IES Abroad Vienna Program Assessment April 8-12, 2019

Committee Report
Background

This review was conducted on behalf of the IES Abroad Academic Council. Charges to the Assessment Committee were drawn from the IES Abroad MAP and submitted to and approved during the fall 2018 meeting of the IES Abroad Academic Council. The charges addressed all aspects of the Vienna European Society & Culture and Music programs, including Center facilities, German language program and immersion, area studies courses, courses that will be a central part of the new discipline-specific programs (business, psychology, music), cultural integration, student affairs, housing, and co-curricular opportunities. The last program assessment in Vienna was conducted in 2008.

Historical Perspective

Founded in 1950, the IES Vienna Program offers a wide-ranging curriculum with a European focus, appealing to students across many disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences. IES Vienna has always been primarily an English-taught program that assumes no prior knowledge of German but requires students to study German as part of the program. As the program has grown and developed, it has incorporated advanced level German language courses and electives taught in the German language.

For many years, the Center offered a single semester program, but the strong interest in, and access to, world-class musical instruction and performance led to the creation of a separate Music Program in the fall of 2008. The original program was later titled European Society & Culture in the fall of 2010. Those have been the two programs on offer since that point in time. During the summer, there are two program options: Music, History & Performance, and Psychology.

In the coming year, there will be three new options in Vienna. Starting in the summer of 2019, a full-time, 8-week Summer Internship Program will be offered. The European Society & Culture program has traditionally offered a broad-based curriculum with a European focus, appealing to students across a range of disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Students in this program will study the culture, history, business, and politics of Vienna and its surrounding regions. Beginning fall 2019, this program will split into two more programs: (1) Business, Economics & International relations and (2) Psychology & Social Sciences. Thus, students who choose Vienna as their destination this upcoming fall will be able to choose from four programs instead of two. Each program will feature a multi-day program-related trip component to supplement students’ coursework.

The program is currently located in the Palais Corbelli, an elegant 17th-century palace located within walking distance of numerous sites of cultural importance, including concert halls, museums and theaters.

Semester program enrollments in Vienna have been steady over most of the past decade with 200-225 for the fall and spring terms combined. In recent years, however, these enrollments have spiked and for the past three years have totaled between 280 and 320. Summer program enrollments have been strong at 60-70 students each summer. An area of notable growth in recent years is customized programs. The number of programs held steady at four or five for the past several years until the Center hosted nine programs in
2018, with a similar number projected for 2019.

**US Program Assessment Committee**

- Phyllis Haberman, Managing Director at Golden Seeds LLC, Member of IES Abroad’s Board of Directors, Alumna of IES Vienna 1968-1969
- Lutz Koepnick, PhD, Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor of German, Cinema and Media Arts, Vanderbilt University
- Megan Leff, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Program Dean, IESAbroad (Secretary)
- Chris Niemiec, PhD, Associate Professor in Psychology, University of Rochester
- Mark Rush, PhD, Director of International Education, Professor of Politics, Washington and Lee (Chair)
- Joey Tartell, PhD, Director of Undergraduate Studies and Professor of Music, Indiana University, Jacobs School of Music

**IES Abroad Vienna Faculty Committee Members**

- Ulrike Anton, PhD
  - MS 390 Music Performance Workshop
  - MS 391 Individual Performance Studies
- Wolfgang Moelzer
  - IB 320 Strategic Management
  - IB 329 Business Ethics
  - IB 344 International Business: Towards a Global Market
  - IB 348 Management Theory and Practice
  - IM 302 Managing Behavior in Organizations
IES Abroad Vienna Student Committee Members

- **Chet Humphries**, Spring 2019 Vienna Music Program, Music Major, Vanderbilt University
- **Stephanie Xu**, Academic Year 2019 Vienna Music Program, Music Performance Major, Northwestern University

Executive summary

The program assessment team spent the week of April 8-12, 2019 meeting with faculty, staff, students, and internship coordinators from the IES Abroad Vienna Center. For a complete schedule of review week, see Appendix B. The team celebrated and was impressed by the tremendous success of the Vienna Program across numerous areas including (but not limited to):

- **Impressive recent enrollment growth.** Since 2015, the European Society and Culture program has experienced a doubling of enrollments, while numbers in the Music program have dropped slightly. As well, the Center has experienced additional programming demands associated with Study Abroad Foundation (SAF) customized programs, an increased demand for US customized programming (“CP”—see below), and an equally
impressive demand for placements in the summer full-time internship program initiated in 2019.

- **Center Management of this growth.** Rapid enrollment growth over the past ten years (from 280 in 2008-09 to 577 in 2018-19) is indicative of the excellence and popularity of the programming available at the Vienna Center. While growth of this magnitude and speed is inevitably accompanied by significant short- and medium-term strains (as staff must quickly adapt and reallocate physical and human resources), the staff demonstrated an inspiring spirit of service and dedication to ensuring the success of the Center.

