



September 3, 2004

Dear Colleagues:

It is my pleasure to have the opportunity, as Chair of the Academic Consortium Board (ACB) of CIEE, to write this year's letter to all institutional representatives on the Academic Consortium (AC). These annual letters aim to summarize the highlights of the past year, introduce new programming initiatives, and describe any significant changes in CIEE's organization or the organization of the Academic Consortium Board.

New Developments in the ACB

This year I would like to begin by describing a new initiative that we have developed as a result of our sense that perhaps the ACB itself could serve the Consortium better in some areas. I do believe that we are doing very well in the collaborative work with staff on program development and evaluation, and on the central aspects of our mandate – to provide feedback to CIEE about programs and about student experiences, and to make sure that campus concerns are heard and understood within the organization.

Communications Plan

But the Academic Consortium as a whole is, by definition, a loose affiliation, and we worry that perhaps you have concerns and also valuable insights that never reach CIEE for lack of appropriate means of communication. We know that you are all extremely busy people and that issues with programs often disappear within your offices and are never conveyed to staff at CIEE in Portland. The ACB would like to make it easier for CIEE to learn what is going on our campuses, and we have therefore developed a new function for ourselves – to improve communication with other Consortium members.

We have determined that each of us will serve as the representative for a number of AC institutions. Included in this communication is the name and contact information for your ACB representative and you are invited to contact this person directly with any matter related to CIEE. We expect, for our part, to contact you in various ways over the year. Each ACB member will carry out this function in his or her own way, but the goal is to increase the usefulness of the AC network for you and for CIEE. As I see it, this is an organization that creates and runs programs for the needs of our institutions, and the better communication between campuses and staff, the more we can refine the models and standards of these programs. We therefore hope to be more pro-active in mediating the relationship between institutions that may not have a strong sense of what CIEE is or how it really operates, and those of us who have a strong sense of involvement. This will also, we hope, produce a broader and stronger pool of potential members of the ACB.

ACB Election Process

We have talked a good deal this way about the way in which ACB elections are conducted. One of the things that worries us is that we have found the process by which more candidates are proposed than there are openings on the Committee has always resulted in those people who are best-known being elected. That may have served us quite well, but we feel that talent often goes unrecognized in those professionals who have not yet made a strong mark, and that we would like to see a broadening of the candidate pool beyond the people whom we all already know well as members of our national public community – a very limited one in this relatively small profession. We feel that the ACB can make better use of members when we have a well-calibrated collection of skills and experience among us, and that we can achieve this by

determining more specifically what we seek in new members. We have therefore determined that, in order to avoid this process by which the same people end up in leadership roles in several organizations, we will change the process to the following:

1. At the fall ACB meeting, which takes place at the CIEE conference, the ACB Nominating Committee (the executive committee – Chair, Vice Chair and Evaluation Chair, plus one elected AC member) considers who is rotating off the ACB, and draws up a profile of what is needed in the next class of members (two or three slots are usually open). These criteria are considered:
 - Diversity of institutional type and region
 - Mixture of faculty and administrative experience
 - Regional and linguistic expertise
 - Gender, ethnic, racial and national diversity
 - Familiarity and experience with CIEE programs
 - Need for several ACB members to be drawn from institutions that are major users of CIEE programs

The profile is then approved in discussion with the whole ACB.

2. A call is sent in November or early December to the AC for nominations both for the ACB and for the next year's nominating committee. ACB members contact the AC institutions they are working with, and request assistance in identifying good candidates who may not be known nationally. The Nominating Committee then works by telephone and email to develop a pool of proposed candidates to propose to the whole ACB
3. At the spring meeting of the ACB, in April, the ACB configures the final slate: one candidate per seat available. The ACB also selects two or three candidates for the non-ACB slot on the Nominating Committee.
4. In late April, early May the election begins, with an email to the official representative of each Consortium institution listing the candidates, with biographical notes, and providing instructions for on-line voting. Representatives are asked to approve the slate and to elect a candidate for the next Nominating Committee, and spaces for write-in candidates are provided both for Board membership and Nominating Committee membership.
5. In late May results are announced at the AC meeting at NAFSA.
6. Members-elect attend the fall meeting of the ACB at the CIEE conference in preparation for their service, though their term does not begin until January 1.

