

# IDOCS Annual Report 2006-07

## IDOCS Members 2006-07

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|-----------------|---|
| Jeane DeLaney   | Humanities (Chair)  |
| Bruce Hanson    | Natural Sciences and Mathematics  |
| Brian Borovsky  | Natural Sciences and Mathematics (Replaced Bruce Hanson during Spring term) |
| Dona Freeman    | Fine Arts   |
| Karil Kucera    | Interdisciplinary and General Studies                                       |
| Kris MacPherson | Social Sciences   |
| Katherine Baker | ex-officio, Registrar's office  |
| Eric Lund       | ex-officio, Director of IOS   |
| Solveig Zempel  | ex-officio Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary and General Studies         |
| Maura DeChant   | Student Representative, non-voting  |
| Cate Redman     | Student Representative, non-voting (replaced Maura during Spring term)      |
| Kelin Loe       | Student Representative, voting  |

## 2006-2007 General Business

The main business of IDOCS this year was to evaluate and approve instructor's courses for field-supervised programs, ongoing semester-long study programs, and St. Olaf-led off-campus interim programs for January 2008. Mindful of the upcoming committee restructuring that would lead to the disbanding of IDOCS, we took on little new business this year. Instead, substantial time was devoted to defining IDOCS' core responsibilities, attempting to streamline these duties, and envisioning how they could be carried out in an expeditious manner by the proposed subcommittee of the new general curriculum committee. At the request of CCC, IDOCS examined all its activities with the goal of distinguishing between those associated with curricular review, and those associated with its role as advisor to/sounding board for the director of IOS. Only the former, of course, will be taken over by the new subcommittee.

Committee members were divided over the wisdom of disbanding IDOCS, but in the end were cautiously supportive. The principle concerns of the committee members include:

- ❑ Excessive workload for the new subcommittee members. Members of the new subcommittee will have to assume all the course/program review duties of IDOCS in addition to the duties associated with the larger curriculum committee. Besides the quantity of work, there is also the problem of how it is distributed throughout the year. Because of brochure and recruiting deadlines, during certain times of the year IDOCS is required to review program proposals very quickly. This is especially true in late fall, when interim proposals for the following year come under review, but it also occurs when a program provider such as IES or HECUA suddenly moves an

established program in which students are already registered to another country. (This usually happens in response to security concerns.) Other events requiring quick action include the need to approve faculty courses for field-supervised programs when there is a sudden change in personnel.

- Loss of expertise. Although expertise in international studies has never been a prerequisite for service on IDOCS, in practice a good percentage of faculty representatives have led one or more programs abroad. Such experience is particularly vital when reviewing proposals for the faculty-led semester programs (TIME, TIA, GLOBAL, Australia) and interim programs from individuals who are putting together an off-campus course or program for the first time. In many cases, the more seasoned members of IDOCS are able to spot difficulties and raise concerns about proposals that—while sounding fine on paper—would be impossible to carry out well in practice. It is our fear that because the new subcommittee will most likely have fewer members with international expertise, most of the burden for identifying problems will fall on the director of IOS.
  
- Loss of standing committee to advise director of IOS on programming and policy matters. As noted above, the disbanding of IDOCS means that the director of IDOCS will no longer have a faculty group to provide feedback and advice. This change has two consequences. First, it places a greater burden on the IOS director, by giving him/her sole responsibility for making policy decisions that have a significant impact on programs that are central to St. Olaf's mission and identity. Second, without a faculty group directly involved with IOS, there may be a tendency for it to become isolated from the rest of the college. Such isolation may make it more difficult for IOS to make its voice heard in college-wide discussions over the role of international studies in the college's mission. One suggestion, made by Eric Lund, was for the director of IOS to appoint a group of experienced faculty to take over the advisory/advocacy functions of IDOCS. To conserve faculty time, this group would be convened sparingly (or even not at all, if discussions could take place by email). As IDOCS chair, I strongly support this proposal, particularly for the next few years as the college experiments with the new committee structure.

