

## Evaluation Executive Summary

### **CIEE Dublin Study Center: Arts and Sciences Program; Engineering, Technology and Society Program; Summer Irish Studies Program**

**October 21-25, 2013**

*I. CIEE Center evaluations are conducted roughly every 10 years. Evaluation Teams are made up of one or two members of the Academic Consortium Board joined by faculty from Consortium members with expertise in the areas of the program. The Team reviews all aspects of the program[s] and focuses in particular on any areas of concern reflected in the annual monitoring reports and/or staff reports.*

**II. Evaluation Team Members:** Lisa Donatelli, Deputy Director/Director of Global Strategies, Georgetown University, Team Leader and Dr. Shaun Wiley, Associate Professor of Psychology, The College of New Jersey.

**III. Colleagues with whom the Evaluation Team met:** CIEE Resident Staff: Don Niall (Resident Director) and Martin Humphreys (Resident Coordinator), DCU faculty Dr. Ciaran Dunne (School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies), Mr. Des McLaughlin (DCU Business School), Sylvia Schroeder (Director DCU International Office), St. Patrick's College Registrar team, Fall 2013 students (select group).

**IV. Last evaluation Conducted on:** 2005 (interim review). Please note that at the time of the 2005 interim review, CIEE was partnering with Dublin Business School.

**V. Program Background/History:** The Dublin Study Center first opened in 2002. The Center currently runs a variety of programs in Dublin including semester programs, summer programs and a growing number of customized options. The evaluation team was charged with reviewing the two semester programs: 1) Arts and Sciences, (A&S) which includes a service learning track and 2) the recently added Engineering, Technology and Society (ETS) program. The Seminar on Living and Learning is offered on the semester programs. The semester programs offer a hybrid model to students requiring a core CIEE course and some combination of university courses and CIEE courses to complete the course load. Beginning in Fall 2013, students are also able to enroll at St. Patrick's College (a DCU affiliate).

In addition, the team evaluated the three/six week summer Irish Studies program. The summer Irish Studies program is a freestanding three or six week program. CIEE participants have the opportunity to explore Irish culture and history through one course for three weeks, or two courses for 6 weeks. In this summer model, the students' primary interaction with Irish culture and Irish citizens is with program faculty and the program excursions.

**VI. Focus of Evaluation:**

Prior to the program evaluation, CIEE Staff noted several areas upon which they wished the evaluation team to focus: adjustment of students to the different academic system, integration of students into the local culture, and the increasing challenges of delivering the service and internship components. These areas were considered closely alongside the other standard areas of review.

**VII. Key Discussions/Findings:**

The Dublin Study Center has talented individuals on staff who run the Center well and there are no major concerns with the program or its administration. The Resident Director [Don Niall] and Resident Coordinator [Martin Humphreys] juggle many academic and administrative roles effortlessly, and there is a great deal of energy and caring put into all of the programs they deliver. This CIEE team has created a safe environment in which students may raise both academic and personal issues. At the same time, the evaluation team was pleased to see the level of accountability and respect demanded of the students both inside and outside the classroom.

Considerable time was afforded to discussions around student adjustment to the Irish academic system. In many cases, the students were unaware that Irish students follow a set, progressive curriculum that focuses narrowly on one or two disciplines. This has led to challenges in selecting appropriate courses since there are almost no stated pre-requisites on the DCU website for courses, but the necessary completion of previous coursework is understood by degree candidates. Given this, CIEE staff has the considerable task of managing registration and student expectations at the beginning of each semester. Happily, all of the students with whom we spoke noted that Martin and Don insured that the course registration process was completed successfully for everyone.

CIEE partners with two host institutions – Dublin City University and St. Patrick’s College. Both DCU and St. Patrick’s College are clearly deeply invested in the partnership with CIEE and strive to insure that the program and CIEE students have full access to the services and courses. Despite this, both of these institutions have limited course offerings in the humanities. Should the course offerings in the humanities need to grow, adding host university partners in Dublin that offer a broader range of humanities courses may be needed in the future.

The summer program was not in session during this visit, but student evaluations, stakeholder feedback and CIEE Dublin Study Center staff feedback noted challenges around student integration and the stress of a tight turnaround from spring to summer as two areas for discussion. Several ideas were discussed to improve student integration that are noted in the evaluation report. By all accounts, the summer program delivers an exceptional learning experience that includes thoughtful cultural and experiential components despite these challenges. Although not raised by the CIEE team, the evaluation team recognized the potential for customized program requests to create an environment of competing interests and strained resources during the summer.

Additional challenges and opportunities that emerged during the evaluation included the impact of restrictions in hiring local faculty on program development, and the pros and cons of the Center’s location in meeting program goals.

