

PROCEEDINGS

ELLSNA Conference on Transatlantic Cooperation in Education

June 1 – June 2, 2004

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Tuesday, June 1

Welcome Address

The Welcome Address was presented by Dr. Earl Kellogg, Associate Provost for International Affairs at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The overheads are enclosed as a separate file. Key message:

- Universities who fail to expand and enrich international dimensions in their learning, discovery and creative endeavors will become marginalized in the future.
- One of the most significant and in depth ways of incorporating these international and global dimensions is through collaboration with universities in other countries.
- These “partnerships”, in this changing world, must take new forms to provide mutual benefit to both partners and to be sustainable into the future.

While some of the examples presented were derived from collaboration in research, the recommendations are applicable to collaboration in education:

- It is very important to define a topical focus.

- Faculty leadership must be obtained at each institution for each topic. Let faculty define appropriate agenda for collaboration. Have small group of faculty from each institution meet to decide on specific agenda, to review and to evaluate processes.
- Develop efficient administrative mechanisms at campus level; don't burden faculty with too many administrative tasks.

Letter of Intent

Unlike originally planned, the finalized and mutually agreed upon Letter of Intent was not signed this day because not all representatives were authorized to sign on behalf of their institution. The goal is to have the Letter of Intent fully executed by early October 2004.

Presentation on the Euroleague for Life Science

Dr. Ute Mackenstedt, Vice Rector for Education at the University of Hohenheim, described the Euroleague for Life Sciences in terms of its:

- List of member universities
- Purpose of the framework of cooperation
- Objectives and how to achieve them
- Focus of joint activities (internationalization, joint teaching and learning initiatives, student and staff mobility, quality assurance)
- List of subject areas on which ELLS will focus
- Network structure and leadership
- Report on the Conference on 'Internationalization and Quality Assurance' at the University of Hohenheim, February 16-17, 2004¹

The presentation is enclosed as a file.

Presentations on the ELLSNA Universities

Subsequently, each ELLS and each North American university gave a presentation on itself as an institution and on its degree programs and internationalization strategy. The respective presentations are enclosed as separate files. Information pertinent to student exchange was collected in a standardized format prior to the conference. This information was compiled into a brochure, which is now available as a file and has been enclosed. The plan is to make the brochure available on the web. Regular updates will be necessary.

Break Out Session on Constraints and Support Factors in Collaboration

During an afternoon break out session, each of the two groups discussed the following three questions, with emphasis on the latter two:

1. What do the ELLS universities expect from collaborating with North American universities and vice versa?
2. What are the constraints that hinder transatlantic student exchanges and collaboration in Education?

¹ The proceedings from the quality assurance conference were distributed. Additional copies are available from Gabriele Klumpp. Andrea Bohn also has some copies left.

3. What are the factors that help and support successful exchanges and collaboration in education?

Question 1

Our getting together for this second ELLSNA conference clearly demonstrates a joint interest. Kirby Barrick summarized it well, when he pointed out the similarities between our institutions, the fact that a lot of North American students have roots in the countries that are members of ELLS, and that the new degree structures and joint programming within ELLS with English as lingua franca greatly lowers barriers to participation by North American students. Furthermore, making information about these opportunities and information about ELLSNA network institutions more readily accessible to all should promote student and faculty exchange and other forms of inter-institutional collaboration.

Summary of the Discussion on Question 2 and 3

Constraints	Counter Measures (Factors that promote exchange and collaboration)
Lack of information on the part of students (and faculty, advisors) about exchange opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have comprehensive information on partners and programs abroad readily available. The ELLSNA brochure is a great first step in this direction. ▪ ‘Bombard’ students with information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talk about study abroad in introductory courses - Have study abroad fairs - Advertisements on boards, campus newspaper - Do presentations in student associations and in classroom (also to juniors and seniors) - Send out emails frequently - Follow up with mailings, emails, phone calls to those students who express interest in study abroad - Inform and train advisors at the departmental level - Target parents with content and format that appeals to them (e.g., during freshmen orientation weeks, mailing to parents) - Hold lots of informational events (maybe with free meal) - Involve former study abroad students, alumni, and businesses interested in hiring globally competent graduates in all of the above
Difficulties in transferring of courses, credits, and grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get support from faculty by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educating them about the quality of the

