

## Academic Consortium Board

### Site Evaluation Executive Summary

#### Evaluation of the CIEE Programs at Seville, Spain

Fall 2018

#### Date of last [program] evaluations:

Advanced Liberal Arts, 2010

Business + Society, 2004

International Business + Culture, 2009

Liberal Arts, 2010

*CIEE Center evaluations are conducted every 10 years and evaluation teams are selected to review the programs and study centers for best practices in study abroad.*

#### Evaluation Team members:

Elizabeth Wildenberg de Hernández, Associate Director, International Programs, University of Iowa, ACB member and team leader

Adam Henry, Ed.D., Director of Study Abroad, Arizona State University, ACB member

Cindy White, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Undergraduate Curriculum and Programs, College of Media, Communication and Information, University of Colorado, Boulder

Christopher C. Oechler, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Spanish, Gettysburg College

- I. **Program Background/History:** *General background on the program, statistics, history, background on host institution, and summary of academic and co-curricular program dimensions.*

CIEE Seville is a large study center which offers several programs aimed at students in many different majors. CIEE has been operating in Seville since 1971 and is currently one of CIEE's largest centers in terms of student participation numbers and staff numbers.

All programs (except summer and January) have course options for students at local host institutions. The CIEE Seville program options for student enrollment are:

**Liberal Arts (LA)** is geared for students with 4-5 semesters of college-level Spanish designed to achieve language skill improvement and learn about Spanish history, politics, literature, and culture – with all courses taught in Spanish. LA students begin the semester in an intensive language course (2 weeks long) then take up to one language courses from CIEE and three or four content courses taught by CIEE, Cursos Concertados (formerly called cursos para extranjeros) at the University of Seville (US), and up to two direct enrollment courses at US, University of Pablo de Olavide (UPO), or EUSA.

**Advanced Liberal Arts (ALA)** offers independent students with advanced Spanish language skills the opportunity to take direct-enrollment US or UPO classes in a wide range of topics with Spanish students in combination with a CIEE language course and up to one

CIEE content course taught in Spanish. Students in this program begin the semester with an intensive language or content course (e.g., Social History of Contemporary Spain).

**Communications, New Media + Journalism--Spanish (CNMJ-S)** focuses on journalism and media studies with an emphasis on production for students with 4-5 semesters of college-level Spanish. Students take CIEE communications courses in addition to a CIEE language course (taught intensively at the beginning of the semester) and US Cursos Concertados in addition to direct enrollment options for students with a very high language level.

[These three programs were observed and evaluated by Liz Wildenberg de Hernández and Chris Oechler.]

**Business + Society (BS)** combines the study of business, culture, and Spanish language for students with an advanced level of Spanish. BS students begin the semester in an intensive (2 week) language course (Spanish for Students of Business & Economics). Continuing classes are selected from offerings taught at CIEE, US and UPO. All courses are taught in Spanish.

**International Business + Culture (IBC)** offers coursework in many disciplines both for business and students studying the humanities, social sciences, and sciences, all taught in English at UPO. Students also take a CIEE (intensive) and UPO language course.

**Communications, New Media + Journalism--English (CNMJ-E)** is the newest program and the only one that does not require any language study (previous or on-site) or teach an intensive course. Students take communications and media-focused courses taught by CIEE or EUSA (a private communications-focused institution, associated with US).

[These three programs were observed and evaluated by Cindy White and Adam Henry.]

The summer and January program options were not observed or evaluated during the site visit but those programs include Summer Language & Culture, Global Internship, and January programs.

- II. **Key Discussions/Findings:** *This section would not only include a brief summary of the items explored from the terms of reference, but it would also include noteworthy conversations and clarifications of program dimensions that might be particularly useful to member schools and home school advisors.*

Students seem to be generally pleased with their programs and life in Seville. The vast majority of students on these programs (consistently more than 90%) live with homestay families (residence halls are another option), even students who have low levels of Spanish language or who can take all of their coursework in English. The center and staff have been very innovative in their approach to encourage students to engage with the local community via special interest groups and student projects/internships. Another unique aspect of many of the programs in Seville is the intensive language session whereby students take a Spanish language course over the first two weeks of the program before their other classes begin. Students seem to enjoy the time to focus on language study and the staff takes advantage of those courses to be able to continue orientation activities during those two weeks.

