

Dr. Cobane

The International Education Council would like to follow up on our brief discussion regarding a SAGL fee of \$150 per student applying for a study abroad program.

Program leaders have worked diligently within the new system, with significant frustration we might add, to develop programs and budgets that make our programs attractive to our students. An increase in the cost of these programs by 1% to 10% is a significant, not a modest, change. Program leaders have recruited for their programs, which have already increased in cost significantly under the new system, with the expectation that all costs to students have been included in the budgets that were provided by (or with the input of) the DELO staff. We urge you to reconsider the timing of the implementation of this fee until such time that program leaders are able to include it in their cost projections. At the time of the announcement faculty were diligently recruiting students. This fee could easily be viewed by students and/or parents as faculty being dishonest or incompetent.

We understand the need to provide additional funding to support internationalization. President Ransdell made major strides toward improving funding prior to the most recent fiscal crisis and budget cuts from the state. These funds were earmarked partially to provide supplemental pay for those who were teaching faculty led study abroad programs. Since SAGL no longer provides this support but the total cost of faculty stipends are budgeted into the programs, we urge that these funds be redirected toward supporting the cost of the newly acquired software. The internationalization efforts of the university go far beyond study abroad. Our goals have been to increase opportunities for all students, regardless of whether they actually travel abroad. Thus, additional funding might more appropriately come from a wider range of students.

The President's strategic plan calls for increasing the number of student studying abroad. Our students and their parents are sensitive to pricing of such programs. An additional charge of \$150 on top of the increased cost associated with compensation may just push programs out of the range of many students.

Does the university plan to follow a similar strategy with other key programs that are supportive of the mission and vision of WKU? Are we to implement a similar \$150 fee for all students participating in the honors program? Should we charge an additional \$150 for students who are part of the forensics program? Would it be

appropriate to charge each student using the Advising Center or the Career Services Center a usage fee? Should we also charge students who make use of Student Disability Services a fee to cover the cost of their services? If it is appropriate for study abroad students it is just as appropriate for those listed above.

We fully understand it is your prerogative to make such calls without our input and without providing us with a “heads” up prior to announcing the fee to the WKU community. We as a council have worked diligently with you and your staff throughout your tenure as CIO. A courtesy discussion with or announcement to this group prior to making this information publicly available on the SAGL web site would have gone a long way at reinforcing the positive relationship we have enjoyed.

During our discussion on January 23 you reported that you were uncertain when the fee would be imposed. We raised our serious concerns regarding the fee, especially implementing it for programs that were currently in the process of recruiting members for fees that had been advertised. While you gracefully offered a mea culpa to the IEC, such major changes in policy without consultation with or communication to the IEC is somewhat disheartening. You also reported to us that you were uncertain as to the date of implementation. The members of the IEC and program leaders received notification from you exactly one week later, at the same time that you announced the fee to student participants. We would like to continue that discussion.

Again, we are supportive of the internationalization efforts of WKU. We truly believe that additional funding for these efforts is warranted. However, we feel some other method of increasing the funding is more appropriate. Should a different approach not be possible, we urge the delay of implementation of this user fee.

IEC: Dan Myers, Chair (GFCB); Keyana Boka (SGA); Cecile Garmon (UC); Roger Murphy (PCAL); Tony Paquin (CEBS); Ron Ramsing (CHHS); Mike Stokes (OCSE)

Daniel A. Myers

Associate Professor/College International Officer

Department of Economics

Gordon Ford College of Business

Western Kentucky University <<http://www.wku.edu/>>

1906 College Heights Blvd #11059

Bowling Green, Ky 42101-1059

+1.270.745.3684 fax +1.270.745.3190