Constraints	Counter Measures (Factors that promote exchange and collaboration)
<p>Problems in the US stem from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The legal framework and accreditation process in place at these institutions. ▪ Program structure not conducive ▪ Faculty reluctant to accept substitute courses 	<p>education and training offered by the partner universities (proof of accreditation of the host's programs, information on quality assurance system used by host, site visits, faculty exchange, joint teaching projects)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make them more aware of the benefits of studying abroad - Promote emphasis on international experiences throughout the curriculum ▪ Make the credit transfer process clear and as simple as possible, providing the students with information about the host institutions course palette, credit and grade system ▪ Point out the value of complementary content that although only used as elective credit is greatly beneficial to the student in terms of career opportunities and personal enrichment
<p>Unwillingness to postpone graduation because of study abroad</p> <p>Pressure on the university to make sure students graduate on time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Measures to help students finish degree with the cohort group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good planning ahead on part of advisor and student (requires good knowledge of courses that will be available while student is abroad, understanding how credit and grade transfer will work, etc.) - Flexibility and ease in letting a student use courses taken abroad to meet degree requirements - Design programs of study that either require international learning experience or that make it attractive to fulfill requirements through study abroad - Offer majors and minors with strong international focus and compulsory study abroad experience ▪ Make it possible and attractive to study abroad after completing the degree, for example, by granting continuing non-degree student status for students going on an exchange program in the term after graduation. Consider making scholarships available for these students, too.

Constraints	Counter Measures (Factors that promote exchange and collaboration)
Costs of studying abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a program palette that includes low-cost options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summer programs may be perceived as more affordable than a semester abroad. Perhaps short programs can be offered at lower or zero home institution tuition, resulting in real savings - Keep costs as low as possible (e.g., include home stays, sharing of rooms) - Juxtapose all costs of studying abroad vs. at home, which will often show that the cost difference may not be so large as feared ▪ Use scholarships to help defer additional costs of study abroad and to send out the message: “We want to make it easy for you” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Example: Grant automatic scholarships to Honors students to be used for study abroad. - Promote (additional) scholarships for study abroad to be granted at the departmental level
Language barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educate students about the English-based programs at ELLS universities and the fact that students and faculty as well as many other people in these countries speak English ▪ Provide introductory level language courses at host institution (and give credits towards graduation for these courses) ▪ Promote the study of foreign language at home university (e.g., as part of graduation requirement, as requirement to participate in a subsidized program abroad)
Need to keep exchanges balanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Count exchange balance in terms of student exchange months, making it possible to balance several students going short program (usually US students to Europe) against fewer students coming for a semester (e.g., 4 students on 1-month long program for 1 student on a semester program) ▪ Instead of an annual balance, target three- or five year balances ▪ Exchanges that are particularly unbalanced should receive special promotional effort by the institution sending too few students

Other ways to promote international collaboration in education:

Hire faculty with interest in international engagement:

- Include the international component in the job announcement
 - Enquire about international engagement during the interview process
 - Have international engagement count towards tenure and promotion
 - Promote a 'Can Do Attitude' among department heads and faculty
- Find out about the relevance of international experiences in finding jobs and having a successful career both from business leaders and recent alumni.
 - Career service units should be able to demonstrate how valuable study abroad experiences are in finding and keeping a job.
 - Work with industry and alumni to provide (paid) internships abroad.

Wednesday, June 2

Presentation on the Current and Planned Joint Activities within ELLS

We started the day off with an overview of current and planned joint activities within ELLS (see enclosed presentation for details):

1. Joint Short Term programs
 - 1.1. Learning Apart Together (LAT)
 - 1.2. Summer School
 - 1.2.1. Subject Area: Animal Science (3 week course with 6 ECTS credits)
 - 1.2.2. Subject Area: Environmental Courses
 - 1.2.2.1. European Field Excursions in Environmental Science (EFEES)
 - 1.2.2.2. Soil-Microbe-Plant Interactions
 - 1.2.3. Subject Area: Biosystems Engineering (BELLS) (planned for 2005)
2. Mutual Recognition of Existing Courses and Programs of Study
 - 2.1. Subject Area Biostatistics/Bioinformatics: list of courses at various ELLS universities
 - 2.2. Subject Area Environmental Science: Semester packages
3. Joint Curricula and Joint Master Programs
 - 3.1. Subject Area Safety in the Food Chain (SIFC)

The presentation closed with a long to-do list. We are confident ELLS will accomplish its goals!

