International Education Advisory Committee
Minutes/Meeting Notes for Monday, September 19, 2005

Voting members Present: Sheryl Blumenthal, Elma Cabahug, Mark Fan, Ann Fontanella, Jill Heffron, Sue Lian, Mikiko Matsumura, Sirous Monajami, Leslie Pahl, Carol Reitan, Ira Rothstein, Joan Vitorelo, Paul Wong, Ana Wu, Sharon Zakus

Resource members: Louise Louie (Resource), Cynthia Obenchain, Michele Zimmerman

The meeting was commenced at 2:10 by the chair, Leslie Pahl. As this was the first meeting of the academic year, Leslie asked the committee members to review the “purpose statement,” which she had written on the board.

1. Jill Heffron, Study Abroad coordinator, presented the first two agenda items. She talked about the complicated housing arrangements for the Fulbright visiting scholar, Dr. Ahmed. Dr. Ahmed, whose specialty is Islamic theater, will be a speaker at the East-West Group on November 4 and 5 and will participate in the “Windows into Islam,” giving a talk on “Theater, Islam and One Thousand and One Nights at Karachi.” Jill encouraged members to invite Dr. Ahmed to speak to their classes.

Jill discussed the upcoming program “Diego Rivera and the Muralists,” which will be guided by Greg Landau. Additionally, the Winter Break program “Laos and Vietnam” will take place from 12/26-1/11.

2. Ann Fontanella gave a presentation on the STEPS ESL placement test that she and Louise Louie had researched and prepared. The STEPS test is commonly given in Japan and accepted in lieu of the TOEFL placement test at some institutions around the Bay Area and also across the US. Ann discovered, however, that the one college she contacted who accepts the test said that they have had no applicants applying with the STEPS test. There was a debate as to how many STEPS students from Japan actually apply to US colleges. Based on anecdotal evidence from Mikiko Matsumura and Ana Wu (Ana Wu, for instance, commented that when she worked in Japan, the test was used merely as part of a personnel file in the workplace.), the STEPS test is not as rigorous as the TOEFL; however, since the STEPS administration will not allow viewing of the test, it was not possible to know the rigor of the test for sure. The advantage would be “free advertising” for CCSF if it were placed on the list of institutions accepting STEPS, but the downside is that it would not be beneficial for the Institute.

There followed more information about the various placement equivalents of STEPS vis-à-vis the TOEFL.
3. The next item was a presentation regarding the ELS 109 language institute. The issue was whether students who were given a 109 placement from the ELS would be accepted into the CCSF Credit Program without having to take the TOEFL. There would be an advantage to CCSF and to ELS, but a distinct disadvantage to the Institute for International Students.

Following these presentations and discussions, Joan Vitorelo raised the motion, seconded by Jill Heffron, to dismiss the consideration of recommending policy to implement STEPS and ELS109 at CCSF. The motion was carried in favor of dismissal by a vote of 14 to 0, with Leslie Pahl abstaining.

4. The next item was that of recommending policy regarding “conditional acceptance” for ESL students to attend the Institute for International Students if they receive a TOEFL score of less than 475. The term “conditional acceptance” apparently has a cachet among agents and institutes abroad such that, were it to be instituted as policy here at CCSF, might very likely enhance applications and retention of international students.

It was concluded that this is such a complex matter that it cannot and should not be addressed solely in the advisory capacity of the committee. Mark Fan volunteered to present the issue to the Academic Senate, with the possible assistance of Louise Louie, since she is most familiar with the background issue. The caveat is that the language of the policy has to be carefully crafted in order to avoid misunderstanding by students as to their status at CCSF. Louise will work to develop a clearly and unambiguously worded policy statement, when this is finished it will be circulated by Leslie Pahl to the committee members, and then Mark Fan will take it from there. (ED. NOTE: subsequently, it has been determined that the issue should first be advanced in the forum of the IEAC’s parent committee, the Academic Policy Committee.)

Michelle Zimmerman than made a suggestion to allow students from the Institute for International Students to also take a selected list of non-ESL classes at CCSF. This would be appealing to students – making them feel like more of the college community -- and Mark Fan added that similar “bridge” programs (if it were construed as such) already exist at CCSF (summer teen classes, for example). Joan Vitorelo cautioned that this might lead to unauthorized registration for some classes. Someone else commented that CCSF has the capacity to block registration for (for example) non-payment of fees and related matters, and that perhaps somehow this procedure could be used to ensure that students do not register for classes they are not actually qualified to attend.

As appealing as this might potentially be, it was decided unanimously (though not through any motion) to not go any further with this suggestion, on the premise that the “conditional acceptance” issue has priority.
Leslie Pahl asked if there was any further business. There being no further business, she adjourned the meeting at 3:20. The next meeting is set for Monday, November 14, from 2:00-3:30 p.m. in Cloud 229.