- **Committed, dedicated, and talented administrative team.** Through a series of formal presentations and informal meetings, the staff demonstrated a deep commitment to the students, a focus on IES Abroad’s mission, and a desire to provide quality programming in all areas of operations.

- **Overall student satisfaction.** Our conversations with student representatives and the written reviews and ratings of each course and instructor embodied high praise for the faculty and staff. Students are generally highly satisfied with academic and experiential opportunities in Vienna. They did express some reservations about particular aspects of the programming (Comprehensive Orientation and Re-entry Program (CORE)), length and content of orientation, condition of and space in the Center, etc.—see below), but there was no doubting their absolute satisfaction with their overall experiences.

- **Meaningful courses, outstanding faculty, and strong opportunities for immersion.** We observed numerous courses and met with faculty members who expressed a commitment to ensuring that courses are current and engaging and that immersion experiences are an integral part of the program’s design. This was manifest in the care taken in syllabus preparation and in the eagerness of faculty to collaborate and share ideas for developing new courses and experiences.

- **Strong and well-established internship program.** Internship placements in the fields of education, business, music, public service, and arts and culture offer students exceptional insight into the local culture and opportunity for immersion. The internship placement coordinators are experts in their respective areas, well connected, and fully devoted to ensuring that students have authentic experiences.

- **Excellent music program.** The traditional jewel in the crown of the Vienna center remains inspiring and continues to attract accomplished students in a variety of voice and instrument majors from a broad section of institutions.

- **Safe, secure, and comfortable housing options.** Despite the rapid increase in enrolment, Vienna center staff have kept ahead of demand through regular surveys of the housing market and securing cost-effective terms for student rentals. Student feedback confirmed high satisfaction with the quality of housing.

Within this context of tremendous success, the team identified several areas and issues that call for review or other recommended action. We state these briefly here with more information provided in this report.

- **Implement a Center-wide collaborative strategic planning process and articulate a 5-year plan.** The team noted that management of the Center’s growth was not matched by a broadly

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collaborative and consultative planning process. We found that different constituencies were unaware of one another’s goals, concerns, workload, etc. As well, numerous stakeholders volunteered that they frequently felt that decisions were made in a manner that forced them to behave reactively instead of proactively.

- **Articulate vision, rationale, and assessment process for new program structure to all stakeholders.** Rapid program growth clearly has put a strain on the team and its ability to engage in collective strategic planning exercises. As the Center prepares for greater program complexity and continued growth, it will be necessary to hold team planning sessions that focus on the direction, development, logistics, and assessment of the new program structure.

- **Clarify and strengthen role of Faculty Coordinators for faculty oversight and development.** In our conversations with the Faculty Coordinators about the new Center program structure, they still had many questions about the implementation of the new programs. Beyond the organization and teaching of courses, the faculty were unaware of the challenges the new program structure presented to one another and want the opportunity to collaborate in the planning of additional responsibilities, such as mandatory trips, advising, faculty evaluations, etc.

- **Take necessary steps to enhance the place and profile of German language instruction in Center programming.** We support the Center Director’s commitment to ensuring that German remain an integral, central part of the Vienna curriculum. Nonetheless, we noted that German language courses maintain a less than equal position relative to existing and new programs. We recommend taking action to enhance the profile of German language instruction and removing the stigma of having German classes be the only courses offered on Fridays. The Center could promote a full-immersion opportunity that would consist of combining German-taught area studies courses with a homestay and internship, for example.

- **Transfer academic advising to faculty coordinators.** While this goes against the trend in the USA of transferring academic advising from faculty to professional advising staff, the faculty coordinators were unanimous in their desire to have faculty members involved in this process because, in their estimation, faculty have better knowledge (than center staff) of the content and commonality of content among courses.

- **Modernize the Registration Processes.** Staff, faculty and students indicated that the onsite registration process is inefficient, confusing, frustrating, and needs improvement. Currently, students have several weeks to finalize their registration on-site, resulting in many scheduling changes that make students anxious and complicate the work of the staff and faculty. The Center should try to reduce the amount of changes that can be made on-site and review the online registration process to ensure that it is as effective as possible.

- **Shorten orientation and revisit the need for and impact of off-site orientation.** In light of the demands resulting from rapid enrollment increase, staff have not been able to conduct orientation in a manner that enables them to develop a familiarity with students as they have in the past. We recommend to shorten and digitize the process of transmitting information to students, so that staff will be able to engage them in smaller, more meaningful orientation activities. Much of the orientation information can be placed online in a manner that ensures ease of access and the ability to measure student comprehension.
• **Add CORE to afternoons during intensive German sessions.** Administration of CORE has been hampered by the impact of growth. By shortening and digitizing the orientation process, staff will have more time to conduct preliminary CORE activity during the period of intensive German instruction at the beginning of each term. Ongoing CORE sessions could take place within the language sections as well, as language courses are a natural way to create student cohorts and ensure a manageable size for interactive sessions.