A trend among Spanish departments in U.S. higher education is to do more focused classes for heritage speakers of Spanish. Given the large numbers of participants in Seville and the diversity of those students, it seems that a separate section of the intensive language course could be devoted to a Spanish for Heritage Speakers course. This course would have the added bonus of signaling to prospective Latinx participants that they are especially welcome in Seville.

We observed a lack of program and course learning objectives that seems out of line with current practices in US higher education. It was surprising to see that many of the CIEE courses do not have clearly outlined course objectives and the individual programs in Seville do not have articulated program objectives. We did not observe any systematic assessment of learning objectives.

Classically the Seville center has been modeled around programs that encourage students to operate exclusively in Spanish. Currently there are two programs that do not have an emphasis in language learning (IBC and CNMJ-E), which mirror a decline in language learning on US campuses. It is clear that there is a bit of a struggle to make those students feel that they are a part of the greater CIEE Seville community while, at the same time, preserving a Spanish-only atmosphere for students on other programs. These students spend most (IBC) or all (CNMJ-E) of their class time at their host universities. It is challenging to engage these students in program activities and for them to have a sense of belonging to the CIEE Seville group. CIEE has tried out a few ways to tackle this tricky issue but as of yet has not seemed to quite figure it out.

It is clear that the Seville center is made up of highly professional, competent, engaging, and creative staff. Everyone we interacted with was an expert in their area and shared willingly about their successes and challenges. We were highly impressed with the staff, most of whom have been working with CIEE for more than 10 years (and some, much more than that).

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

*RECOMMENDATION 2: CIEE should consider offering a Spanish language course for Heritage Speakers of Spanish that focuses on the strengths and challenges that these students experience when using the language in an academic setting. This course could be offered for students in all Spanish-language programs (ALA, LA, BS, CNMJ-S).*

*RECOMMENDATION 5: We strongly suggest that the programs continue with the intensive language sessions for all programs except CNMJ-E.*

*RECOMMENDATION 6: Following the recommendation that the intensive language session be continued for students in the IBC program, we suggest that students not be required to take the language course at UPO during the semester (but still have the option to take it if they desire). For many students, the credits from this course do not transfer as anything other than elective credits, and students have expressed a preference in favor of the intensive language session run by CIEE faculty. This recommendation relates to a proposal before the ACB in November 2019.*

*RECOMMENDATION 7: Guiding objectives are needed for courses and programs and should be clearly articulated in written form. In speaking with the staff and faculty of the programs in Spanish, one such objective became clear: immersion, both linguistically and culturally. We are less clear on the objectives of the IBC and CNMJ-E programs. Additionally, all syllabi should clearly state the course objectives, in keeping with standard accreditation practices at United States and Spanish institutions.*

*RECOMMENDATION 8: Building on the previous recommendation, we also suggest that CIEE assess these objectives at the course and program levels; for example, in the Intercultural Communication and Leadership course students take the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) to gauge their growth. This or a similar method could be used to assess students' cultural competency at the beginning and end of the semester. A language post-test could also be administered to see how well students in the Spanish-language programs have improved.*

*RECOMMENDATION 9: Integration of experience for students in the IBC and CNMJ-E programs. Currently, IBC students attend all courses at UPO except for the two-week intensive session at the beginning of the term (at CIEE). Previously, CNMJ-E students attended all classes at EUSA (this was modified to allow CNMJ-E students to take courses at the CIEE center). Given that these are two rapidly growing programs that are linguistically at odds with the immersion philosophy espoused by faculty and staff in the Spanish language programs, we recommend that CIEE create an integrative experience for these students that is separate from the other programs and that is centered around their experience at the host institution. From our conversations with IBC students, many feel isolated with no "homebase" at UPO. A common shared space for students at these two locations, or one "CIEE Seville in English" center, would be ideal to create that sense of CIEE/UPO or CIEE/EUSA community. This would also help separate the two linguistically diverse populations that also have different learning goals for their time abroad.*

