OFFICE OF
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Annual Report 2009-2010
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Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Mission Statement

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is an expanding, doctoral-granting institution committed to preparing graduates for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship in the global community. We are dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, creative activity and service. Our supportive, multicultural learning community provides undergraduate and graduate students with a challenging educational experience. The university’s federal designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) provides a foundation for closing educational gaps, while its strategic location on the Gulf of Mexico and on the cultural border with Latin America provides a basis for gaining national and international prominence.

Office of International Education Mission Statement

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is dedicated to creating an inclusive community and establishing collaborative relationships across cultures. TAMU-CC aspires to enrich and educate without exclusion and foster responsible global citizenship. The Office of International Education (OIE) will promote international learning environments that embrace diversity.

Vision

Constructing a future without boundaries - building bridges in a changing world.

Goals

- Increase our understanding of international issues.
- Create an international community.
- Provide our international students a sense of belonging.
- Give our students greater opportunities to participate in study abroad programs.
- Encourage our faculty to actively participate in faculty-led programs.
Dr. Paul Meyer, Vice Provost

Ana Billeaux, Director

Karin Griffith, Coordinator, International Student Services

Blanca Ordner, Study Abroad Advisor

Srikanth Padakanti, Student Worker – web master
Services and Programs

The Office of International Education (OIE) has two distinct functions:

1. Provide services to all international students on campus, whether enrolled in the English as a Second Language International (ESLI) or already TAMUCC students, and
2. Provide study abroad opportunities to all TAMUCC student population.

International Students Services
Karin Griffith
The international student population has been steadily growing since ESLI was established in 2005.

During the 2009-2010 academic year, OIE served 1830 international students as follows:

- Fall 2009: 577
- Spring 2010: 615
- Summer I 2010: 363
- Summer II 2010: 284
- Fall 2010: 650

The International Student Services Coordinator (ISSC), has seen the international student population grow from about 90 students when she started 7 years ago, to about 650 students Fall 2010. The ISSC ensures that every student has proper health insurance, that each student's F-1 status is maintained, provides academic and immigration advice, helps students transition from ESLI to TAMUCC, provides Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT) information and advice, and submits all OPT applications to the Department of Homeland Security.

The ISSC issued all I-20's to direct entry and ESLI students through Spring 2011. All I-20's for ESLI students who will start in summer 2011 will be issued by ESLI staff. The ISSC will be assisting ESLI staff as they familiarize themselves with SEVIS and will continue to provide support to the ESLI office.

Karin consistently joins webinars that increase her knowledge in international matters and plans to attend conferences that are of interest to her in order to stay current with immigration issues that affect international students.
International Student Programs and Events

Ana Billeaux
OIE provides programming to improve transitioning from the English as a Second Language International (ESLI) to TAMUCC. The office plans and conducts New ESLI Student Orientations each Fall, Spring, and Summer semester. These orientations include presentations from Student Affairs, Housing (Hurricane evacuation plans), Camden Miramar, Health Center, Counseling Center, University Police Department, Immigration information, Library services, and some student associations available on campus. In addition, OIE in conjunction with New Student Programs, organizes and conducts orientations for ESLI graduates ready to enroll in TAMUCC. These orientations included presentations from Student Affairs, Housing, Career Services, Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA), and Academic Advising at the undergraduate and graduate levels. OIE will continue to provide New ESLI Student Orientations as well as orientations for ESLI graduates coming to TAMUCC.

Keeping in step with Momentum 2015, specifically, Imperative III, “Instill Global Perspectives into the Academic Life of the University,” OIE organizes a variety of educational and cultural programs each year to bring internationalization to the forefront of the campus.

Pizza Nights
Once a month, OIE hosts a pizza night. Normally, a student association plans games and activities in order to facilitate interaction between all students who participate.

Information meetings
In October 2009 and February 2010 OIE hosted informational meetings for international students to review immigration rules, tax information, employment limitations, and other pertinent information. These meetings will continue to occur. This office works closely with ESLI to schedule the meetings and ensure attendance. In addition to these information meetings, we anticipate that in Spring 2011 we will increase the scope of these meetings to include students already on campus. Immigration and visa information is particularly of interest to international students who are close to graduation. Local immigration attorneys offer their expertise free of charge and students will greatly benefit from the information these attorneys can provide.
Meet and Greet

Meet and Greet events started in Spring 2009. OIE hosts Meet and Greet, an event to welcome new and returning students. These events are open to all faculty, staff, and students, and representatives from the different colleges and/or services are at hand to offer students information and support. This event will continue to happen at the beginning of each fall and spring semester.

