

Academic Consortium Board

Site Evaluation Executive Summary

Evaluation of the CIEE Programs at Barcelona, Spain Spring 2018

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:

- Mary McMahon, Regional Director Education Abroad Program, University of California, ACB member and team leader
- Elizabeth Wildenberg de Hernández, Associate Director, International Programs, The University of Iowa, ACB member
- Andrew Sobiesuo, Professor of Hispanic Studies and Associate Provost for International Education, College of Charleston, ACB Member
- Jennifer Platania, Associate Dean of the Love School of Business and Associate Professor of Economics, Elon University

I. Program Background/History:

The CIEE Barcelona Study Center is large, complicated and very successful, with spring 2018 being its largest student enrollment to date, operations required for six diverse academic programs, and ongoing work with five partner Spanish institutions. The CIEE Barcelona program options for student enrollment are:

Business & Culture (BC) combines the study of business, culture, and Spanish language undertaken in the active international city of Barcelona. Courses are selected from class offerings taught at CIEE, the Escola Superior de Comerç Internacional (ESCI) of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) , and the Universitat de Vic – Central University of Catalonia (UVic).

Economics & Culture (EC) offers coursework in economics, Spanish language and Spanish cultural studies, with courses taught at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) and CIEE.

Global Architecture & Design (GAD) is a CIEE program that is run in association with the Institute of Advanced Architecture of Catalonia (IaaC) with courses taught by IaaC faculty for CIEE students.

Language & Culture (LC) is for lower-level language students whereby students take intensive (6 s.h.) of language at the beginning or intermediate level at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), a Hispanic and European Studies Program (HESP) course at UPF taught in English combined with 2 CIEE-taught area studies courses in English.

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 take one language and two content courses from CIEE and at least two content courses at UPF chosen from HESP --which offers courses for international students-- or UPF regular courses with Spaniards.

Advanced Liberal Arts (ALA) offers independent students with advanced Spanish language skills the opportunity to take Universitat de Barcelona (UB) classes in a wide range of topics with Spanish students in combination with CIEE courses with CIEE students. All students take an advanced Spanish language courses to prepare them for their work at UB. This program has some unique offerings for heritage speakers of Spanish.

The six decidedly individualized programs result in a high degree of complexity and create a need for synchronized operations for the Barcelona Center. A high rate of growth in some programs, with less growth in others, prompts a number of the recommendations made in the report.

Growth and relative size of the Barcelona semester programs:

Semester Programs	% growth since AY 13-14	% of total in AY 17-18
Barcelona BC	96.27%	51.97%
Barcelona LA	26.19%	8.72%
Barcelona ALA	-5.00%	9.38%
Barcelona AD ¹	-61.90%	1.32%
Barcelona LC	155.00%	16.78%
Barcelona EC	131.82%	8.39%
Barcelona GAD	110.00%	3.45%
Total Barcelona	70.79%	100.00%

¹ Architecture and Design (AD) program retired after Fall 2017.

II. Key Discussions/Findings:

Students appear to enjoy Barcelona, be suited for their CIEE program selections, and are well-placed in their courses. Overall student satisfaction with combined/sum of “program aspects” is high. This suggests that eligibility requirements are appropriate. CIEE spring students were generally satisfied and feel that they have a good balance between academics and life in Barcelona. Students shared that they chose the program based on the location, as well as ability to take classes in their major areas that automatically apply towards specific degree requirements.

But, based on our observations and conversations about course difficulties with students, staff and partner universities, we suggest it might be worthwhile to consider whether it would be advisable to have additional prerequisites recommended for select courses, both those at CIEE and/or taught by a host university.

Students in the CIEE programs generally take 4 to 5 courses, a combination of CIEE courses and one to three host university courses. CIEE Barcelona offers 71 CIEE courses (sections), taught by 54 instructors in Spring 2018, of which 34% of the classes are in tracks related to language instruction, 30% in business, 32% relating to culture, and 4% stated to be in architecture. Due to challenges of student travel, after repeated and widespread student absences for long weekends, in spring 2018 CIEE eliminated almost all Friday class meetings. As a result, CIEE courses are held for a longer period of time, Monday through Thursday. This format, along with increased enrollment, creates some challenges to schedule all classes as required at the Center and could limit future growth should student interest continue to increase.

In general we were impressed with the CIEE faculty qualifications, staff advising, course 'selection' etc, but have some concerns/questions about the articulations of learning goals and the lack of assurance of learning processes.

Many students tend to come here in groups from large sending institutions. These cohorts are especially evident in the BC student group. The University of Wisconsin-Madison, Elon, Indiana, Cornell, Michigan, and Providence tend to send groups of 20 to 60 business majors in a single term. One of the classes observed by the review team had 23 students present on the day of the observation, of which 21 were from a single institution. Given the size of these cohorts, it may be worthwhile to think more carefully about how to better distribute students from the same home institution across different courses/experiences, avoiding perceptions of a "bubble" or "island" program abroad. Related to this observation, one suggestion worthy of note is that four of the larger sending AC institutions contacted indicated that they would like to receive copies of CIEE student evaluations specifically from students for their institution in order to evaluate effectiveness of the program for their students and degree programs. This might be a consideration with the evolution of Domo for the future.