*RECOMMENDATION 11: Implement a new marketing strategy to encourage the consideration by students for internships. Create the atmosphere for this to become a more prominent and expected activity among students.*

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

*RECOMMENDATION 2: CIEE should consider offering a Spanish language course for Heritage Speakers of Spanish that focuses on the strengths and challenges that these students experience when using the language in an academic setting. This course could be offered for students in all Spanish-language programs (ALA, LA, BS, CNMJ-S).*

**ACTION 1:** The possibility of creating a Spanish language course for heritage speakers has been thoroughly considered, at least over the past five years, by the Seville academic team. Taking into account the suggestion formulated by the ACB, the Director of Linguistic Services (under the supervision of the Academic Directors) will initiate the process of creating a language course specifically designed for heritage speakers. Upon review and approval of the Academic Affairs Department in Portland, this course will be added to the existing offering for the Intensive Cycle for the LA, ALA, BS, and CNMJ-S programs.

*RECOMMENDATION 5: We strongly suggest that the programs continue with the intensive language sessions for all programs except CNMJ-E.*

ACTION 2: Based on this feedback, an updated proposal for the International Business and Culture Program has already been submitted to the ACB for their approval during the upcoming March 2019 meeting.

ACTION 3: In the case of the CNMJ-E program, the lack of an intensive language session is balanced with an extended a more intense orientation period, which includes two sessions of 'survival Spanish' and a number of activities intended to motivate students to enroll in the Spanish language course more appropriate for their level at host institution EUSA. This strategy has proven to be effective both in Fall 2018 and in the just started semester of Spring 2019.

*RECOMMENDATION 6: Following the recommendation that the intensive language session be continued for students in the IBC program, we suggest that students not be required to take the language course at UPO during the semester (but still have the option to take it if they desire). For many students, the credits from this course do not transfer as anything other than elective credits, and students have expressed a preference in favor of the intensive language session run by CIEE faculty. This recommendation relates to a proposal before the ACB in November 2019.*

ACTION 4: As stated in the action plan for recommendation 5, an updated proposal has already been sent to be re-evaluated during the next ACB meeting. This proposal recommends that the intensive language session be continued for students in the IBC program, and maintains the possibility that students may decide to take additional language courses at UPO during the semester if they desire. Along with this action, CIEE Seville academic team will continue overlooking the process of updating and improving the different languages courses currently undertaken by UPO. Rather than dissuade our students from enrolling in them, we are hoping to guarantee that all students interested can continue with their Spanish language learning in courses that match the quality of those offered by CIEE during the program's intensive language session.

*RECOMMENDATION 7: Guiding objectives are needed for courses and programs and should be clearly articulated in written form. In speaking with the staff and faculty of the programs in Spanish, one such objective became clear: immersion, both linguistically and culturally. We are less clear on the objectives of the IBC and CNMJ-E programs. Additionally, all syllabi should clearly state the course objectives, in keeping with standard accreditation practices at United States and Spanish institutions.*

ACTION 5: In alignment with this recommendation, CIEE Seville is fully involved at present in a process of course syllabi updating, which is being monitored by CIEE's School of Record, Tulane University of Louisiana. The definition of learning objectives is being carefully reviewed for each CIEE course. Additionally, this will be the ground for the subsequent definition, in the coming months, of learning objectives for each CIEE semester program and for CIEE Seville as whole. Undoubtedly, linguistic and cultural immersion, together with our continuous commitment to procure better orientated and reciprocated exchanges between the students and their host community will be an essential part of such definition of objectives.

*RECOMMENDATION 8: Building on the previous recommendation, we also suggest that CIEE assess these objectives at the course and program levels; for example, in the Intercultural Communication and Leadership course students take the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) to gauge their growth. This or a similar method could be used to assess students' cultural competency at the beginning and end of the semester. A language post-test could also be administered to see how well students in the Spanish-language programs have improved.*

#### ACTION 6:

Program-specific learning goals and assessment: onsite staff will redefine the program learning objectives for each Seville program, by taking, as an example, some solid learning objectives of programs recently approved by the ACB (well-defined and measurable). We will also make sure that Seville is offering courses, co- and extra-curricular activities and opportunities that align with each programs' goals. Seville staff is already engaged in a project with the CIEE Director of Intercultural Learning by which we are administering the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to a small sample of students (from all programs) who do not take the Intercultural Communication and Leadership course.