• **Review the number and capacity of staff to administer orientation, advising, and counseling.** We observe that adequate administration and oversight of the intensive and ongoing orientation and CORE process has been hampered by enrollment growth. We recommend a review of the processes to address the potential for streamlining them or a review of staffing to ensure its adequacy in meeting the student needs envisioned by the IES Abroad MAP and CORE.

• **Formalize and augment the role of resident Austrians (RAs).** We found that the RAs are underutilized. They could perform an important support role to the staff in such areas as advising, orientation, cultural immersion, CORE implementation, etc. Expanding their role would offer great opportunities to connect academic and residential aspects of the program and strengthen liberal arts values.

• **Consider reducing the number of field trips.** In light of the logistical aspects of planning for the mandatory field trips and the expanded, term-long demands of overseeing CORE, we suggest that the Center review the necessity and number of field trips and balance them against the opportunities posed by the new mandatory trips.

• **Acquire additional, technologically appropriate space for the Center.** The site visit team appreciates the historical role that the Palais Corbelli plays in Vienna programming. Nonetheless, the Center’s age, historic status, floor plan, and technical capacity place tremendous limitations on pedagogy, student meeting spaces, faculty meeting spaces, etc. We understand that, since our visit, the Center has acquired additional space. It is critical that this and any additional space be designed for 21st century technical and pedagogical needs and that it include student, staff, and faculty meeting places (including closed spaces for confidential meetings).

• **Improve faculty evaluations through instituting an anonymous system.** As the program grows, it is increasingly necessary to have multiple layers of review of the student course evaluations. By using the faculty coordinators to conduct a preliminary review, the Center director can then focus on areas of concern.

• **Review mental health resources for the students.** Due to growing demand by the current student population, we recommend a review of the mental health services afforded for the students with a goal to improve availability, confidentiality, and to better match resources to the needs of students.

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**Overview of the Particular Charges**

Our charges drew directly from *The IES Abroad MAP for Study Abroad Programs* (See Appendix A for the official charges). In a pre-assessment planning meeting, Program Dean Megan Leff
reviewed areas of recent focus and development in Vienna:

- Expanding internship options (to prepare for the commencement of the Summer Internship Program in 2019);
- Developing new courses to meet high-demand majors, especially psychology;
- Expanding housing options due to increased enrollments;
- Imbuing educational and administrative aspects of the Center with our educational technology platforms (e.g., Moodle and Guidebook);
- Ensuring that the ever-changing social and political landscape of Europe is reflected in dynamic courses that are of necessity and importance to today’s students of European affairs.

Dean Leff also highlighted additional items in the charges to which the team was asked to pay special attention and struck others that were removed from the scope of the review team’s agenda. Finally, the team reviewed the 2008 site visit report to address whether any issues remained from the recommendations made by its predecessors.

I. Student Learning Environment

A. Pre-departure information

The end-of-term evaluations indicated that students were not fully satisfied with the amount of information that they received in their pre-departure materials, in particular as it relates to housing, schedule of classes Monday through Friday, and access to the University of Vienna. The students with whom we met echoed concerns noted in the evaluations. Students also voiced complaints in their evaluations about the age and inadequacy of furniture in the IES classrooms. (These echo the complaints voiced and recorded in the 2008 report.)

The on-site students acknowledged that they may not have paid close attention to pre-departure information. To remedy this, we urge the digitization of the pre-departure orientation process in a manner that will cater to the online habits of contemporary students and ensure student accountability. We appreciate that it is a challenge to get students to comply with expectations in advance of arrival. Perhaps the Center could provide incentives—for example, timely completion of online orientation material would increase the probability of getting preferred housing placements.

Recommendations

1. The committee recommends including a clear description of the Palais Corbelli and its location in Vienna.

2. The committee recommends providing more detailed information on the student housing options and their locations in Vienna.
3. The committee recommends emphasizing that academic programming is scheduled Monday through Friday.

4. The committee recommends setting clear expectations about enrolling at the University of Vienna.

5. The committee recommends digitizing the most important pre-departure information and use a tool that requires students to acknowledge that they have read the information.

B. On-site Cultural and Academic Orientation

On-site Cultural Orientation

The Center has a long history of taking its students off-site immediately after arrival for several days of orientation. Having students together in an off-site location allows them to bond with each other and get to know the Center staff. In the past, the group traveled to Mariazell, a village in the Alps three hours from Vienna. As the enrolments have grown, the Center has moved the orientation program to a hostel in Vienna’s 11th district.

In our discussion with students, several commented that they were eager to move into their permanent housing and wanted to spend less time off site. They also felt that the group was too large and that the content of group sessions could be more informative, especially with regards to local customs. The end-of-term evaluations indicate that students find the amount of material delivered during orientation to be overwhelming and difficult to absorb as they are recovering from jetlag.

Staff acknowledge that the pressures and demands from rapid growth have hampered their capacity to minister to the students effectively (we note that the 2008 report predicted this). Orientation requires smaller, intimate group work. The rapid growth in enrollment without sufficient growth in staffing and space has necessitated the use of much larger groups and correspondingly less effective communication of important onsite orientation information.