After exploring both the depth and breadth of opportunities at this Study Center, there is some evidence that this distinctive Center is being underutilized. Dublin, and more broadly Ireland, exemplifies a confluence of contemporary issues, and could be better recognized as a rich learning environment in which topics such as diversity, identity, secularism, entrepreneurship and scientific innovation could be explored. The CIEE courses do an excellent job of connecting the dots between these concepts for students once they arrive, but the program could benefit from a more thoughtful marketing of the program’s learning goals and strengths. However, were the program to grow as a result, the current staff

size could not feasibly continue to deliver the same level of exceptional personal and academic advising and reflective feedback to the students.

**VIII. Priority Recommendations:** *This section would include the 3-5 priority recommendations selected by CIEE and the Evaluation Team as the top actionable items*

Recommendation 1: Reimagine or reaffirm the identity and nomenclature of the Center and its programs to insure that the distinctive opportunities the program offers are maximized. Specifically:

- CIEE should consider whether the name of the Arts and Science program accurately reflects the courses that are offered. “Arts”, for example, does not accurately reflect the diversity of course offerings in Education and Business. For many, “Sciences” implies that laboratory courses will be readily available. During the fall semester, students may only enroll in courses that are continuously assessed or examined prior to departure. There are very few lab courses available to students in the fall as the science departments primarily grade through examination not continuous assessment.
- CIEE should consider the larger identity of the program, in particular how central the internship and service options are to the program.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen the materials, resources and training around the semester academic offerings at the Center, insuring that the students and home school advisors understand the Irish academic system and are aware of the course offerings. Specifically:

- Consider developing the Course Selection form to include information about the Irish university system and how to select courses. Be sure to note that while DCU does not state any prerequisites for courses, it assumes that several core courses have been completed in the previous year before progressing to the next year.
- Consider conducting training for high sending institutions on how the academic system in Ireland works, with particular emphasis on the cohort system, unstated pre-requisites, and available courses in the fall semester.
- Consider working with DCU to articulate the implied prerequisites for a core set of courses in which the CIEE students typically enroll.
- Given that the majority of science courses include a lab and are assessed through examination, CIEE should consider promoting the Science and Engineering tracks as a full year or spring only option. (It is important to note that lab courses also have restrictions on enrollment). This shift will better set student expectations for access to courses, and it will allow the Study Center team to confidently promote the list of courses that are available.
- CIEE should explore working with business and engineering faculty to identify appropriate course equivalencies for courses which may equate to major requirements or electives for students.

Recommendation #3: Consider small changes to the summer program which would allow for increased student engagement and appropriate distribution of resources. Specifically:

- Increase opportunities for the summer students to engage in activities with local university students. This has been very difficult given that the DCU spring semester and the first week of the summer program overlap, but creative solutions could be successful. For example, consider engaging Irish

students who may have just returned from study abroad/exchange in CIEE summer program activities.

- Consider options (albeit limited) to engage another faculty member to support either the summer or customized programs so that the CIEE staff may continue to deliver all programs well. The summer program requires a tremendous amount of staff time and attention and begins only three days after the spring semester lectures end. In addition, increasing requests for customized programs will require additional time and effort on the part of the program staff.

Recommendation #4: As plans for the future of the Center are developed, evaluate existing space and future program growth carefully. Specifically:

- Consider finding more appropriate space that better facilitates private student advising sessions and CIEE library facilities.
- Consider the pros and cons of how a free-standing study center, or “hub”, may best highlight the program strengths and facilitate the learning goals of the program.

## **IX. Action Plan/Program Update:**

### **CIEE Action Plan**

*In response to the Academic Consortium Board (ACB) Evaluation of the CIEE Study Center at Dublin City University, Dublin: Arts and Sciences Program; Engineering, Technology and Society Program; Summer Irish Studies Program*

March 2014

#### **Overview**

CIEE staff are pleased to provide this Action Plan in response to the Academic Consortium Board (ACB) report on the CIEE Study Center programs at Dublin City University. The report of the site visit was received by members of the ACB at the Fall 2013 meeting. After review, the ACB accepted the report, and presented it to the Academic Consortium.

The Action Plan outlines the key recommendations from the Evaluation and the specific steps CIEE plans to follow to address the recommendation. While the Action Plan is authored by CIEE, staff solicited input from the ACB team leader from the evaluation, Lisa Donatelli, Deputy Director and Director of Global Strategies, Office of International Programs, Georgetown University, and, where appropriate, from the other member of the evaluation team, Dr. Shaun Wiley, Professor of Psychology at the College of New Jersey. The Action Plan should be read in light of the ACB Evaluation and with reference to the detailed description of the program available from CIEE.

The “ACB Plan for Program Evaluation”, the Evaluation report, the Action Plan, and program details are available at [www.ciee.org](http://www.ciee.org).

