

## Evaluation Executive Summary

### Evaluation of the CIEE Study Center in Sharjah, UAE

November 3-6, 2014

*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.*

- I. **Evaluation Team members:** The evaluation team included Dr. Woody Pelton, Dean of Global Studies, Elon University, Team Leader and ACB member, and Dr. Mike Troilo, Assistant Professor of International Business, The University of Tulsa.
- II. **Colleagues with whom the Evaluation Team met:** The Team met with the CIEE Resident Director, Abu Bakr Al Ani and Regional Director of Operations, Janine El Tal. From the American University of Sharjah the Team met with the Interim Provost, Dr. Kevin Mitchell; Chair of Arabic Language, Dr. Ronak; Director of the International Exchange Office, Dr. Linda Angell, and various of her staff; Director of Student Residential Life, Atif Ehsan; six faculty members from the courses observed; CIEE students; peer language tutors; Residence Hall supervisors; staff from the Clinic and Counseling Center.
- III. **Last evaluation Conducted:** This was the first evaluation of this site, which opened in 2011.
- IV. **Program Background/History:** The CIEE program in Sharjah is a direct enrollment program at the American University in Sharjah ("AUS") ([www.aus.edu](http://www.aus.edu)), an independent, non-profit co-educational private university in Sharjah, UAE. AUS is located in University City, a large gated community with various institutions of higher education, a hospital and a museum. In Fall 2014 AUS has 5509 undergraduates and 478 graduate students within their College of Architecture, Art & Design; College of Arts & Sciences; College of Engineering; School of Business & Management and a bridging program for those lacking sufficient language skills. The College of Engineering is the largest school. There are students from 85 countries and faculty from 55 countries.
- V. **Focus of Evaluation:** The primary areas of focus, based on review of materials and a conference call in advance of our visit, centered around 1. Arabic language offerings, 2. Relationship between the host university's International Exchange Office (IXO) and the Resident Director, and 3. experiential learning opportunities.
- VI. **Key Discussions/Findings:** The evaluation team found that the program at Sharjah is very strong and operating very well. Because of the small number of students interested in upper level Arabic there is no level four Arabic course. Students with advanced Arabic take courses like Arabic Media or Arabic Translation, supplemented by "peer language tutors" and support from the RD, who is completing an MA in Arabic translation. The RD is working together very well with the IXO to the great benefit of the

students. While some internship and volunteer opportunities have been found for those interested, both the RD and the IXO are developing better outlets for experiential learning.

**VII. Priority Recommendations:** As mentioned in our full report, we believe the program to be very strong and our recommendations are largely exhortations to continue to work on areas of perceived weakness. Three recommendations are listed below. Others not listed suggested ways to promote various aspects of the program.

**#1: Continue efforts to expand offerings in Arabic language.**

**#2: Continue development of internships, volunteer opportunities, and other forms of experiential learning.**

**#3: Explore the possibility of establishing a formal relationship with the Bridging Program for volunteering opportunities.**

**VIII. Action Plan/Program:**

*In response to the Academic Consortium Board (ACB) Evaluation of the Business, Engineering, Arts and Sciences (BEAS) Program at the CIEE Study Center in Sharjah, UAE*

January 20, 2015

**Overview**

CIEE staff are pleased to provide this Action Plan in response to the Academic Consortium Board (ACB) report on the BEAS Program offered at CIEE Study Center in Sharjah, UAE. The report of the site visit will be submitted by members of the ACB at the Spring 2015 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 for the evaluation, Woody Pelton, Dean of International Programs, Elon University.

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).

**Action Plan**

**ACB Recommendation: Continue efforts to expand offerings in Arabic language.**

CIEE is working with AUS to implement an on-line placement test prior to the students' arrival so that we can better plan for the class levels needed. In the event of students

requiring advanced levels of Arabic, we can then lobby the language department to offer the required levels. In addition, the CIEE Resident Director will look into possible options available at other universities in the vicinity.

**ACB Recommendation: Continue development of internships, volunteer opportunities, and other forms of experiential learning.**

A number of students in the spring and fall 2014 terms secured internship/volunteering opportunities primarily through contacts made by CIEE. As a follow-up to the ACB recommendation, the Resident Director will develop a more formalized and structured internship and volunteering program by establishing contacts with a number of potential hosts, designing a program and offering a selection of options to the students. In addition, the Resident Director will work with a local school to organize an activity for CIEE students to interact with local students, such as a soccer game or a debate session.

**ACB Recommendation: Explore the possibility of establishing a formal relationship with the Bridging Program for volunteering opportunities.**

The Resident Director will meet with the director of the Bridge Program at AUS and discuss ways that the CIEE students can volunteer their time, individually or collectively, in teaching English to their students.

**ACB Recommendation: Provide the CIEE Resident Director with a laptop computer and a smart phone.**

The RD has always had a computer and cell phone but will receive a new computer as part of an organization-wide upgrade this year.

Submitted by:

Janine El Tal  
Regional Director of Operations, Middle East, North Africa, South and Southeast Asia  
January 21, 2015