We then discussed various models of collaboration for ELLS and NA but also continued the discussion of what factors facilitate collaboration.

Personal Contact and Advising

It was stressed how important it is to know exactly which persons to contact at the partner institution to obtain information, resolve problems, and design procedures that facilitate student

exchange. Thus, there needs to be a personal contact on each end to provide advising services on two levels:

1. Organizational/social (prior to application, during the application process, post-acceptance, upon arrival, during the stay; with regard to legal status, housing, interaction with host country students, etc.)
2. Academic (to help pick courses, to help resolve problems with instructors, to help establish equivalencies, etc.)

Furthermore, it is a good idea for every university to have a pre-established emergency plans.

A major goal is to have faculty and administrators know about and believe in the value of the partner institutions. This can be facilitated through site visits.

Site Visits

Below are suggested items for visits by faculty and administrators to a partner institution:

1. Contact staff in the international office to have them plan and implement the various activities
 - Meet the people in the International Office
2. Ask host faculty to design a program that will
 - Bring together well-matched (prospective) counter parts
 - Have the visitor meet colleagues working in related fields (to also promote future collaborative research)
 - Show labs, grounds and facilities
 - Arrange for the visitor to sit in on a class
 - Arrange for the visitor to give (a) lecture(s) or seminar (perhaps it will even be possible to have the visiting faculty teach a week-long class or jointly teach an ongoing course)
3. Host a lunch for both students and staff when international counterparts are present and / or invite students to a guest's presentation
4. Talk about (and show the visitor around) issues very important to exchange students:
 - Housing options
 - Meal options
 - What kind of social life is offered

Often only an isolated small group of people knows about a visitor coming to campus. It may make sense to announce such visits on a web based 'Gallery', showing the visitor's itinerary, a link to the home institution, and the visitor's CV and teaching/research interests. Encourage faculty and students who may not be directly involved, to meet the guest and participate in programs on the itinerary.

Usually funds are available for hosting visitors, but they need to be applied for in advance.

Credit Transfer

In addition to what has been noted above, credit and course transfer is facilitated by:

- Making detailed course descriptions readily available to students and to faculty charged with establishing course equivalency
- Clarifying at which level a given course is being taught (Ph.D., Master, Bachelor; which year during Bachelor)
- Providing an explanation of the credit point and the grading system, ideally with a 'translation' into the partner university's system
- Creating a data base of courses available in a given semester and the credit offered

Who is responsible for understanding the system? Both the students and the institutions need to understand what is involved in course and credit transfer, but ultimately more responsibility should fall on the students. It is important that they research the system at the school at which they will be attending.

Semester and Academic Year Abroad

The semester or year abroad is considered to be the most valuable type of study abroad experience. The following comments were made about this model:

- A semester abroad can involve classes or research
- For some students, 'prepared semester packages' (e.g., as offered by KVL, SLU, UHOH) may be particularly attractive
- Since US students are more likely to study abroad during their undergraduate studies, it is very important to clarify the level of a course and which Master level courses may be appropriate for junior or senior level Bachelor students from the US.
- Honors students may be a particularly good target group for promoting semester/academic year programs abroad
- Use former study abroad students to promote the extended period abroad
- Create brochures about the programs and partnerships
- Maintain up-to-date websites linked with the partner universities, highlighting the courses and packages offered
- Communicate with parents about the value of a semester abroad (e.g., 'Give your Child the World')
- Semester 'packages' such as already pre-pared by KVL and SLU may be particularly attractive to US students, as they offer coherent content, are definitely offered within a specific term, and the courses coordinated so not to have time conflict with each other.

Short Term Programs

Short term programs were defined as lasting one week to ten days during spring or fall break or 3-8 weeks during the summer. The NA universities are keenly interested in the ELLS short term courses, especially if they are offered at a level that is appropriate for undergraduate students. In any case, the eligibility for and background knowledge required of a given course should be made very clear.

