

MIDDLE GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY
International Programs Review Board (IPRB)

Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2016

Attendees: Dr. Alex Ekwuaju (Chair), Dr. Kelli Cheng, Dr. Jeffrey Wiles, Dr. Yingfeng Wang, Dr. Sumitra Himangshu, Dr. Stephen Fuller, Dr. Laura Thomason, Dr. Yunsuk Chae, Dr. Niels Eichhom, Dr. Simone Phipps (Recorder)

Absentees: Ms. Jasmine Brown, Mr. Jeffrey Bryan

Excused: Dr. Pamela Bedwell

Guests: Dr. John Girard, Mr. Christopher Tsavatewa

- The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Dr. Ekwuaju.
- It was requested that future minutes include absentees and not only attendees.
- It was also suggested that moving forward, both the agenda and minutes clearly distinguish between old business and new business.
- Dr. Wiles moved to adopt the minutes from October 13, 2016. Dr. Fuller seconded the motion.

Old Business

- It was agreed that the transient study abroad participation form would be reviewed electronically (via Google Docs), and discussed/amended and approved at the next meeting.
- It was also agreed that the draft program director handbook would be reviewed electronically, and discussed/amended and approved at the next meeting.

New Business

- Dr. Girard and Mr. Tsavatewa served as guest presenters, introducing the experiential learning program “Knight Impact” for review and approval. Dr. Girard explained that only 8% to 10% of students complete any international experience during study, and as MGA matures into a true University, opportunities for students to be more “global” are crucial. He then proceeded with the PowerPoint, noting the following:

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- o “Knight Impact” is an authentic international service learning opportunity that builds on MGA’s “Knowledge @ Work” program, and would allow students to gain bronze level experiential learning credit.
- o Using Fathom Travel, which facilitates impact travel (i.e., travel with a purpose), “Knight Impact” will include a series of impact activities in the Dominican Republic (DR), as well as pre-departure sessions/activities to ensure student safety, responsibility, and professionalism as they travel as ambassadors of MGA.
- o Students will focus on 3 areas for impact activities, namely economic development, education, and the environment. On the ground in the DR, the 3 specific impact activities will be 1) Water Filter Production, 2) Student English Conversation and Learning, and 3) Chocal: Women’s Chocolate Cooperative. In addition, a trip to learn about the DR, including its history and culture will be planned.
- o Although the main event is in the DR, on board the ship, which leaves from Miami, there will be en route impact activities as well, including (but not limited to) Spanish phrases, visual storytelling, getting to know DR, and social innovation in action.
- o The total cost is approximately \$649, and this figure excludes transport to Miami.
- A concern was raised about the adequacy of the insurance which was only \$9 per student. Mr. Tsavatewa and Dr. Thomason agreed that the insurance was in line with the basic insurance sanctioned by USG for study abroad programs.
- Another concern about potential lawsuits against MGA was raised, and it was mentioned that the only way to avoid risks would be to stay here, and that risks have been assessed and steps taken to mitigate risks. Students will sign some sort of waiver document of understanding, and procedures will be in place similar to any other study abroad program or alternative spring break program.
- It was asked if 4 days were sufficient for students to engage in meaningful interaction with locals. Dr. Girard and Mr. Tsavatewa agreed that it was enough for them to be able to learn how to communicate in a foreign context, to identify similarities and differences between the home culture and host culture, to describe complexities of the host culture, and to appreciate their privileges here in the US.

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