International Education Week

In November 2009, TAMUCC celebrated International Education Week for the first time. From November 16 through November 20 international students were highly visible on campus. Events during this week included the first “Colors of the World Exhibit” which was opened in the University Center, Legacy Room. Museum artifacts from the Institute of Hispanic Cultures and the Texas Museum of Asian Cultures were displayed during this week. Information booths from several different countries were set up in the University Center every day. OIE invited representatives from several consulates and the Consul General from Turkey and representatives from the Consulate of Indonesia came and had lunch with Dr. Killebrew and gave presentations about education and cultures in their respective countries. Arlene Jackson, AASCU Director of International Education, was also invited to this luncheon and she too, presented a program on internationalizing the campus. Ms. Jackson also offered a workshop on internationalization. Other events during International Education Week 2009 included the launching of the Young Business Professionals by the International Relations Officer, language mini-lessons (Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Turkish), Tales from Abroad with study abroad students sharing their experiences and faculty sharing information about faculty-led programs, a study abroad fair, and free passport picture services.

International Education Week 2010 was celebrated November 15 through November 19. The “Colors of the World Exhibit” included once again artifacts from the Texas Museum of Asian Cultures and the Institute of Hispanic Cultures. It also had displays from Turkey, courtesy of the Turkish Student Association; from different African countries, provided by Dr. Peter Kuntu-Mensah, Dr. Bilaye Benibo, both from TAMUCC, and some community individuals, Ms. Abiola Shodipo, Ms. Amaka Agriga, and Mr. & Mrs. Amoako-Baah; the
Coastal Bend Filipino-American Association, and the South Texas Alliance of Indigenous People. We owe the involvement of the last two groups to the International Relations Office.

Parade of Nations
On April 12, 2010 OIE presented the Second Annual Parade of Nations. The first parade of nations was in April 2009 in the UC Ballrooms, but the popularity and scope of this event quickly grew and the Performing Arts Center was the venue for the 2nd Annual Parade of Nations. Students from China, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Latin America, Turkey, USA, and Vietnam performed for a large and enthusiastic audience. This event is open to the public and it has received local media coverage and many local well known figures have attended them. Representatives from the Indonesian Consulate in Houston attended Parade of Nations 2010. The Third Annual Parade of Nations is scheduled for April 18, 2011.

Ana attended the NAFSA Academy which started in the spring with a training in Georgia and ended in October at the National NAFSA Conference in New Orleans. Ana plans to continue to develop professionally taking advantage of the opportunities that TAMUCC offers as well as webinars and attendance to conferences as budget allows.
Other Programs
Alison Leithner, International Relations Officer (Institutional Advancement)

Other successful programs that TAMUCC provides for all international students include the Friendship Families and the Ambassador Suitcase programs. These programs were developed and carried out by the International Relations Office (IRO). One goal of the IRO is to connect the international students at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi to the Coastal Bend community. In 2009-2010, the IRO had two programs with which it accomplished this task: Friendship Families and Ambassador Suitcase.

The Friendship Families program matches international students with local families to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday. In 2009, the first year of this program, approximately 40 students and 20 local families signed up to participate. The IRO matched the students and families and followed up after the holiday to get feedback. The response from both the students and the families was overwhelmingly positive. A webpage was created with pictures and testimonials from the students and families. This webpage can be found at: http://international.tamucc.edu/friendship_families.html. In the Fall of 2010, the program doubled with approximately 85 students being matched with 40 local families. The IRO anticipates the program will continue and grow in the coming years. As a result, the IRO plans to work in conjunction with the OIE and ESLI to recruit and follow up with students who elect to participate.