Term Limits

The initial term for ACB membership remains three years, and as before, a member is eligible for a maximum of two consecutive terms. In the past, nomination for a second term has been almost automatic. In future, this will not be the case, but will be carefully considered by the Nominating Committee. The only exception to the term limits, requested by the Staff for reasons of continuity, is that when a Chair is elected to the ACB near the end of a second (final) three-year term, this member may continue to serve as Chair for a total of three years even though his or her ACB term has expired, as a super-numerary ACB member, thus remaining on the ACB for up to a total of seven or eight years.

Program Development

CIEE makes small changes to programs all the time, with advice and consent from the ACB, in order to improve programs, to take advantage of special opportunities, or to solve problems. These changes are discussed and voted on twice a year. In addition to these minor improvements, the ACB has this year approved the following new CIEE Study Center programs:

Spain, Madrid

>Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, beginning in spring 2005

Spain, Seville

Universidad de Sevilla and Universidad Pablo de Olavide

>International Business and Language Program, beginning in spring 2005

>Teaching Development Program, beginning in spring 2005

Details of those programs beginning in spring 2005 are available in the CIEE regional catalogues, which are now available.

The ACB also approved a model for the development of CIEE Service Learning Programs, an exciting new development in which the best of current theory on service learning will be applied in the exceptional sites available through existing CIEE Centers. The first of these programs is to be developed in Cape Town, South Africa.

The ACB has been most concerned, as I'm sure we all have, at the draconian interpretation of laws governing educational programs in Cuba operationalized by this Administration. This will sadly prevent the CIEE program planned in conjunction with the University of Rochester from opening in fall 2005, as planned.

Program Evaluation

The ACB approved a number evaluation reports at the November 2003 and April 2004 meetings. You are invited to read full evaluation reports on the CIEE website at www.ciee.org.

The CIEE Study Center programs that we evaluated during the academic year 2003-04 include:

Argentina, Buenos Aires

Jordan, Amman

Senegal, Dakar

Poland, Warsaw

South Africa, Cape Town

Spain, Seville: Business & Society and Language & Society

Spain, Seville: Summer Programs

Upcoming evaluations during the academic year 2004-05 include:

Belgium, Brussels

China, Hong Kong

Ireland, Dublin

Italy, Ferrara

Mexico, Guanajuato

Spain, Barcelona

Taiwan, Taipei

Turkey, Ankara

Program Evaluation Process

As you know, we now work on a clearly delineated evaluation schedule, we have in use a template which is used as a model by evaluation teams nationwide, and we have developed a process which we feel is very effective. Staff has a mandate to point out to the evaluation team problematic areas, rather than to conceal them as so often happens in evaluation processes. Resident Directors are open, welcoming, and prepared to help evaluators in all aspects of their inquiry. Faculty members with extraordinary expertise participate as team members. We should note that we owe thanks for much of the recent development of this process to Margery Ganz, who as Evaluation Chair has run a very tight ship over the past couple of years.

Because we have now reached a point where we feel that good control is exercised in this proves, the ACB has agreed to conduct "mini" program evaluations in the cases where a program is new and has yet to enroll sufficient numbers of students, for programs where significant issues arose from a full evaluation and the ACB wants to take another look fairly soon after the evaluation, and for programs that may not require a full evaluation as regularly as others. In such cases it does not always serve our interests well to have a full evaluation, and we feel that we can now modify the process to make it more effective.

The mini program evaluation will be handled by an ACB member or, depending on circumstance, by staff and administrators from Academic Consortium institutions. The evaluation will be conducted by a single person, or sometimes by a team of two people, and will use a modified template focusing on issues specific to the program,

In addition, the ACB has agreed to an upper limit of ten years between evaluations in cases where everything runs exceptionally smoothly, but with a mini program evaluation will be conducted within this period.

Program Monitoring

The ACB continues to monitor all programs on a yearly basis. This process involves working through all the written and tabulated materials available, and is designed to be sure that no drift or crisis impedes the continued smooth operation of any program. The monitoring process will be complete by October 1 each year. A statement of the monitoring process along with a list of which ACB members monitored which programs will be available on the CIEE website. ACB representatives will be happy to respond to their constituents if there are any questions about this process or about specific program issues.

I hope that your summer was excellent, and that the coming year will bring more peaceful times for America and for those countries that so warmly host our young people as they seek to develop their understanding of this globalized world.

Sincerely,

Jane Edwards
Director of International Programs, Harvard University
Chair, CIEE Academic Consortium Board

Enclosure