Faculty Report: Speech, Language, and Hearing Science Student Exchange Programs in the Scotland

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Proposal title: Speech, Language, and Hearing Science Student Exchange Programs in the Scotland
Country/ies visited: Scotland
Institution visited: University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland
Dates of travel: 2/20/10-2/24/10
Number of student participants: 0
Previous IP proposals submitted and grants awarded
(list titles, countries and dates): Establishment of Speech, Language, and Hearing Science Student Exchange Programs In the United Kingdom; Glasgow, Scotland; 11/25/08-12/1/08
Have all required reports been submitted? Yes
Other funding for this activity available/applied for:

Proposal Abstract (75 word maximum):
This proposal requests support for travel to two Scotland universities to review an existing student exchange program and develop a second program. The courses at SDSU and QMU are similar and the development of a program similar to what is in place at US should be straightforward. There is interest between the universities, but because of the difficulties reviewing and developing these programs via email/phone, visiting both universities is necessary.
Travel report:

I. Opening/overview of intentions/activity
The original proposal was to include any revisions needed to the existing student exchange program with the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland based on the experience of two SDSU undergraduates who completed their semester in the program. And, it was also supposed to include a visit with Dr. James Scobbie of Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Scotland. Toward the beginning of February, 2010, as I was making commitments to meet Dr. Scobbie, he informed me that the Audiology program was being suspended due to financial restrictions at his university. As a result, my visit to Edinburgh was cancelled, but I did have the opportunity to make arrangements to visit Kilmarnock, Scotland. Kilmarnock is just outside of Glasgow and it is a city where the SDSU students do some clinic visitations.

II. In preparation for the trip abroad
Dr. Anja Lowit, Senior Lecturer at the University of Strathclyde (a.lowit@strath.ac.uk) and I completed multiple phone calls in an effort to review semester that the SDSU students had just completed at Strathclyde. It was not surprising, given that this was the first semester of the exchange program, that there were more problems, predominantly minor, than we had predicted. Most were handled using email, or by simply having better means of communication between Strathclyde faculty and the University Registry (their equivalent of Registrar) established, making each party aware of all aspects of the exchange program. Others, with regard to clinic visitation, required me discussing components of the exchange directly with clinic supervisors. Additionally, two University of Strathclyde students had begun taking classes and seminars at SDSU, so we also discussed their early experiences with the SDSU system. A second activity that took place before I left, and in my opinion, more important, was a meeting with the two SDSU students who took part in this exchange program. The purpose of the meeting was simply to have them describe to me the strengths and weaknesses of the exchange program. Their feedback would be a very important tool in any modification of the exchange program needed in anticipation of the next SDSU students who would be going to Strathclyde. As mentioned earlier, most of their comments regarding weaknesses referred to being the first two students in the program, with Dr. Lowit and I not having the experience to foresee certain problems that can be associated with such a program. On a positive note, both students did report that even with the problems they had experienced, they truly felt that the exchange was a phenomenal opportunity and that the exchange program should continue.

III. Upon arrival/specific activity
February 20, 2010 – Arrived in Glasgow, Scotland. Dr. Lowit picked me up from the hotel and we proceeded to the university to discuss how the program was proceeding; specifically, what worked and what did not work in the past semester.
and how the Strathclyde students were adapting to SDSU. Most of the discussion was based on student input, but Dr. Lowit did organize a conference call with an individual at the University Registry. The main problem was that the SDSU students did not become fully enrolled in their courses until the middle of the term. After discussing what had happened in the past term, the Registry assured both Dr. Lowit and I that this problem has been corrected and that future SDSU students will not have this problem.

The afternoon was relatively free, so I sat in (after I was invited) on one of the second year classes. This second year group of students was the group who interacted with the SDSU students, so it was nice to get some feedback from a student perspective. The Strathclyde students enjoyed the SDSU students and they always included them in activities. This was something that the SDSU students had told me before I left for Scotland.

February 21, 2010 – There were two big issues that needed to be resolved: the changing 2nd-year curriculum at the University of Strathclyde; and can we generate an equivalent grading system between the universities. Dr. Carolyn Anderson (Senior Lecturer), Dr. Lowit and I met to discuss the impact of certain new courses being offered at Strathclyde. The change in the curriculum, however, did not have a big effect on the exchange. In fact, in my opinion, it strengthened the exchange curriculum. Next fall semester, the SDSU students will be taking a course more closely related to a course they would have taken at SDSU. In the past fall semester, the course that the SDSU students were enrolled was actually an independent study course. The grading situation was somewhat more involved because grading is so vastly different between the institutions. We decided that adding 30% to the SDSU students’ final grades and subtracting 30% would be a simple, but accurate, way of establishing appropriate grades for students enrolled at the exchange campus.

February 22, 2010 – I took the 45-minute train ride to Kilmarnock to meet with Louise, who is the woman in charge of overseeing the observation component of the exchange program. Her only concern was the lack of communication early in the semester with when the SDSU students would be starting their observations; so I reassured her that Dr. Lowit and I believed that we have eliminated that problem and that this observation component should be much more efficient in the upcoming fall term. Louise had very nice things to say about the SDSU students and was impressed with their contributions during their interactions with audiologists and their insightful questions during those times. I spent the rest of my time in Kilmarnock visiting some of the sites (e.g., Crosshouse Nursery and Grange Academy) where the SDSU students completed their observations.

February 23, 2010 – Dr. Lowit and I met to discuss to my visit to Kilmarnock. She is familiar with all of the sites and was very pleased to hear that the students were engaged in all the activities of the observation. We did discuss having the observation settings finalized before the students arrive for the term at Strathclyde. This was a serious problem because the students were spontaneously organizing their visits rather than having them already scheduled.
After our meeting completed, Dr. Lowit and I met with some Strathclyde who were interested in applying to the exchange for next year. There were 8 students who attended this meeting, and they are in the same situation as the SDSU students, such that only 2 students will be coming to SDSU. Some students had questions very specific to the academic aspects of the exchange program whereas a couple of students were more likely interested in the environmental aspects of the exchange program.

February 24, 2010 – Departed Glasgow, Scotland.

IV. Conclusion, recommendation, and next step?
After the first year of the student exchange program between SDSU and the University of Strathclyde it was clear to Dr. Lowit and I that designing an exchange program is substantially easier than implementing one. Although even with that being the case, the students who participated in this exchange were both extremely patient and extraordinarily helpful in assisting with suggestions as to how the program can be improved. By working with Dr. Lowit and integrating most of the students’ suggestions, I truly believe that we have strengthened this exchange program. I look forward to sending the next SDSU students to the University of Strathclyde in order to determine how these changes will affect their experience in Glasgow.

In my continuing role as undergraduate adviser for the SLHS, I will always discuss this exchange program during my advising meetings. Those include the freshman and transfer student orientations and my twice-a-year meetings with the upper division SLHS students. I will also post announcements of this program on the SLHS and CHHS web sites, so students considering the SLHS program at SDSU may be attracted to the possibility of studying abroad.

V. Additional Information
None.

All information should be sent to The Office of International Programs via e mail:

oip@mail.sdsu.edu