Curricular Internationalization Seed Funding, 2014-2015
Office of Global Engagement
Proposal: Strategic Communication Study Abroad in Germany
Dr. Travers Scott, Asst. Professor, Director of Graduate Studies, Communication Studies
Dr. Andrew Pyle, Asst. Professor, Communication Studies

1. Project description and statement of curricular internationalization:

This project would expand opportunities for Clemson students to gain international experience and prepare for the workforce, while also helping develop the Upstate region’s international ties. Clemson University’s Department of Communication Studies proposes to add to our current Study Abroad offering a month in Berlin, Germany (and surrounding areas), emphasizing Strategic Communication. Our current program in Brussels offers a general international experience with our basic and introductory Communication Studies courses for minors and other interested students. Our proposed Berlin program would emphasize strategic communication courses and industry partnerships for our majors and other interested students. Our contacts at international companies with offices in Germany and the Upstate would be approached for site visits, class projects, guest speakers, and internships.

Our objectives in internationalizing this curriculum are to expand our department’s offering beyond a general international experience to one which directly supports specific student career interests and helps build the international partnerships and collaborations between Germany and the Upstate. Our most in-demand classes are those in strategic communication (public relations, advertising, social media campaigns, and related areas). Moreover, one of our department’s main emphases is critical understanding of communication technologies. The intersection of these two areas is where we are currently placing graduates. As the focus of this study abroad offering, coursework, contacts, field trips, and client projects would give students direct practical experience, networking opportunities, and portfolio pieces.

Germany is chosen as our location in order to leverage and build existing contacts and partnerships for educational experience that also supports growth and development in our region. With CU-ICAR, Clemson One, the Greenville Center for Visual Arts, and other “Orangeville” projects, Clemson has a growing presence in Greenville. According to the Greenville Chamber of Commerce, the Upstate is home to just under 100 German companies, including BMW, Henkel, Siemens, and BMG Entertainment. Energizing and expanding these connections with experienced students familiar with their culture issues is one way this program would support Clemson’s mission as a land grant university. As reported in the 10-year GLOSSARI study by the University System of Georgia, students who study abroad have improved academic performance upon returning, higher graduation rates, and improved cross-cultural knowledge. Studying abroad helps, rather than hinders, academic performance of at-risk students and minority populations: four-year graduation rates for African-Americans who’d studied abroad were 31 percent higher. Our department strongly feels that expanding our study abroad opportunities improves our students, our university, and the surrounding region.
Courses offered would support our departmental emphases in strategic communication and communication technologies, and our industry partnerships, such as the Erwin Center for the Study of Advertising and Communications and our Social Media Listening Center. We plan to offer four courses: Comm 3550 Principles of Public Relations, COMM 3680 Applied Communication (Social Media Campaign Production), COMM 3660 Special Topics: Cases in International Public Relations and COMM 3070 Public Communication of Science and Technology. The 3000-level courses all support our major requirements, and the last class also fulfills the Science, Technology & Society requirement for General Education. The course content for each would be tailored to the international experience. For example, Public Communication of Science and Technology would include visits to Berlin’s Museum of Communication and the Underground Sewers museum, which features historic strategic communication campaigns on urban engineering. Both of the public relations oriented courses would include site-visits to corporations and public relations agencies based in or near Berlin, so that students could gain real-world experience and access to the internal functions of public relations in international organizations. As we will be using existing course numbers, this will not require design and approval of new classes. Class will be taught by Communications Studies tenure-track faculty. (See biographies below.)

Seed funding would assist us in meeting these objectives by allowing the faculty to meet with potential industry partners, scout field trips and site visits, and determine what day- or overnight trips from Berlin would be feasible, affordable, and productive. For example, Unblocked (formerly Periscope Creative), a Berlin-based international commercial photo services company, has previously expressed interest in working with our department. Seed funding would also enable faculty to travel to visit university and corporate locations around the area to establish and extend connections with contacts who are interested in creating opportunities for students inside and outside of the classroom. An example of exploring a potential day-trip or weekend-trip would be to travel to Munich or Stuttgart to visit and connect with representatives of organizations based in those cities and to visit important cultural sites located in the surrounding areas.

2. Sustainability Plan

The first iteration of this program will run in the summer [Summer 1?] of 2016 and will recruit sophomore, junior, and senior level students interested in the study of strategic communication, specifically public relations, advertising, and related areas. To provide opportunities for additional course offerings, opportunities for internships, field seminars, and independent study courses will be investigated at targeted universities and organizations in Germany, specifically in Berlin and the surrounding area.

This program will be successful and sustainable for a variety of reasons. First, this program will be appealing to students as it will provide an opportunity for gaining additional public relations experience that is not currently offered in any other department or program on or off campus. The target students for this program are public relations students, the largest percentage of majors in the communication studies department.
The location, working from Berlin, Germany, as a home base for the program, is ideal. Berlin is a central location from which students and faculty can make day trips or extended weekend trips to make connections at universities and organizations all over Germany and in the surrounding countries with minimal travel time and minimal additional cost, as train travel in western Europe is relatively inexpensive.