Drawback: Some students count on the summer months to earn money

Advantage: The ELLS partners can offer some courses at 0 tuition/program costs.

What are the key factors to get students to enroll in short programs?

- Make information about short courses known to students many months in advance (email, website)
- Have a clear application process, show a timeline by which they will find out about acceptance
- Clarify costs components (passport and visa costs, airfare, ground transport, accommodation, meals, insurance)

Concerns were raised as to what extent short programs will count towards the exchange (they should!).

ELLS summer courses are appealing because they are made for ELLS students instead of being 'artificially' set up to host US students. Ideally, though, these programs are set up to facilitate a broader 'European' experience (e.g., with cultural immersion components, field trips).

An issue that warrants further discussion: If ELLS schools offer short courses to accommodate US students, what will US schools do to accommodate EU students?

Internships

- Student demand for internships exists.
- Find out about the relevance of international experiences in finding jobs and having a successful career, both from business leaders and recent alumni.
- On farm or company internships:
 - These are not easily arranged by universities themselves
 - We can provide information about related organizations that facilitate internships abroad (e.g., International Associations of Students in Agricultural and Related Sciences (IAAS), Communicating for Agriculture, IFYE)
- Research internships
 - Can be arranged by the university or rather by individual faculty with support from administrative units (e.g., with regard to visa, work permit, housing, insurance)
 - In certain research projects or specific labs funding / payment may be available
 - Particularly in the US, homeland security issues may restrict access to certain labs or types of research

It is crucial to have good descriptions of internship positions available several months in advance to recruit students and make sure the internship fulfills requirements so it can be used to fulfill degree requirements. Please refer to the enclosed "Internship Job Advertisement" draft.

Note that ELLS students coming to the US will:

- need a visiting scholar visa (J 1, usually requires Bachelor degree or equivalent),
- need to provide proof of sufficient funds,
- not be permitted to enroll in any classes.

Points open requiring further discussion:

- What is the appropriate length of an internship? US students may only want to come for 6 – 10 weeks, whereas ELLS hosts envision 3-6 months.
- How can language and cultural immersion be promoted for interns?
- Will they have the same access to housing as regular students?

Joint Degree Programs

The very valid question was posed, whether there is even a demand for joint degrees on the part of students? Perhaps demand will come once such programs are publicized.

Within the current legal framework both in Europe and North America, it is extremely difficult if not impossible to establish joint degree programs in which students obtain two diplomas upon completion. Programs with integrated components (semester, year) abroad are more likely to be approved. Courses or research completed at a partner institution are transferred to the home institution and accepted fully towards meeting degree requirements. Perhaps a special certificate can be given by the partner institution for the component completed during the semester/year.

In any case, joint programs require extensive investment in planning and close collaboration over many years. This will require resources and highly energized leadership. There should be demonstrated interest from students and strong indication from the job market that students with such training are in demand.

Other Forms of Collaboration Between ELLSNA Members

We all suspect that there are many faculty:faculty contacts, hosting of students on research internships, and post-doc exchanges that the international offices are not aware of. While no one wants to discourage these, there are reasons why it would be good if such collaboration was channeled through the international office to:

- facilitate this kind of engagement for faculty (whereas some may currently have the perception that the international office interferes more than it facilitates);
- make sure visitors receive excellent services, are properly insured and have the proper kind of visa/work permit, to help in emergency situations, etc.;
- help the university count and record all its international activities for statistical purposes.
- make use of existing contacts in promoting student exchange, co-teaching projects, etc..

