International Programs Committee
2008 – 2009 Annual Report

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I. Overview

This was a transitional year with regard to International Programs at IUS, but thanks to stellar cooperation between the IP director and IPC members it was a generally successful year. With this said, we do hope for an even more dynamic and engaged year in 2009-2010. The IPC was centrally involved in the planning and implementation of several events and also in the fulfillment of certain traditional functions, including: (1) the International Speakers Series; 2) the Wares of the World bazaar; 3) the IUS International Photo Contest; 4) the annual IUS International Festival; and 5) the distribution of scholarship money to students seeking to study and/or travel abroad on IU sanctioned programs. A more detailed discussion of the committee's activities with regard to these charges is found below. In this initial year of the new IP Director’s tenure, the IPC was also called upon to offer input, advice and assistance with regard to other issues connected with the running of International Programs at IUS. Since it is the central charge of the IPC to assist the IP Director, this was a most appropriate use of our time and energies.

II. Committee Work

1) International Speakers Series: This series has been a part of IUS programming for a number of years now, but with the special demand of a transitional year, we were not able to maintain a full series this time around. Fortunately, some other events were programmed with an international focus, such as the visit of the ambassador from South Africa, an event for which we assisted with the promotion. We did organize and promote a speaker presentation in February, 2009, however, and we hoped to organize a campus workshop concerning academic ethics with regard to international students. Due to scheduling problems, the latter is now planned for Fall, 2009. We also now have a bank of potential speakers for the next academic year.

This coming year the IPC will work closely with the IP Director in both programming and promotion so that we may resume a full schedule of speakers on campus.

2) Wares of the World 2008: The Wares of the World bazaar has become an annual event at IUS, and this year’s version was the biggest yet. The bazaar features jewelry, crafts, musical instruments, and home products supplied by Ten Thousand Villages, an organization devoted to fair trade principles that contracts with third-world artisans to provide them a market and a fair price for their goods.
in the West. IUS, as host of a bazaar, arranges for the space, sets up and takes down the displays, assists customers with their purchases, and collects and submits the proceeds from sales to Ten Thousand Villages. The bazaar lasts for 2 days and represents a major undertaking for the IPC, involving staffing by an IPC member or the Director at all times to collect the money, keep track of goods sold and oversee the volunteer students and staff.

Sales were solid this year once again and I believe we matched or exceeded sales from last year. As a suggestion for the future, it would be great to seek to advertise this event even more fully to the surrounding community. It is such a worthy cause, that additional advertising in the community would surely help us draw in additional customers, particularly with Christmas not too far off.

3) IUS International Photo Contest: This is an annual event, first organized a couple of years ago by the IP Director at that time. The IPC took on a much larger role this year in partnering with the new Director to maintain this fine event. Photo submissions from students, faculty, and staff who have traveled abroad are accepted in two categories, places and people, and two prizes are awarded in each category, one winner selected by popular vote and the other by professional judges. The photos are put on display in the Main Library so as to facilitate voting, and they make for a beautiful visual collage of world destinations: a great advertisement for encouraging more students to study abroad.

The photos are put on display during National Study Abroad Week as part of the IUS programming. The contest was well-received this year, with some beautiful submissions, but submissions were down from the previous year, due no doubt to not starting the event promotion as early as in the past. This will be remedied in the coming year, and it is the hope that the number of submissions will rise dramatically as a result.

4) International Festival: This has become one of the premier annual events on the IUS campus, raising scholarship money for study abroad. The IPC was involved with a broader array of preparatory activities than in the past, assisting the new Director with the organization of his first Festival. In addition to acting as a liaison to community groups that we thought might be interested in having an informational booth or contributing door prizes, putting up promotional signs, and assisting with the set-up and clean-up, the IPC also assisted this year with brainstorming for entertainment possibilities, preparing food descriptions, distributing leaflets, searching out volunteers to work the festival (as well as working ourselves), creating the banner wall for promoting the event, and selecting decorations.

The Festival was a great success this year from an organizational standpoint, everything came together beautifully with a number of IUS and community organizations in attendance, great food on hand, terrific decorations in place, sufficient staffing, etc. However, attendance was a bit down from previous
Festivals, and so we need no doubt to work more diligently on promotion next year.

5) Student Overseas Travel Grants: An important charge of the IPC is to review student requests for overseas funding during the academic year. This year, there were only requests for summer study abroad. An initial student request for funding for study abroad during the winter/spring 2009 term was withdrawn before funding was finalized. We received 17 student requests for funding, on a par with the previous year, and 15 awards were made, ranging from $700 to $3300, depending generally upon length of stay and type of program. Ratings were made using a weighted score sheet that had been developed for this purpose.

We were pleased to be able to offer scholarship money to every qualified student who applied this year. One suggestion for the future is that the committee look at ways to tweak even further the score sheet that has been developed for rating applications. The IP Director received 4 applications for full-year study abroad for the following academic year. These awards will come out of next year’s allocation, but in order to facilitate the process, the IPC also deliberated on the merits of these applications and made tentative suggestions of awards to the applicants, pending review, of course, of the final budget allocation that IP receives.

III. Additional initiatives

In an effort to assist in the strengthening of the IUS International Students Organization, the IPC invited the student executive board of the ISO to attend our first meeting of the fall semester. We discussed ways in which we could mutually promote and assist with each other’s activities. Several positive developments came of this initial interaction, including the organization, principally on the part of IUS international students, of the first International Fashion Show, the lead-off event at the International Festival. The increased visibility and support of international students at IUS will only benefit our campus as a whole, without mentioning its direct contribution to a central mission of the IPC: to encourage more students to seek international connections and broaden their international perspectives both on campus and abroad. I hope that the IPC will continue in its efforts to support the international students who attend IUS in whatever ways seem practical and mutually beneficial.

IV. Recommendation

Several recommendations have already been embedded into this report. By way of summary, it is recommended that the IPC begin the academic year with a more fully realized agenda and calendar so that there can be a more even distribution of duties, a clearer checklist of what those duties will entail, and deadlines in place for the completion of tasks. This will improve the IPC’s ability to promote our events more fully and perhaps even expand upon the initiatives that we can undertake.
V. Conclusions

The International Programs Committee had five official meetings during the academic year, but we also conducted a good deal of “business” via email and informal gatherings. Attendance ranged from 50% to 100% at official meetings, but all committee members made important contributions to the various events and tasks assigned to the IPC. The efforts of all members were greatly appreciated and bode well for the coming year, as the IPC will be composed in large part of returning members.