#### **Actions**

##### **ACB Recommendation**

Reimagine or reaffirm the identity and nomenclature of the CIEE Dublin Study Center and its programs to insure that the distinctive opportunities the program offers are maximized. Specifically:

- CIEE should consider whether the name of the Arts and Science program accurately reflects the courses that are offered. “Arts”, for example, does not accurately reflect the diversity of course offerings in Education and Business. For many, “Sciences” implies that laboratory courses will be readily available. During the fall semester, students may only enroll in courses that are continuously assessed or examined prior to departure. There are very few lab

courses available to students in the fall as the science departments primarily grade through examination not continuous assessment.

- CIEE should consider the larger identity of the program, in particular how central the internship and service options are to the program.

### **Action**

CIEE is in the process of reviewing the naming conventions used for its semester and summer programs. This process will likely result in a change to the name of this program in the next few years. As such, a change to the name of this program must be done with full consideration of the overall CIEE strategic program name review. CIEE will review possible changes to the way in which this program is described in its print and website materials, as staff agree that the current name may not be reflecting the academic offerings as effectively as possible.

CIEE staff will review the current internship and service-learning opportunities available to CIEE students and will put together a plan to address this issue more effectively in the near future.

### **ACB Recommendation**

Strengthen the materials, resources and training around the semester academic offerings at the Center, insuring that the students and home school advisors understand the Irish academic system and are aware of the course offerings. Specifically:

- Consider developing the Course Selection form to include information about the Irish university system and how to select courses. Be sure to note that while DCU does not state any prerequisites for courses, it assumes that several core courses have been completed in the previous year before progressing to the next year.
- Consider conducting training for high sending institutions on how the academic system in Ireland works, with particular emphasis on the cohort system, unstated pre-requisites, and available courses in the fall semester.
- Consider working with DCU to articulate the implied prerequisites for a core set of courses in which the CIEE students typically enroll.
- Given that the majority of science courses include a lab and are assessed through examination, CIEE should consider promoting the Science and Engineering tracks as a full year or spring only option. (It is important to note that lab courses also have restrictions on enrollment). This shift will better set student expectations for access to courses, and it will allow the Study Center team to confidently promote the list of courses that are available.
- CIEE should explore working with business and engineering faculty to identify appropriate course equivalencies for courses which may equate to major requirements or electives for students.

### **Action**

Working with both the enrollment and marketing teams, CIEE will work to improve pre-departure materials to make them more informative regarding the Irish university system. In addition, a CIEE team that includes residents staff as well as members of the Institutional Relations and Marketing Departments will explore creating a piece for study abroad offices that explains in detail how best to advise on programs in Ireland. To address these and other potential communication insufficiencies, CIEE will continue to encourage sending schools to communicate closely with Portland enrollment staff and Dublin resident staff.

In partnership with DCU, CIEE resident staff will explore creating a list of implied pre-requisites to help guide students to courses where they have a better chance of success. This process is already in place for academic areas such as science and business. CIEE considered the recommendation to offer spring or academic year programs only, but still believes that it is feasible to offer a fall program option. In order to help support fall students, CIEE staff will explore ways in which to better support fall students so that they succeed in the program, including providing more information about pre-requisites.

Regarding the suggestion to work with business and engineering faculty to identify appropriate course equivalencies for courses which may equate to major requirements or electives for students, this is something CIEE staff is in fact already doing in the ETS program.

### ***ACB Recommendation***

Consider small changes to the summer program which would allow for increased student engagement and appropriate distribution of resources. Specifically:

- Increase opportunities for the summer students to engage in activities with local university students. This has been very difficult given that the DCU spring semester and the first week of the summer program overlap, but creative solutions could be successful. For example, consider engaging Irish students who may have just returned from study abroad/exchange in CIEE summer program activities.
- Consider options (albeit limited) to engage another faculty member to support either the summer or customized programs so that the CIEE staff may continue to deliver all programs well. The summer program requires a tremendous amount of staff time and attention and begins only three days after the spring semester lectures end. In addition, increasing requests for customized programs will require additional time and effort on the part of the program staff.

### ***Action***

CIEE has hired another instructor for summer 2015, and will likely recruit additional local teachers beginning this year in order to free up resident staff time during the summer session. As a result of freeing up staff capacity, CIEE will be able to work on developing and delivering additional program enhancements including more in-depth local integration activities and partnerships.

### ***ACB Recommendation***

As plans for the future of the Center are developed, evaluate existing space and future program growth carefully. Specifically:

- Consider finding more appropriate space that better facilitates private student advising sessions and CIEE library facilities.
- Consider the pros and cons of how a free-standing study center, or “hub”, may best highlight the program strengths and facilitate the learning goals of the program.

### ***Action***

CIEE staff have been exploring setting up a new Study Center outside of DCU, but these discussions were put on hold in light of other higher priorities to consider currently. In any case, CIEE agrees that the current space is sub-optimal and that long term a more appropriate facility needs to be identified.

Submitted by:

Caroline Maas, CIEE Regional Director of Operations, Northern Europe

Donald Niall, Resident Director, CIEE Dublin Study Center

Date: March 28, 2014