The location and timing are also ideal, as students could pair the study abroad experience in Berlin with the existing program in Brussels, Belgium. Students could take one or two courses in the Brussels program (two weeks), and could then take one or two courses in Berlin (two weeks). This pairing provides students with a diverse array of opportunities and course options, from general education courses through advanced public relations and advertising course offerings, without the cost of making multiple trips abroad. The cost for a study abroad program in Berlin should be comparable with other programs currently operating in Europe.

The site visit would create an opportunity to establish and build relationships with contacts at universities and organizations in Berlin and the surrounding areas. The intention of the program is to establish long-term relationships which can lead to cross-cultural collaboration in study and research opportunities for faculty and students for years to come. Faculty currently supporting this initiative from the Department of Communication Studies are:

- Dr. Andrew S. Pyle, Assistant Professor of Strategic Communication - I am a crisis communication scholar interested in the intersection of crisis and culture. My research focuses in large part on the question “How do we manage the distinct tensions of intercultural communication in crisis & emergency contexts?” Working in the study abroad context would allow for international collaboration that has not been established as yet.

- Dr. D. Travers Scott, Assistant Professor and Director of our MA in Communication, Technology and Society - I am a 13-year veteran of the advertising industry, where my latter years specialized in global technology companies. At Clemson, I helped secure our department’s investment in the Erwin Center for the Study of Advertising and Communication. My current research examines technology as it is perceived and discussed in culture, and I previously led a summer abroad experience in Brussels.

3. Budget Narrative and budget form.

Seed funding will be used for travel costs and accommodations to Berlin, Germany and the surrounding areas for two Clemson faculty members: Dr. Travers Scott and Dr. Andrew Pyle. The time in Berlin will be used to establish connections with public relations practitioners in organizations based in or near Berlin, such as corporations like Siemens or BMW, and non-profit organizations such as the Jewish Museum or the DDR Museum. Anticipated travel would occur in Summer 2015 or Winter of 2015. Five days and four nights should be enough to accomplish our goals of establishing connections and conducting site visits, with day one and day five serving as travel days.
Proposed Budget

- Airfare from Atlanta to Berlin, 2 @ $1400 (Travelocity.com) $2800
- Accommodations (Expedia Average = $150/night x 4 nights) $600
- Train Travel ($120x2; $190x2) $620
- Public Transit Pass (U-Bahn) One week pass ($35x2) $70
- Per Diem @ 50% of Berlin rate ($61.50x2) $615
- Miscellaneous (airport taxis, museum entrance, etc) $195

- **Total Budget** $4900
September 25, 2014

International Programs Coordination Committee
Attn: Gloria Freeman
Office of Global Engagement
E 302 Martin Hall
Clemson, SC 29634

Dear Committee Members:

Please accept this notice as our department’s intent to apply for seed money toward developing a summer study abroad program in Berlin, Germany. This program would build on our existing summer program located in Brussels, Belgium. We are interested in exploring opportunities for expanding our students’ hands-on learning opportunities, as well as creating new contexts for cross-cultural collaboration.

Students will be able to study strategic communication with course offerings in the areas of public relations and advertising. This program will also expand the current study abroad options for Communication Studies students. Perhaps the most exciting piece of this proposal is the opportunities students will have to actively interact with public relations and advertising professionals through site visits and shadowing excursions.

Public relations is the area of greatest interest for communication studies majors and minors, so this program will also have a high demand among our current and prospective students. If you require more information beyond what is included in the proposal, or have any questions about our proposed program, please let me know. Thank you for considering supporting this important opportunity for our students.

Regards,

Karyn Jones, Ph.D.
Chair
Communication Studies
September 25, 2014

International Programs Coordination Committee
Attn: Gloria Freeman
Office of Global Engagement
E 302 Martin Hall
Clemson, SC 29634

Dear Committee Members:

This letter is to strongly support the Department of Communication Studies’ proposal for seed money toward developing a summer study abroad program in Berlin, Germany. This program would build on their existing summer program located in Brussels, Belgium. The proposed new program would offer students the opportunity to gain international experience and prepare for the global workforce, while also helping develop Clemson’s relationships with international organizations in the Upstate.

Focusing on strategic communication courses, such as public relations and advertising, this program would expand the current study abroad options for Communication Studies students. They would not only learn about strategic communication in diverse cultural contexts, but would also be able to conduct site visits, gain hands-on experience, and network with professionals.

With nearly 100 German companies based in the Upstate of South Carolina, establishing a study abroad program in Germany would create opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration for students and faculty at home and abroad.

As a hub for commerce and culture, Berlin is an ideal location. Students and faculty would have access to numerous organizations, and would be well situated for short trips to other key locations in Germany and the surrounding region.

This program would create great opportunities for our students and faculty over the coming years, and I believe it could have a high market demand for Clemson students.

Regards,

[Signature]

Richard E. Goodstein, Ph.D.
Dean