Further consideration will be given to the re-implementation of an end of semester Online Placement Test (OLPT) for all students in Seville to additionally assess the linguistics skills gained throughout the semester. We agree this data could help us define our linguistic learning objectives and review our teaching strategies, but also have concerns that it may not be effective in the way the reviewers and CIEE Seville hope it would due to the fact that students are overloaded with academic responsibilities and course, program, housing, and other types of evaluations towards the end of their semester, as well as the emotional challenges of departure and re-entry. We are concerned students will not be motivated to complete a language exit exam not connected to their courses. We will re-visit this test and determine if it is feasible to administer it, or if there is a more appropriate time to administer it.

ACTION 7: In the case of assessing personal intercultural growth, CIEE is currently focused on supporting students in developing their own reflective process along the entire length of the semester, at two levels: (1) through the review of students' objectives, which are followed up on by program managers and members of the academic team in the course of their individual mid-semester meetings with the students, and (2) through the implementation of reflective activities that, starting during the onsite orientation, are carried out by program managers, members of the academic team and/or faculty in a coordinated effort to increase students' intercultural awareness and growth. These activities are conducted in group and vary from program to program, being often linked to curricular and extra-curricular activities such as overnight trips of interest groups.

*RECOMMENDATION 9: Integration of experience for students in the IBC and CNMJ-E programs. Currently, IBC students attend all courses at UPO except for the two-week intensive session at the beginning of the term (at CIEE). Previously, CNMJ-E students attended all classes at EUSA (this was modified to allow CNMJ-E students to take courses at the CIEE center). Given that these are two rapidly growing programs that are linguistically at odds with the immersion philosophy espoused by faculty and staff in the Spanish language programs, we recommend that CIEE create an integrative experience for these students that is separate from the other programs and that is centered around their experience at the host institution. From our conversations with IBC students, many feel*

*isolated with no “homebase” at UPO. A common shared space for students at these two locations, or one “CIEE Seville in English” center, would be ideal to create that sense of CIEE/UPO or CIEE/EUSA community. This would also help separate the two linguistically diverse populations that also have different learning goals for their time abroad.*

ACTION 8: The program managers of both the IBC and the CNMJ-E program spend a *minimum* of two days a week at their programs’ locations, in set locations each day, at the *Centro Universitario Internacional* at Universidad Pablo de Olavide and EUSA School of Communications, respectively. Their presence there is intended to provide regular support in closer proximity to the students and to reassure them of CIEE’s close following of their semester at their host institutions. It is however important that they also benefit from merging with the atmosphere of the host institution, where they have great immersion opportunities given the presence of so many local and international students. CIEE closely works with both host institutions so that students can better integrate in their communities and take advantage of the many activities intended to foster contact between locals and visiting students. Because of this, we currently prefer to continue to meet students regularly at their host institutions, supporting them in immersion, rather than create a separate center. We will work to create more awareness as to when program managers are at the institution as well as explain more clearly to the students why this strategy of immersion support is beneficial to them.

*RECOMMENDATION 11: Implement a new marketing strategy to encourage the consideration by students for internships. Create the atmosphere for this to become a more prominent and expected activity among students.*

ACTION 9: The Site Director, Academic Directors and Internship Coordinator at CIEE Seville have established a plan, following a thorough discussion, to promote for-credit professional internships beyond the limits of the pre-departure process. Students are receiving information during onsite orientation and are being targeted via emails. Promotional videos based on previous participants’ experiences are also being used. However, such a plan also includes the setting of realistic expectations amongst students, so that none commit under wrong assumptions or irresponsibly. Furthermore, CIEE Seville is committed to only offering substantial placements, and is therefore limiting its number to that of the positions which are available in those companies that experience tells us we can totally trust.