As we note above, online platforms offer tremendous opportunity to improve and digitize the orientation processes. In order to maximize the benefits of on-site orientation, we recommend that the Center develop a “flipped orientation” where much of the necessary information is delivered on-line, leaving more time for discussion and interactive activities or sessions when the students are on-site. This will enable students to access and review important material before they arrive, and will allow the Center to maintain student accountability by outfitting the online resources with digital signature capacities so that students can affirm that they have read online information.

Comprehensive Orientation and Re-Entry Program (CORE)
The staff is clearly passionate about CORE and is committed to providing students with this support and opportunity for exchange during key points in the semester. Rapid growth and development has made it difficult for staff to dedicate their attention to this initiative, and in our conversations with both staff and students, it was evident that this was missed. We recommended earlier that shortening and digitizing the orientation process will allow staff more time to conduct preliminary CORE activity during the period of intensive German instruction at the beginning of each term. Ongoing CORE sessions could take place within the language sections as well, as language courses are a natural way to create student cohorts and ensure a manageable size for interactive sessions.

**Diversity Sessions**

Student evaluations indicated some level of frustration and concern regarding orientation material on diversity, whereas the staff felt that the Center addresses diversity issues conscientiously and thoroughly. It is not clear whether student complaints about diversity are actually complaints about the challenge of immersing into a new culture with its own distinct issues of diversity. Diversity in Austria touches upon themes (such as East European ethnicity, 20th century European history, the Holocaust, etc.) that may be different from those addressed in the US. This is less a matter of concern than one of curiosity. We note that IES is investing in diversity training that will take place at all IES Centers beginning in Fall 2019. No doubt this will be beneficial to staff, faculty, and homestay hosts.

**Recommendations**

4. The committee strongly recommends reconsidering holding orientation off-site.

5. The committee recommends restructuring orientation so that students are in smaller, more manageable groups.

6. The committee recommends digitizing key orientation information and requiring students to review it prior to arrival.

7. The committee recommends conducting CORE sessions during the language-intensive period and continuing to hold sessions within the language sections.

8. The committee recommends training and requiring Resident Austrians (RAs) to assist during the orientation period to cover some of the cultural sessions.

**C. Instructional Quality**

Over the course of the week, the committee observed a total of 23 IES Abroad courses, including four language sections and two German-taught area studies courses. Overall, the team is impressed by the faculty’s engagement, enthusiasm, and creativity. We found that most faculty make efforts to engage their students through a variety of effective interactive
methodologies. Still, some faculty were not peripatetic, interactive, or willing to do more than simply lecture. While some amount of lecturing is necessary, we recommend that the faculty coordinators organize regular class visits by colleagues to identify faculty who would benefit from additional training on new methodologies, technology, etc. We expect that this training will be beneficial to all faculty as they share their experiences and expertise with each other. This process could thus be cast in terms of mutual, collegial assistance and development.

The team found that the following classes in particular manifested pedagogical enthusiasm and superb student engagement:

- **MS 272 Film Music (Jean-Pascal Vachon)** – the instructor did a masterful job of blending music, video, commentary, and discussion despite the severe technical and acoustical constraints of the Palais classroom.
- **MS/EU/CU 352 Opera History II: Romantic through Modern (Gretl Satorius)**
- **GR 403 Emerging Competent Abroad III (Andrea Sernett)**
- **MS 371 Arnold Schönberg and the Early 20th Century (Dr. John Wilson)**
- **DR 342 G Vienna Theater II (Dr. Saskia Haag)** – this was a wonderful class; students were very engaged even when encountering challenging materials. Visits to local performances offer fantastic opportunities to deepen the understanding of texts and their contexts. The instructor was very well prepared, encouraging intricate debates and lively exchanges among the students. Perfect!
- **AH 370 Italian and Northern Renaissance Painting (Dr. Lisa Regan)** – this was simply a fantastic class/site visit held within the Kunsthistorische Museum. Professor Regan organized the students well, mixed brief lectures on particular works of art with small group work for the students. The time flew by, students were happy and engaged. This was a model example of a class that took advantage of Vienna’s location.

In reviewing the course syllabi, the committee noted that faculty make their expectations clear and since the 2008 review, the Center continues to work with faculty to update all syllabi and ensure that they are in proper format and meet the current standards and expectations of IES Abroad’s Curriculum Committee. The committee noted some courses that still need work, but for the most part the syllabi have been updated. In the past year, the Center hosted an expert on US higher education who conducted a workshop on engaging students in the classroom.

With regard to teaching technology and the use of Moodle, we note that faculty are unquestionably constrained by the unavoidable limitations imposed by the Palais Corbelli. The restrictions on running new wires to support 21st century classroom technology, the poor acoustics, the ambient noise rising from the street (it is necessary to open windows) or from creaking floors, and the limitations on climate control place insurmountable limitations on the use of technologically current pedagogy. That being said, the committee reviewed the individual course Moodle pages and felt that faculty are using the tool appropriately and in some cases are incorporating more advanced and interactive features. The Center director commented that Moodle workshops are held for faculty on a regular basis.
Recommendations

9. The committee recommends that the faculty coordinators organize regular class visits by colleagues to identify faculty who would benefit from additional training and to help balance expectations about rigor.

