

ASP Town Meeting – February 27, 2009

International Connections and Engagement Discussion – led by Carol Brewer

Notes from Sarah Cullison

- Canadian studies
 - offers underappreciated opportunities to students for study abroad-closer, lower costs
 - can prepare students for international resources, good fit with UM programs
 - tradeoffs-how do we choose b/t opportunities: while Canada is not a culturally different as some countries it still has a lot to offer
- Funding
 - campus has jumped from 12 to 80 programs over 8 years for international study but the budget has stayed the same
 - entrepreneurial approach-grants etc... to drive further expansion
- International programs council
 - convened by Provost to decide which regions around the world we want to focus on, we can't do it all
 - currently faculty interest drives which regions we are interested in
- Language requirements
 - does UM really aspire to have all students take a language? we need to decide campus consensus on this issue
 - ASCRC said students should take language but then many programs immediately got exceptions
- UM has lots of focus on UM's students international experience abroad but we need more focus on international students' experience here
 - i.e. problems with international TA's and English barriers
 - UM tries to maintain the balance of UM students out to international students in (relates to academic affairs funding issues)
 - since many of our students don't go abroad maybe we need a 1:10 ratio of UM:International students to give UM students an international experience at UM
- International programs structural issues within the rest of academics
 - i.e. grad programs, who should decide admittance of international students-department, grad school, international programs...?
 - don't view international as a separate issue-view as a priority within everything we do
- International students as scholars
 - these students often have higher GPA's and retention and generate more revenue for UM than US students (always out of state)
 - these students can only work on campus b/c of visa status

-create a learning/living center for international students who started 1st two years in home country and finish degree at UM (ways to increase enrollment at UM)

- Office of civic engagement
 - how can we use service learning to help these students feel more like a part of the greater Missoula community
 - for US students Obama plans to use service learning as a way for students to pay for higher education
- Student life
 - how ready is Missoula to accept international students? Most students feel well received, probably a strength of our program
 - experience not as good for Muslims students, especially those from Arab countries
 - need better education for police force in Missoula
 - placing of international students with American roommates-do US students want international roommates?
 - US students do get questionnaire about willingness to room with international students but these are usually students who get housing early. Due to application/visa process international students often get housing late and get whoever is left over
- Curriculum design
 - plan last 2 years of UM curriculum to help US students prepare to work overseas
- International programs office is very understaffed compared to other institutions with good international programs
- UM students don't know much about the cultures/issues of the countries they want to study abroad in
 - send more faculty abroad to bring more cultural diversity back to UM
- Need a central database of faculty/staff/student exchanges to other countries for the international office
 - use these campus members as recruiters/representatives for UM while they are abroad