

Academic Consortium Board

Evaluation Executive Summary

Evaluation of the CIEE Study Center at the University of Haute Bretagne, Rennes, France

Liberal Arts in Rennes, France

Fall 2014

Last Saved: 1/29/15

CIEE Programs have site evaluations every 10 years. The site evaluation team consists of a member of the Academic Consortium Board (ACB) and faculty from Consortium members within disciplines central to the site. The evaluation team will review all aspects of the program and focus in particular on those areas thought to be in need of attention.

Evaluation Team:

Carmen Grace, Language Program Director
French & Italian Department, University of Colorado: Boulder

Joël A. Gallegos, Assistant Provost
Office of International Programs, UNC Charlotte
Past Chair, CIEE ACB

On-site individuals participating in the review included:

CIEE Resident Staff:
Daniel Audaz, Center Director
Madeleine Lorcy, Administrative Assistant
Leah Honiberg, Student Services Coordinator
Teaching Staff and Administration, Centre International Rennais des Études de Français pour Étrangers (CIREFE)
Teaching Staff and Administration, Language and Cultural Institute
CIEE student participants

Last Evaluation: March 17-22, 2002

Program background and History:

Recognized as one of CIEE oldest Study Center programs, the Rennes program was established in 1971. Since its inception, the program has had, as institutional host, the Université de Haute Bretagne (Rennes II). The original program offered two identical fall and spring terms but soon thereafter, a teaching practicum in a local school was added. This program dimension, which exists today, continues to attract French and Education Majors. For many years, students have had the opportunity to enroll in a combination of language intensive

and when appropriate, direct enrollment courses at UHB. In the early 1990s, the program offering was expanded to the academic year.

Focus of the evaluation:

Since there were no significant program issues or particular challenges, the focus of this site review consisted of a general and comprehensive analysis of all program elements.

Key findings: As noted above, the review team began its work with no significant concerns regarding program quality, staffing, host institution relationship or stakeholder concerns. The team found the program to be in very good status with few issues. Program participants appear to be advancing their language proficiency and are generally very satisfied with the overall program. The review team commends the good work of the CIEE resident team and was pleased to evaluate such a strong program. The recommendations that follow are examples of some ways in which one could enhance an already successful program. These recommendations relate primarily to strategies that would strengthen student performance and engagement in the host culture.

Priority recommendations:

Academic framework:

- Implement additional strategies for program participants to engage with French students at UHB.

Teaching and Learning:

- Identify strategies to enhance student success in the French classroom setting.

Advising and Orientation:

- Develop initiatives to increase students' understanding of CIREFE and UHB courses and program goals prior to departure.

CIEE Action Plan

CIEE Action Plan

In response to the Academic Consortium Board (ACB) Evaluation of the CIEE Study Center at the University of Haute Bretagne, Rennes, France, Liberal Arts program.

January 20, 2015

Overview

CIEE staff are please to provide this Action Plan in response to the Academic Consortium Board (ACB) report on the CIEE Study Center in Rennes. The report of the site visit was received by members of the ACB at the Fall 2014 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 Jöel Gallegos, Assistant Provost, Office of International Programs, UNC Charlotte, and where appropriate from the other member of the evaluation team, Carmen Grace, Language Program Director, French & Italian Department, University of Colorado at Boulder. 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.

Actions

ACB Recommendation

Implement additional strategies for program participants to engage with French students at UHB: 1. Consider contacting the English Department to invite their majors to participate in a conversation exchange program with American students: one *paired* activity might involve matching 1 American and 1 French student to speak 30 minutes of French followed by 30 minutes of English once/week. 2. Organize a Franco-American book group or music group in a campus café/restaurant once/month. For each meeting, choose French or English language books / songs to discuss. Provide sandwiches and/or beverages to get things started.

Action

Resident staff will pursue new methods to organize more language exchanges with local students. Specifically, offering each student an individual language partner (either from the English Department, or another university department). We will encourage the moniteurs to participate and lead a group activity, along the lines of students' interests (whether it is books, songs, movies, discussion of current news, etc).

ACB Recommendation

Identify strategies to enhance student success in the French classroom setting. These may include: (1) Indicate the number of points each exercise is worth on an assignment or exam; (2) Require that students see instructors once/semester in their office before the end of week 4 (or 5? 6?) to discuss their current grade and how to achieve the final grade they are working toward; (3) Ask instructors to convey all *individual* feedback in writing. Invite them to share *global* feedback about the general progress of the class orally if desired; (4) Consider basing part of an oral or written class assignment on a workshop or an event promoted by CIREFE; (5) Several B2 and C1 students admitted to feeling under-challenged in classes. Ask B2 and C1 instructors to make some increase in the *quantity* or *quality* of work demanded of students (e.g., more difficult items on homework/tests, a list of *fautes à éviter* and a serious penalty when those mistakes reoccur, longer homework/tests, etc.); (6) “*Flip the classroom*” technique; (7) Pilot a

placement test for one semester that evaluates all four language skills. This could remedy the disappointment expressed about placement levels and the lack of challenge in some classes.

Action

The evaluators have provided several ideas to improve students' experience in the classroom. Resident staff will proactively encourage students to meet with their instructors discuss their individual performance and grades as suggested by the evaluators. The Resident Director will also suggest to the CIREFE the idea of only providing *global* feedback orally. Regarding the language classes, the RD will discuss with professors of levels B2 and C1 the need to increase the *quantity* or *quality* of work demanded of students, so that students will feel more challenged in their learning experience. Regarding the "flip the classroom" strategy, as the evaluators rightly indicate, CIEE is not in a position to require this change, but the RD will certainly share the idea with the CIREFE faculty. The RD will also assess with language faculty the possibility of piloting a placement test for one semester that evaluates all four language skills, as an attempt to remedy the disappointment expressed about placement levels and the lack of challenge in some classes.

ACB Recommendation

Develop initiatives to increase students' understanding of CIREFE and UHB courses and program goals prior to departure.

Action

CIEE resident staff will continue to encourage appropriate students to take (at least) one UHB course. In addition, in the cases that CIREFE course descriptions do not give students the contact hours in Rennes and U.S. equivalent, the RD will make sure to provide this information clearly.

ACB Recommendation

Provide additional context to increase students' understanding of their placement in host families. The team applauds the decision to match students with families prior to departure and recommends that the composition of each host family be made more explicit to students. This will contribute toward managing student expectations.

Action

Since the Spring 2015 semester, the Rennes team is providing housing information prior to departure from the US. This information does contain a short description of the host or hosts.

ACB Recommendation

Articulate the effects of significant program changes on all constituencies: staff/students/faculty.

Action

As additional programs are added, and student enrollment increases, CIEE will continue with its normal procedure of performing a detailed assessment of the necessary staffing needs to ensure a high quality program.

Submitted by:

Clara Rodes, CIEE Regional Director of Operations, Southern Europe

Date: January 20, 2015