10. The committee recommends using Faculty Coordinators to conduct an initial review of course evaluations. The review would be done without identifying the course or instructor, and problematic evaluations would be flagged with the Director, who would follow-up with the relevant faculty member. The use of an anonymous system would alleviate concerns about criticisms of colleagues.

D. Curricular Design

Over the past four years, Vienna has submitted 19 new courses to the Curriculum Committee for review and approval, all of which were intended to expand on offerings and reflect the changing landscape in the four primary thematic areas. Some examples include:

- CU/SO200 Vienna’s Victuals: Cultural History of Food and Drink
- LT200 Literature in the Modern Metropolis
- MS200 Film Music
- MS/CU271 History of Jazz
- PS/HS300 Aspects of the Free Will Debate
- PO/EC/IB3xx Circular Economy: From Make-Take-Waste to a Visionary System within Planetary Boundaries in a Global and European Context

The number of new courses generated by faculty, along with the incorporation of field visits to support the classroom experience, testifies to the Center’s commitment to keeping courses current and experiential learning immersive.

Music Program

The academic courses offered in music are wide ranging, giving the diverse student population choices that will suit their needs. For the non-music major, there are a number of music appreciation and survey courses, including “Mahler and Turn-of-the-Century Vienna,” which has the appeal of studying about Vienna in Vienna.

Music majors can, of course, select from the survey courses as well. There are additional courses designed for music majors which, in some cases, can fulfill major field degree requirements at the students’ home institution. As music theory is usually a group of sequential courses, finding an appropriate course could be difficult. The choice to offer advanced theory is a good one, as it provides complementary and supplementary material that students may not have been exposed
Students must be able to continue degree progress while studying abroad. The two-semester sequence of music history, MS401/402, is comprehensive and will transfer to most American universities. The other advanced courses, including Music Analysis, Arnold Schönberg and the Early 20th Century, and The Classical Symphony, are courses that can also fulfill music majors’ requirements at their home institutions.

**Music Performance**

The most difficult aspect of dealing with musicians from a variety of schools is offering opportunities for performance. The Music Performance Workshop does an excellent job. Students audition early in the semester and are placed in chamber groups based on instrumentation and ability. They are coached by faculty each week and there are three performances per semester. The atmosphere is supportive and collegial, allowing all of the students the opportunity for growth by being in an appropriate group with faculty coaching and public performances.

Music students also sign up for Individual Performance Studies. This allows the student to study one-on-one with local professionals on their primary instrument. IES has created good relationships around Vienna, giving students excellent choices in selecting private instructors.

For music students, there is a need for both individual and group practice spaces. IES has practice rooms located in some of the housing locations for students. This is excellent, and vital to music majors. The practice rooms are in terrific shape, including some large enough to accommodate chamber groups.

The performance space is a lovely room in the IES building. It is equipped with two grand pianos and a harpsichord. Students may use the space for their own performances. Video and audio recording equipment are also available to the students.

**E. Language Development Opportunities**

The review committee supports the Center’s continued dedication to German language training as a key to the abroad experience and cultural immersion of IES students. Though we understand the difficulties and challenges to offer relevant courses at all possible levels of instruction to the diverse body of students attending IES Vienna during any given semester, we commend the Center for its vibrant efforts to teach German language skills to all students, to meet different learning goals, strategies, and motivations, and to ensure that no student leaves the program without some exposure to basic German language. The program also accommodates students arriving with more advanced language skills with linguistically inflected interest in the workings of Austrian literature, culture, and history.
The growth of the overall program over the past years, and the anticipated expansions in the time to come, require careful attention to each and every aspect of the language program in order to live up to internal ambitions and external expectations. While students overall, with a very few exceptions, report relatively high grades of satisfaction with their respective language classes, the review committee noticed a considerable variety in both teaching strategies and student involvement. The amount of English spoken in class at the lower level of instruction by students and their instructors does not meet expectations for immersive and communicate language education typical for American college campuses. Pace and progress, as well as the calibration of communicative and grammar instruction, also do not match comparable American classroom experiences. While much of this might work for students who seek to meet the Center’s language requirement, it will produce considerable difficulties for students eager to continue German language classes after their return to their respective home campuses.

Though students seem to enjoy and value language instruction in general, the review committee noted a certain lack of rigor and consistency at the lower levels of teaching, partly caused by students’ heavy travel schedules and, as a result, some lackluster attendance and preparation late and early in the week. The committee urges the Center to re-think its current teaching structure, attendance policies, and homework expectations. In order to coordinate instructional expectations, syllabi, and teaching methods, we also encourage the language department to introduce a more rigorous system of frequent peer observation and review among its instructors. Such a system would lead to a more coherent use of instructional materials and technologies. The online course content management system is used very unevenly in our view; the quality of classroom technology is below what any student would expect from their home institution; hardware is in dire need of update while some instructors will need to undergo additional training and encouragement in order to familiarize themselves and effectively utilize online resources during class time and beyond.

