away Course”—makes sense as a temporary placeholder for tuition purposes.  This is already used at the UA. The placeholder is converted to specific course or department credit after the transcript arrives.
18. A language or culture requirement should be specified (or at least encouraged to enhance the study abroad experience) so that students can engage with the culture in a more meaningful way.
19. It would appear that no thought has been given to the impact of the proposed program on the current study abroad offerings.  This should be addressed.
20. It is requested that links be added to the peer study-abroad programs listed in the proposal so that UGC members can get a better understanding of their credit transfer policies.