ICT Presentation

Hendrik Klompmaker led the discussion on using Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Global Seminar

- Conferencing with different countries around the world
- Time difference a problem

Regional Seminar

- Euro League Partners
- GIS application

LAT Learning apart together

- Bring students together to jointly solve problems
- Tools used: MSN Messenger, Quick Place, AOL Instant Messenger, etc...
- Difficult for teacher to see what was going on

GIMA M.Sc. course running for 2 years

- 3-4 week course
- Click to meet (ITC)
- Shares power point (ppt)
- Use of Web cam
- Use a head set to reduce noise feedback
- Streamed to all participants
- Can do up to 8 (?)
- Need DSL or Cable Modem

Video Monography

Scenarios

Global Seminar

- Multipoint VC ISDN
- Time and cultural difference
- Opponent based discussion

Regional

- Multi point with application software
- Expert at a distance
- Teach students and discussion

LAT Virtual Class

- 1:1 communication
- Difficult to supervise

Education Web

- Student portal information and resource together
- Blackboard
- Perception test making program
- Quick place
- Library file sharing emails
- Student administration grades schedules enrolling

Team Environment
Team Sites
Portfolio for HW/Thesis managed like a website

Web interface options
Your classes + links
Registration time
Your marks
Your emails
Links to HW + announcements

Where can ICT Help?

Teacher + students alike
Looking up information
Going to each others' universities
Class not on a real campus
Meetings
Accessing different data bases
Monitoring how much time they are spending there
Web classes across the Atlantic

Additional comments on ICT:

It's great technology and information on a local level. It would enhance guest lecturing and one time lecturers on specific titles. It is great way to exchange ideas and help to solve problems and have a great class discussion. It is a useful way to have conferences and exchange information without having to travel.

Questions or concerns that may arise: If classes are offered thru this media, it would lessen the experience of a true study abroad. If I can get the class I need via ICT, why should I go abroad? A similar concern exists with meetings on an administration level. It is good to meet with people face to face every so often; more can be accomplished that way.

With technology changing all the time, ICT is something all the schools need to keep current on. There are many possibilities of using ICT at a local level to enhance the student experience at each respected university. Some more research and consideration should go into how the information sharing across the Atlantic can be utilized at its best potential.

What Do We Expect From Each Other

- **Reliability:** We should all try to respond to inquiries (email, letter, phone) in a timely fashion; meet deadlines (e.g., for sending applications, requesting changes, ec.); and keep promises.
- **Honesty:** Don't give excuses; don't beat around the bush if there is a problem. Don't pretend all is well if it isn't.
- **Flexibility:** In all things, please try to be flexible and bend the rules, if need be. Cultivate an attitude of "can do" and "we'll make it work".

Special concerns voiced by ELLS:

- The TOEFL is very expensive and sometimes impossible to take for students (time constraints, or TOEFL no longer offered). Request: if the sending institution can confidently vouch for the exchange students English skills, can't that be enough?
- European students usually have excellent health mandatory insurance from their home country that is also valid overseas. Why do they usually have to pay for additional insurance on US campuses? Couldn't the health insurance from partner institutions be pre-approved so that the individual student does not have to deal with it?
- European students usually study abroad after they have completed the equivalent of a Bachelor degree and yet they are classified as undergraduate when they study in the US. They should at least have access to Master level courses, because lower level courses are irrelevant for them.

Next Steps

In closing, we discussed what next steps we want to engage and in what kind of services we should invest in.

1. Create a "One Stop Shop on website" for:
 - Posting the ELLSNA brochure
 - Advertising summer programs
 - Showcase semester packages
 - Promote other non-semester programs (student tours for students, perhaps with help of IAAS?)

The web is where we can highlight what the US Partners can offer to ELLS and vice versa. Relevant calendar information should be posted 4-6 months prior to deadlines.

Ideally, there will be North American secretariat for the collaboration with ELLS (any volunteers to take over from Andrea Bohn?).

2. Engage in joint recruitment efforts
 - Website (see above)
 - Student-to-student meetings (bring the students from the respective universities together in one place)
 - Site visits
3. Continue getting to know each other better
 - Conduct joint tours to visit ALL campuses
 - Meet again in 2 years at a European location
 - In the meantime, promote (bilateral) faculty exchanges

ELLS has set up various models of collaboration internally, many of which are likely to be attractive North American students. Currently there seems to be more focus on graduate level collaboration among ELLS, whereas the North American network members have been putting

more emphasis on promoting study abroad among their undergraduate student population. We need to keep this in mind as we are working towards enhancing student mobility.

Future communication within ELLSNA may want to explore in more detail which ELLS programs and courses are suitable for what groups of North American undergraduate students. And the North American institutions may want to explore how they can better promote graduate level learning abroad.