The review committee found that upper level courses taught in German on various aspects of Austrian or German culture are of high quality, adequate rigor, and meet or in fact exceed the quality of instruction expected at comparable levels at American colleges. Students taking classes at these levels at IES Vienna have all reasons to assume that their courses will transfer easily to their home institutions and productively contribute to their intellectual and linguistic development. Our suggestion is to keep up the existing level of dedication and care—the excellent work—even when classes might be small in size.

In light of the anticipated further growth of the Center, the review committee strongly suggests revising the organizational structure to ensure that the language program in both the perception of the students and of the Center itself does not become an afterthought, a mere fifth wheel. If the Center wants to stay true to its dedication to language education as key to students’ cultural immersion and study abroad experience, it will need to solidify the language department’s institutional role and communicate to its students, the members of the Center, and to participating academic institutions that language education at all levels of instruction matters deeply to what it means to be enrolled at IES Vienna.
The committee expresses concern about requiring German classes on Fridays and urges the Center to reconsider this policy. Student evaluations and the students with whom we met expressed unqualified frustration with this policy. We understand the Center Director’s view that this is one means of discouraging the students to vacate Vienna for other parts of Europe every weekend. Nonetheless, the policy unquestionably generates ill will and enhances dislike of learning German.

**Recommendations**

11. The committee strongly recommends restricting the use of English in all German-language courses, including the novice level.

12. The committee recommends providing additional training to instructors on the use of technology in language instruction.

13. The committee strongly recommends that the language coordinator observes courses at the Novice Abroad level and underscores the expectations of academic rigor and workload.

14. The committee encourages the language department to introduce a more rigorous system of frequent peer observation and review among its instructors in order to coordinate instructional expectations, syllabi, and teaching methods.

15. The committee expresses concern about requiring German classes on Fridays and urges the Center to reconsider this policy.

**F. Internships, Field Placements, and Community-Based Learning**

The Committee met with two semester internship coordinators (for Education and Public Service) and visited two placements (a public high school and the EU-Environmental Bureau). In both cases, the sponsors expressed an eagerness to engage with the Center and to provide immersive, meaningful experiences that connected students to Vienna and Europe as well as to the particular academic areas in which they sought experience. The coordinators and faculty who taught internship seminars manifested a similar eagerness as well as meticulous interest in ensuring that students had meaningful opportunities to reflect upon and discuss their experiences in a classroom setting.

The student interning at the public high school reported that his placement has helped him gain confidence and practical teaching experience, and that this opportunity has exceeded his expectations and allowed him to consider teaching as a future career. The end-of-term evaluations report that students are pleased with their placements and feel that their work is substantive, provides great insight into the local work culture, and that they contributed real
value to their placement.

The Center has strengthened its semester internship placement process and created a strong foundation upon which to build the new summer internship program. The new summer internship coordinator brings creativity, efficiency and strategic thinking to her position that will help her satisfy the extraordinary demand for the inaugural summer internship program.

G. Field Study and Trips

It is evident that the current programs consider field study an integral part of students’ academic experience. The committee participated in two field studies: a visit to the Kunsthistorische Museum with an art history course, and attendance at a play for the advanced German students in a German theater course. In both cases, instructors thoroughly prepared students for their visits and made the connections clear between the sites and the course content. The students were fully engaged and attentive. The committee noted that the majority of IES Abroad courses schedule at least one field study during the semester, with some scheduling several more.

The new program structure requires a mid-semester trip that augments academic themes. We support the rationale for the design and creation of the trips. It will provide students the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom and engage in a culturally immersive experience. To ensure the effectiveness of these trips, the committee recommends that Center staff apply the same rigor and intentionality in planning that is used to connect field trips to the content of the courses with which they are affiliated.

In a discussion with the internship coordinators, they expressed concern that the trips take time away from the work assignments and would prevent their interns from satisfying the requisite number of hours at their placements. It becomes a problem for the coordinators who rely on the students to work regularly. The committee recommends exploring solutions to this issue so that interns can still take part in the trips and satisfy their placement requirements. Perhaps trips for internship students could be a few days instead of a full week.

As the programs continue to grow, the committee recommends considering a fewer number of field trips each term so that the coordination of trips and events is more manageable.

**Recommendations**

16. In collaboration with the faculty coordinators, the committee recommends ensuring that the mid-semester trip content is tied back to the courses so that the trips and classroom experiences complement one another.

17. The committee recommends working with the internship coordinators to find solutions that will allow interns to take part in the mid-semester trips and still
satisfy their placement requirements.

18. The committee recommends considering reducing the number of IES-sponsored trips.

H. Engagement in IES Abroad-Sponsored Cultural and Social Activities

The staff demonstrated the tremendous content and ease of accessibility of the online Guidebook for students. The committee had many positive comments about Guidebook’s organization and potential. The Manager of Student Affairs, Helmut Summesberger, and the entire staff are to be commended for assembling a quality, dynamic, 21st century caliber resource for students that addresses everything from where to eat to where to seek any sort of medical assistance.