The Ambassador Suitcase program was launched in the Spring of 2010. Through this program, international students from TAMU-CC are sent to local schools to teach local students about their countries and cultures. Teachers at Corpus Christi Independent School District (CCISD) schools request international students through the IRO and have the ability to specify requests to fit their lesson plans. In Spring 2010, 5 international students visited CCISD school and 7 international students went in the fall of that year. The international students, the American CCISD students and their teachers all reported the program beneficial and successful. The international students appreciated the opportunity to teach local Corpus Christi students about their cultures and local students reported that having a person from a different country talk about that country made a great difference in their interest level in the topic. A webpage containing sample presentations as well as presenter biographies was created by the IRO. This webpage can be found at: http://international.tamucc.edu/ambassadors_suitcase.html. The IRO anticipates this program will continue to grow in the coming semesters.

A third program, which is a collaboration between the IRO and the OIE, is the Airport Greeter program. We reached an agreement with the Corpus Christi International Airport which allowed the University to set up a greeting station across the baggage claim area at no cost to TAMUCC. This station is staffed by student workers two weeks prior to the beginning of fall and spring semesters, when the majority of the students are arriving. Students are greeted by peers, and welcomed with a small gift bag containing TAMUCC promotional materials (cups, pencils, pens, t-shirts) and the student handbook. It also gives the students opportunity to contact their families via skype upon
their arrival. In return for the free use of the space, TAMUCC agreed to man the
greeting station from 9:00 a.m. until the last plane landed and deplaned. While the
station is a good way to give a warm welcome to our students, the expense of manning
it 12 to 14 hours a day for two weeks proved not to be cost effective. At this time we are
looking at options to continue to have volunteer greeters at the airport at times when we
know that international students are arriving. This will involve working with ESLI to learn
when their students arrive as well as encouraging direct entry students to let us know
their travel plans.
Study Abroad
Blanca Ordner
Study Abroad has been growing in the last few years. Through training faculty, recruiting students, developing departure and re-entry orientations, and building up faculty-led programs, the number of students and faculty interested in study abroad has grown.

Summer Session II 2010 saw a first ever core curriculum study abroad program. Five faculty members—four from the College of Liberal Arts and one from Science and Technology—and 25 students traveled to Istanbul, Turkey. 17 of these students received the International Education Scholarship. Every student took 6 credit hours. The program was very successful and we hope to have a larger group of students traveling to Turkey in summer 2011.

In Fall 2010 four students went on a faculty led program to Portugal to complete a course on International Sport Promotion.

There were five students who travelled through independent programs to five different countries: Canada, China, England, Turks & Caicos Island and Czech Republic.

Three nursing students travelled with a faculty member to Guatemala and three travelled with a faculty member to Dominican Republic. These students did not receive academic credit, but they followed the study abroad protocol concerning health insurance and SOS registration.

During the 2009-2010 year, Study Abroad promoted its programs through participation in New Student Orientation, Island Days, Fall Study Abroad Fair, International Education Week, Freshmen Move-in and student mail out. Study Abroad also provided Faculty-led 101 sessions and as a result several faculty members demonstrated interest in developing programs for Summer 2011 and 2012. These programs include Turkey to teach core classes, England to teach theatre and theatre history, Costa Rica to teach photography, Florence to teach photography and art history, and Spain to teach Spanish and Spanish literature. In addition to the 2011 summer programs, there is a faculty-led program to Portugal in Spring 2011 as part of a Kinesiology-Special Topics course on International Sport Promotion.
Study Abroad continues to grow. Fall 2010 it launched the Study Abroad website with the help of the institutional student worker who was hired for this purpose. It is a work in progress, and while some sections are completed, some need to be added to provide information not only to students and faculty, but to parents as well.

TAMUCC had not had any reciprocal agreement students in many years. Fall 2010 had two students from Universidad Javeriana, Bogota, Colombia. These students worked towards their degrees in Business and completed 17 credit hours each. There are no TAMUCC students interested in going to Universidad Javeriana and at this time there is a travel warning in place from the State Department recommending that US citizen avoid traveling to Colombia.

Fall 2010 a Fulbright Committee was formed as Study Abroad received its first Fulbright application. The committee reviewed the application, interviewed the candidate, and the Study Abroad advisor sent the application on. She will continue to recruit potential candidates for Fulbright opportunities.

In addition to her responsibilities as Study Abroad Advisor, Blanca is undergoing ICERT training. She attended the NAFSA National Conference in California in 2009, and plans to continue her professional development.