

Evaluation Executive Summary
Haifa, Israel Study Center
October 26-27, 2016

I. Evaluation Team members:

- Sarah E. Spencer, Director of Study Abroad, University of St. Thomas, ACB member and team leader
- Woody Pelton, Dean of Global Education, Elon University, ACB member

II. Colleagues with whom the Evaluation Team met:

The Evaluation Team met with Maha El-Taji, Resident Director, staff from the University of Haifa International School, UH faculty and four out of five students over dinner.

III. Last evaluation Conducted on: This is the first evaluation as the program commenced in Fall 2013.

IV. Program Background/History:

CIEE Haifa opened in Fall 2013, in a response to students and advisors who asked CIEE why it did not offer programs in Israel. CIEE had typically responded to such inquiries by citing security concerns (including U.S. Department of State Travel Warnings) and questionable demand. However, for historical, political, cultural, and economic reasons, Israel is one of the key constituents in both the Middle East and global dialogues.

The University of Haifa first approached the CIEE Program Director about a potential collaboration in 2009. CIEE determined that the University of Haifa would present CIEE with academic offerings, infrastructure, and a location (for security purposes) that would make it feasible to move forward with a CIEE Study Center.

In April 2012, Adam Rubin and Allison Hodgkins first visited the University of Haifa and reported a very positive impression of the school, its academic programs, its attention to safety and security, and the city of Haifa.

In December 2012, CIEE signed an agreement with the University of Haifa to establish a direct enroll program with the International School to start in Spring 2013. The University of Haifa's International School (<http://overseas.haifa.ac.il>) was attractive from an academic standpoint due to the fact that it offers both intensive Arabic and Hebrew and specialized Honors programs in Psychology and Peace and Conflict Studies. While many other programs in Israel focus entirely on Hebrew, this location would allow CIEE to offer Hebrew while also expanding its Arabic language program options. This proposed new program would allow CIEE to offer students in these areas a unique opportunity to continue their academic studies in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and incredibly diverse location.

In April 2013, a Resident Director was hired and released of his position with two weeks. Kate Shalvoy, who at the time was the Director of Student Services at the CIEE Hyderabad Study Center, relocated until a permanent hire was found. Her temporary

appointment was very well received, and hiring a permanent director was delayed into Fall 2015, when Kate returned to the United States.

Dr. Maha El Taji was hired as the permanent resident director on October 1, 2015. The University of Haifa was delighted with our appointment as Maha had been teaching at the International School and was well known and respected on the campus.

Both Kate Shalvoy and Maha El Taji have been highly rated by in student evaluations. Unfortunately, enrollments have continued to decline since the first semester. While the security situation in Israel has stabilized, regional tension has increased.

V. Focus of Evaluation:

The focus of the evaluation was how CIEE provides a value-add to the University of Haifa International School direct enrollment options, the student experience and to identify opportunities to increase enrollments.

VI. Key Discussions/Findings:

The team was positively impressed by the University of Haifa, course offerings, internships and most importantly, Dr. Maha El-Taji, CIEE resident director. Haifa is an unique and beautiful location to live and study in a critical region and country, to engage and learn in a shared society. We recommend that CIEE should maintain a study center in Israel, and the University of Haifa is a well-respected comprehensive university and international school. Immediate action should be taken to rewrite all marketing and website materials, rename the program to broaden its appeal, and work with CIEE Institutional Relations staff to identify potential AC schools who approve study abroad in Israel.

VII. Priority Recommendations:

Recommendation 1. Rename the program from International Relations, Psychology & Peace and Conflict Studies (IRPPCS) to highlight the much broader coursework available in English.

Recommendation 5. Top level program descriptions should be revised in the catalog and website to highlight the internship and research opportunities. Ideally CIEE institutional relations staff should be made aware of these opportunities and highlight to campus advisors and relevant faculty. The Resident Director, Maha El-Taji, is also willing to serve as an advisor during student recruitment, especially to answer questions and provide specific information regarding internships and coursework.

Recommendation 6: To strengthen enrollment, IR staff should monitor which schools 1) allow study in Israel, 2) allow study in Israel with approval, 3) do not allow study in Israel due to the travel warning.

Recommendation 7. Identify and market the value-added to enrolling with CIEE versus direct enrollment. These may include 1) four days of additional on-site orientation, site visit to Amman, Jordan (and others), superb support from a CIEE resident director, and intentional re-entry.

VIII. Action Plan/Program Update:
Recommendation 1. Rename the program from International Relations, Psychology & Peace and Conflict Studies (IRPPC) to highlight the much broader coursework available in English.

ACTION: We will explore options that are more suitable for the name of this program and propose a new title for Spring 2017 ACB meeting. Need clarity around availability of Psychology courses.

Recommendation 2: Seek student input on the Amman visit, especially in terms of how money is spent. They reported that meals were excessive, and some of those funds could have been directed to a Petra visit, which they would have preferred.

ACTION: At this time travel to Jordan is not feasible due to US DOS travel warning. In the meantime, the RD will revisit the way meals are planned in any excursion to ensure that more of an emphasis is put on destinations and not lavish meals.

Recommendation 3: Consider offering an ICL embedded component as part of the CIEE value added.

ACTION: We will request that the new RD is slated to be trained for the imbedded portion of the ICL course for the fall of 2017. In the near future, she will be enlisted for the full training of the ICL course, at which point CIEE will revise the MOU with the University of Haifa to factor the offering of the CIEE ICL course.

Recommendation 4. Top level program descriptions should be revised in the catalog and website to highlight the internship and research opportunities. Ideally CIEE institutional relations staff should be made aware of these opportunities and highlight to campus advisors and relevant faculty. The Resident Director, Maha El-Taji, is also willing to serve as an advisor during student recruitment, especially to answer questions and provide specific information regarding internships and coursework.

ACTION: Highlight learning objectives, internship for credit and research options as we revisit the program goals and learning objectives. In addition, the IR team is working with the RDOs to develop a more comprehensive approach of getting resident staff to be more actively engaged in promoting their programs.

Recommendation 5: To strengthen enrollment, IR staff should monitor which schools 1) allow study in Israel, 2) allow study in Israel with approval, 3) do not allow study in Israel due to the travel warning.

ACTION: Need to ask senior IR directors to implement a survey among the AC members to determine each institutions status vis-à-vis sending students to locations with travel advisories.

Recommendation 6. Identify and market the value-added to enrolling with CIEE versus direct enrollment. These may include 1) four days of additional on-site orientation, site visit to Amman, Jordan (and others), superb support from a CIEE resident director, and intentional re-entry.

ACTION: In addition to the items listed above, we would add that CIEE participants receive a higher level of support onsite, with unique opportunities to interact with the local community, receiving a broader spectrum of understanding of regional politics as they are exposed to both the Arab and Jewish communities. Students on the CIEE program are offered a more tailored program to their specific interests as we work with individuals before their arrival and throughout the program.

The website, catalogue and pre-departure handbook will be revised to highlight the uniqueness of the program.

Minor recommendations:

Recommendation: We recommend that the RD consider creating an internship position for herself.

ACTION: The RD will look into creating an internship for a student (CIEE or University of Haifa) to work with her in achieving program goals and enhancing the cultural dimensions of the program.

Recommendation: We recommend that CIEE consider Haifa as a site for an IFDS or for advisor visits.

ACTION: As we have a new RD, it would not be prudent to introduce the IFDS at this time, but this will be a very strong consideration for 2018.