The staff shared data showing student usage of Guidebook across the semester. The usage dropped off shortly after the first weeks of the program. In our interviews with student representatives, they confirmed Guidebook was a solid resource, but that students generally did not continue to take advantage of it after the start of their programs.

Recommendations

19. The committee recommends that the Center enlist student representatives to assist with publicizing Guidebook’s utility and to encourage its ongoing use.

I. Involvement in Other Academic, Political, Economic and Cultural Institutions

The committee notes that internships provide insight into academic, political, economic and cultural institutions, but it was not able to assess the specifics during its visit.

J. Re-entry into Home Culture and Home Institution

The committee was not able to assess the Re-entry program during its visit.

II. Student Learning; Assessment and Intercultural Development

During the review in Vienna, the committee was not able to observe or assess these areas of student learning:

- Intellectual Development
- Development of Language and Communication Skills
- Cognitive Growth
- Interpersonal Growth
- Intrapersonal Growth
III. Resources for Academic and Student Support

A. Faculty Qualifications

The committee is impressed by the caliber of the faculty as well as their commitment to the Center’s mission. Their numerous connections to and networks in Vienna provide a tremendous resource on which the Center draws in support of the classroom experience. There is good balance between faculty longevity and dynamic new hiring. The faculty coordinators are particularly invested in ensuring the quality of courses and contributing to the innovation of new program offerings.

The faculty with whom we spoke expressed a lack of clarity and understanding with regard to the new faculty coordinator role and their involvement in the mid-semester trips. Accordingly, the structure, roles of the coordinators, as well as the nature and expectations of the new program structure need to be stated clearly.

Several faculty expressed concerns about not receiving information about IES-sponsored faculty development programs. In general, the committee reiterates the need for improved horizontal and vertical communication. With regard to faculty recruitment, training, assessment, and development we noted inconsistencies that may be a result of the center’s growth outpacing some programmatic development. The Center Director holds training workshops each summer, but he acknowledged that he is unable to review in detail all course evaluations.

Recommendations

20. The committee recommends clarifying the role and expectations of the faculty coordinators.

21. The committee recommends that the director consider using the faculty coordinators to conduct an initial review of course evaluations in their respective programs. The anonymized evaluation process recommended earlier could be utilized.

22. The committee recommends improving communication about professional development opportunities.

B. Administrative Staff Qualifications

The staff is a highly committed and energetic group that is passionate about working with students. Some members have held multiple positions and have been promoted over the years; others are relatively new to the Center and are assigned to some of the new or newly expanding initiatives. The committee was impressed with the staff members’ qualifications and their dedication to the students. The longevity of the staff also is a positive indication of loyalty to the Center and mission.
Due to growing demand by the student population, we recommend a review of the mental health services afforded for the students with a goal to improve availability, confidentiality, and to better match resources to the needs of students.

C. Academic Advising/Registration

Staff and students commented on the inefficiencies of pre-registration (schedule conflicts, enrollment capacities, lack of knowledge about waitlist status until on-site), and the limitations of the current database. The staff also expressed frustration that students can continue to modify their course selection during the two-week orientation and language-intensive period prior to the start of classes. Students and faculty acknowledged that a more reliable preregistration system would not only speed up the process, but also enable staff to organize the orientation and intensive German instruction period more efficiently and effectively. The committee understands that IES is in the process of identifying a new student registration system that will include improved features.

The faculty members with whom we met expressed a desire to be involved in on-site academic advising as they have a much closer understanding of course content and compatibility.

Recommendations

23. The committee recommends reviewing pre-registration to identify ways to streamline the process and reduce the amount of registration changes that occur once on-site.

24. The committee recommends that the director consider ways in which the faculty coordinators can be involved in advising, whether as the primary academic advisors, or in working in tandem with the staff.

D. IES Abroad Center Facilities

The staff, faculty and students share a common emotional attachment to the historic ambience of the Palais Corbelli and the location is unbeatable. And while it provides an impressive setting for music recitals, the Center is inadequate as a teaching space for many courses. As the Center prepares to expand and acquire additional space, the committee recommends that the new classrooms support 21st century pedagogical and technological needs and have adequate space for students to socialize and for faculty and staff to meet privately and confidentially with students.
E. Access to Local Educational and Cultural Institutions

We note, with no recommendation, the evolving nature of the relationship with the University of Vienna. While students continue to have the option to enroll directly, the Director indicated that a host of factors—ranging from calendar idiosyncrasies to different grading and advising practices—had decreased the appeal of direct enrollment. In light of these obstacles, the committee understands that future university enrollment will remain limited.