## **Other Matters**

- Another matter IDOCS considered this year was the question of whether off-campus interims that don't fill during spring registration should be opened to first-year students. There is some precedent for this: an Education program based in Minneapolis and some language programs based abroad have traditionally enrolled first-year students. IDOCS members consulted with both IOS staff and faculty members who have led these programs. Responses were mixed. Among the concerns were (1) Maturity level of first-years (2) Belief that more on-campus preparation allows students to integrate off-campus studies into their academic program (3) Belief that interim "belongs to first years," that is, because so many

second-, third- and fourth-year student are abroad, first-years have a unique opportunity to bond and to share a common experience. After some discussion, IDOCS decided to maintain the current policy of allowing first-years to participate only in those programs that currently allow them. Although we found little evidence to suggest that first-years as a group lacked the maturity to study off campus, on balance we believed the other concerns had sufficient merit to reject any change in current policy.

- IDOCS also sought to streamline further the process by which interim programs are evaluated and approved. There has long been a question about whether ongoing off-campus interim programs should be repeatedly reviewed, since on-campus courses receive no such scrutiny after initial approval. In IDOCS' view, because of the special risks involved in off-campus study, these programs should indeed be reviewed on a regular basis. The process, however, should be as streamlined as possible for both the faculty who lead interim programs and those who review them. Deliberations over the past few years have led to the following policy: Only new programs, or those programs seeking to move from pilot to full status, are reviewed by the entire committee. All other proposals are divvied up between smaller subcommittees for review, and then are approved by the entire committee on the basis of their recommendation. The only exception is in the case of an ongoing interim program that is being revised substantially, entailing either a significant change in content or itinerary. To flag such cases, IOS has asked faculty members to indicate in their letter of intent whether such changes are being contemplated.
- Ongoing discussion of BORSC report regarding St. Olaf's off-campus study programs. As a whole, the committee expressed its belief that the student criticisms contained in the report were ill-founded and based a very narrow sample population. Two issues, however, merited further discussion: The need for a better mix of programs for all majors and the need for summer programs.

## **Curricular Actions**

### Review of Established Programs

- Denmark International Studies, Margaret O'Leary advisor
- Novgorod Program, Irina Walters advisor
- Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Oxford, Karen Marsalek, advisor
- Budapest Semester in Mathematics, Cliff Corzatt

### Programs moved from pilot to full status

- Bogazici University Program (Eric Lund, advisor)
- American University in Cairo (Eric Lund, advisor)
- IES Milan (Dan Dressen, Advisor)

### Programs Granted Pilot Status

- Asian Conversation II: Meeting Sojourners approved for as pilot for Interim 2009

- ❑ Washington Internship Institute, Solveig Zempel, advisor
- ❑ IES Buenos Aires, Jeane DeLaney, advisor
- ❑ CIEE Santiago, Jeane DeLaney, advisor

#### Course Approvals for Field Supervised Programs

- ❑ Chuck Huff, “Four Dimensions of Moral Reasoning,” TIME, 2007
- ❑ Kris MacPherson, “Food in Asia,” TIA, 2007

#### Approval for Changes in Venue

- ❑ One-time approval allowing students enrolled in HECUA’s January 2007 Program in Bangladesh to participate in a similar program moved to Ecuador (Bangladesh program shut down)
- ❑ Approval given of new venue for ACM program in Zimbabwe. Program will now be in Botswana.

Interim Programs for 2008: Please see attached spread sheet

## **Ongoing business**

Issues discussed this year, but which we believe require further consideration include::

- ❑ Whether St. Olaf should begin promoting (and approving) summer study programs. Several members saw the merits in such a policy change. IOS director Eric Lund warned, however, that administering these programs would be extremely time consuming, and could not be handled by his office without more staffing.
- ❑ Whether the college requirement that students take three interims be modified to accommodate some students who study abroad during spring semester. Problems with this requirement sometimes arise with students who have taken an interim off early in their college career, but then want to enroll in a semester abroad program that begins in January and that only offers four course credits.
- ❑ Raising student awareness of the environmental costs of travel. Given St. Olaf’s focus on sustainability AND the great environmental impact of travel, IDOCS discussed ways in which students could be asked to reflect upon their role in contributing to environmental degradation, and to suggest actions that students can take to compensate for damaging activity. One possibility is to inform students (and faculty) about carbon-offset programs like TerraPass, and to provide a link on the IOS website. This discussion was very preliminary, but certainly worth pursuing.