It is of some concern that "academic experience" was rated lower among the "program aspects" consistently in terms of CIEE student satisfaction in the BC student evaluations to date. Students suggested, and our observations confirmed, that CIEE courses may be easier than those of the partner institutions, with less homework, less reading, and a greater emphasis on in class presentations in place of analytic research and written papers. Coincidentally, CIEE staff shared that dissatisfaction with host university courses is among the top complaints of BC students.

A primary concern of the review team is that there appears to be no assessment mechanism in place to measure assurance of learning (AoL). It is important to have some kind of measurement of student learning in CIEE courses. A comprehensive AoL process is important in American higher education in order to ensure that students are achieving the learning outcomes and goals for the programs/courses in which they are participating.

A high level of professionalism and engagement was shown by all Barcelona program staff. All appear to be highly qualified, friendly, competent and dedicated. The level of staffing seems satisfactory, especially with the addition of temporary staff joining at high volume times. Student evaluations show high regard for the staff assistance provided in response to any question. We discussed challenges of diverse students with the Barcelona staff, students with needs that may not have been apparent in previous cohorts. We were pleased with the staff openness and willingness to help anyone in need in any situation that might come up.

III. Priority Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: We encourage CIEE Barcelona to work on assessment, for overall program and course-specific objectives. This is a worldwide trend in higher education and increasingly important for the American sending institutions. This is about assurance of learning, which is important for American sending institutions, as part of their own course pre-approval processes and to meet required accreditation standards. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) offers seminars (many of which are held in Western Europe) which focus on the terminology, process, and best practices related to assurance of learning. These types of developmental seminars may be a good place to start.

Recommendation 2: Think about the strategic plan of CIEE-Barcelona in association with strategic goals of CIEE-Portland. Given the growth and importance of the BC program, it will be important to strategically and purposefully think about the goals of the BC program itself and how they relate to the overarching programmatic and enrollment goals of CIEE. Given student interest and AC university use and endorsement, BC clearly presents some opportunities for expansion.

Recommendation 3: Explore/build relationships to add additional accredited (either AACSB, EQUIS, and/or AMBA) partner institutions at which the BC students may take courses. Given the emphasis US business programs are placing on accepting only transfer credit from institutions that hold accreditations from premier accrediting bodies, we think it is particularly important to maintain and build the quality of the program by partnering with these types of host institutions. We learned from the CIEE staff that they are already in the process of exploring new partnerships with an accredited institution; we believe this is prudent, important, and timely.

Recommendation 4: For the GAD program, CIEE should take a close look at the marketing, expectations and learning objectives. Student satisfaction is much lower in the areas of the academic component/curriculum. Continued meetings with GAD faculty seem to have made less of an impact for improvement than in other programs. The curriculum may be better suited to those students interested in urban planning and design, sustainable design and/or engineering and thus the GAD program may be better marketed towards students with these types of interests.

IV. Action Plan/Program Update:

Recommendation 1: *We encourage CIEE Barcelona to work on assessment, for overall program and course-specific objectives. This is a worldwide trend in higher education and increasingly important for the American sending institutions. This is about assurance of learning, which is important for American sending institutions, as part of their own course pre-approval processes and to meet required accreditation standards. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) offers seminars (many of which are held in Western Europe) which focus on the terminology, process, and best practices related to assurance of learning. These types of developmental seminars may be a good place to start.*

ACTION 1: Course-specific learning goals and assessment: for business courses, we will look at AACSB standards and make sure classes are aligned in terms of learning objectives and assessment. For language courses, our syllabi will be revised to align with ACTFL standards. For other disciplines, where there may not be an accrediting organization that outlines key learning goals, we will use Tulane faculty feedback (from July 2017) about Barcelona's syllabi.

Recommendation 2: *Think about the strategic plan of CIEE-Barcelona in association with strategic goals of CIEE-Portland. Given the growth and importance of the BC program, it will be important to strategically and purposefully think about the goals of the BC program itself and how they relate to the overarching programmatic and enrollment goals of CIEE. Given student interest and AC university use and endorsement, BC clearly presents some opportunities for expansion.*

ACTION 2: Program-specific learning goals and assessment: we will redefine the program learning objectives for each Barcelona 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 we are offering courses, co- and extra-curricular activities and opportunities that align with each programs' goals. We will engage in a conversation with the CIEE Director of Intercultural Learning and consider administering the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to a small sample of students (from all programs) who do not take the ICL.

ACTION 3: BC program development: given the opportunities for expansion that the BC program presents, we will strategically and purposefully think about the goals of the BC program itself and how they relate to the overarching programmatic and enrollment goals of CIEE.

Recommendation 3: *Explore/build relationships to add additional accredited (either AACSB, EQUIS, and/or AMBA) partner institutions at which the BC students may take courses. Given the emphasis US business programs are placing on accepting only transfer credit from institutions that hold accreditations from premier accrediting bodies, we think it is particularly important to maintain and build the quality of the program by partnering with these types of host institutions. We learned from the CIEE staff that they are already in the process of exploring new partnerships with an accredited institution; we believe this is prudent, important, and timely.*

ACTION 4: Partnership with accredited schools of business: given the emphasis US business programs are placing on accepting only transfer credit from institutions that hold accreditations from premier accrediting bodies, we will continue exploring the possibility to add additional accredited (either AACSB, EQUIS, and/or AMBA) partner institutions at which the BC students may take courses in Barcelona.

Recommendation 4: *For the GAD program, CIEE should take a close look at the marketing, expectations and learning objectives. Student satisfaction is much lower in the areas of the academic component/curriculum. Continued meetings with GAD faculty seem to have made less of an impact for improvement than in other programs. The curriculum may be better suited to those students interested in urban planning and design, sustainable design and/or engineering and thus the GAD program may be better marketed towards students with these types of interests.*

ACTION 5: GAD program development: evaluations from recent semesters show the academic program is not always suitable, and the marketing of the program curriculum has lead some program participants to misaligned expectations. As a consequence, the academic component of this program has received a low rating. We will continue engaging in conversations with all the relevant CIEE departments to ensure the program is marketed towards students interested in this programs' very particular approach to architecture, in sustainable design and/or in engineering.

ACTION 6: Prerequisites: The prerequisite structure of courses where an above average number of students struggle academically (or ultimately fail) will be revised. "Recommended" (not "required") additional prerequisites will be added for some of those courses, especially for business and economics courses at the host institutions ESCI and UPF. This will be combined (or even replaced) in selected cases with individual advising before registration in favor (or against) course enrollment based on prior coursework completed and/or stellar academic performance.

ACTION 7: Know Before You Go (KBYG): In order to make the KBYG more successful and to entice students to complete it, we will coordinate with the CIEE Academic Director of Online Learning to include as much local and specific information as we can. Specifically, we will

include practical and logistical information that students have expressed they would like to know about before their arrival onsite, such as the most cost-effective way to use their smartphones abroad, phone plans and bank accounts. Regarding phones, we will explore the possibility of negotiating a sim card/phone plan with a local company, to help facilitate this process. Regarding bank accounts, we will review again the options for students to open one while onsite.

ACTION 8: Orientation: starting Fall 2018, the orientation will be redesigned. The first-day meeting will be reduced to its bare minimum, and students will be distributed to their accommodation as quickly as possible on the arrival day. Some information sessions (that used to be condensed on the first and/or second day) will be moved when possible to the third and/or fourth day after the students arrival, to ensure they are rested and able to take in all the information.

ACTION 9: Academic rigor of CIEE courses: All CIEE course syllabi will be reviewed to ensure that they have the adequate amount and level of work associated with their course-level (i.e. reading, homework, analytic research, research papers).

ACTION 10: ALA advising and course-selection: In order to facilitate the course selection and approval process, once confirmed, ALA students will be asked to review the UB course offerings (available in May for fall and September for spring) and select a list of top five possible courses of interest for each of the three course topics they will ultimately take at UB (i.e. total 15 courses). The CIEE Barcelona Program Manager will then supply the student with syllabi for review by the home campus (and cc the CIEE Study Abroad Advisor), and, ultimately, the student will arrive on site with knowledge of how those courses would (or wouldn't) be accepted for credit by the home institution.

ACTION 11: Printing labs and common lounges: We will monitor the level of use of the computer lounge, in order to eventually reduce the number of desktop computers and create more common lounge areas and/or study space. We will also explore installing a wireless network printer that students could connect to and print directly from their laptops.

ACTION 12: Laptops in the classroom for non-academic purposes: Given the observed generalization of the use of laptops in the classroom for non-academic purposes, this topic will be addressed and a workshop for faculty on best practices for the use of laptops in the classroom will be organized.

ACTION 13: Safe space/innocent bystander policy: we will arrange so that there is a safe space/innocent bystander policy for fellow students to share concerns with CIEE staff about roommates or classmates should something of concern be observed.

ACTION 14: Classroom space: in Spring 18 (when the ACB evaluators visited the site), some classes were overenrolled (Spring 2018 was CIEE Barcelona's biggest semester ever). We will ensure the learning environment is adequate in all cases, that faculty are not forced to remain at the front and that they can reasonably walk around. Also, we will continue renting nearby classroom space (from the Professional Association of Engineers) if/when necessary.

ACTION 15: Staff professional development: we will continue supporting CIEE Barcelona staff with professional development opportunities, both locally-arranged and international. In the first five months of 2018, the following opportunities have been implemented: 2-day Active Learning Faculty Workshop at CIEE Barcelona (with participation of CIEE European staff and U.S.

trainers); 1-day Psychological Attention Workshop (for CIEE Barcelona staff, with a local therapist); 1-week visit to Elon University (by Rebecca Swanson, BC Program Manager). Additionally, a 1-week visit to Vanderbilt University by Elena Rodríguez (LA-LC Program Manager) had been approved, but finally postponed as the timing was not good for the sending school. Additionally, one permanent CIEE Barcelona staff member is temporarily working at CIEE Uppsala.