F. Research and Learning Resources

The committee accessed the Center’s Moodle sites and felt that the faculty were using these appropriately and that Moodle offered all of the features necessary to store information, load resources, and create interactive activities or projects for the students. In general, faculty use of online platforms varied in relation to pedagogical style and preference. In order to meet student experiences and expectations regarding ever-more expansive online components of instruction, the committee encourages the Center to continue to offer regular training sessions, workshops, and webinars to make their use of Moodle’s affordances more effective and even.

G. Housing and Homestays

We met with Tobias Sigmund to tour housing available at a residence hall located across the street from the IES Center; students apartments at Margaretenstrasse, which also houses IES’ music practice rooms and recording studio; and Fizz House, a new student residence located in Brigittenau, the 20th district in Vienna. All options were secure, conveniently located, modern, and in quality neighborhoods. It is a tribute to Tobias’s energy that the Center can offer such a variety of high quality housing options and that there are sufficient options to manage future growth.
Appendix A: Charges for the IES Abroad Program Assessment of the IES Vienna Center Submitted for Approval to the Academic Council, October 2018

Items in italics indicate areas of special interest for the IES Vienna Program Assessment.

I. Student Learning Environment

A. Pre-departure Information
   1. Information presented to students includes practical information about academic program requirements, living and travel arrangements, safety and health considerations, and expectations about expenses.
   2. IES Abroad information begins to prepare students for the challenge of crossing cultures.
   3. IES Abroad information articulates program goals for student learning and development in the local setting.

B. On-site Cultural and Academic Orientation
   1. The IES Abroad Center conducts an extensive initial orientation program on policies and protocols governing academics, emergencies, health and safety, housing, independent travel, and the student code of conduct.
   2. The IES Abroad Center orientation introduces students to the local culture and local laws.
   3. Staff and guest speakers knowledgeable about the locale conduct the orientation.
   4. The IES Abroad Center introduces students to a process for reflecting on their experience abroad through CORE™, Comprehensive Orientation and Re-entry.
   5. The IES Abroad Center addresses diversity issues including gender, race, and religious practice in the host country.
   6. Under appropriate supervision, students are given immediate opportunities to explore and function in the local setting (e.g., using local transportation, eating, attending cultural events).

C. Instructional Quality
   1. Faculty are committed to student-centered pedagogy.
   2. Faculty use the location as a learning resource through experiential learning such as field study and student engagement with the community.
   3. Faculty communicate high expectations of student performance through student learning outcomes that are linked to appropriate and rigorous assignments.
4. Faculty use pedagogically sound educational technology both inside and outside the classroom, when appropriate, to enhance student learning.
5. Faculty integrate the classroom and study outside the classroom by effectively employing the IES Abroad learning management system (Moodle).
6. Faculty are evaluated by student surveys for each course they teach and Center directors review evaluations.

D. Curricular Design
1. Academic programs are designed in keeping with the character of local academic practice to promote students’ academic cultural integration.
2. Academic programs are designed to encourage independent learning.
3. Academic programs are designed to enhance student engagement in the intellectual, political, cultural, and social institutions of the host country.
4. Curriculum and co-curriculum are integrated to reflect the Center’s mission and goals for student learning and development.
5. Curriculum and course content reflect the political, social, and cultural diversity of the host country.
6. The curriculum identifies research opportunities in the community.
7. Sequence of courses and learning experiences are designed for academic credit principally at the undergraduate level in the U.S., with potential application to institutions of higher education abroad and at the graduate level.
8. Courses use discipline-specific methodology at the appropriate level.

E. Language Development Opportunities
1. Course content, textbooks, materials, and goals for student learning correspond to the IES Abroad language development standards.
2. Language classes articulate goals to advance students’ oral, listening, reading, and writing skills at the appropriate level.
3. In language courses, students gain a perspective of the host country’s values, history, culture, and contemporary issues.
4. Language instruction, when appropriate, is integrated into all courses and co-curricular activities.
5. Students are provided out-of-classroom opportunities to develop oral, listening, reading, and writing skills.
6. The IES Abroad Center environment strongly encourages use of host country language through a student pledge.
7. Tutoring and/or other forms of academic assistance are available to students.

F. Internships, Field Placements, and Community-Based Learning
1. Placement sites correspond to the Center goal to build sustainable partnerships in the host community and contribute to the needs and interests of those partners.
2. Placement sites share Center goals for student learning and development.
3. Placement sites give IES students the opportunity to participate in and to critically observe a work environment in the host country.
4. An academic component supports the practicum and follows IES Abroad guidelines.
5. Internship, field placement, and community-based learning sites meet IES standards of safety and risk management.
G. Field Study and Trips
   1. Field studies and field trips reinforce the IES Abroad Center’s goals for student learning and intercultural development.
   2. Supervised field study and field trips are integrated into the academic program.
   3. Qualified guides lead field trips.
   4. Field study and field trips meet IES Abroad’s standards of safety and risk management.
   5. Guided field trips help students take advantage of the region and result in more learning than if students attempt to travel on their own.

H. Engagement in IES Abroad-Sponsored Cultural and Social Activities
   1. The IES Abroad Center organizes activities that facilitate student engagement in the local culture.
   2. The IES Abroad Center conducts CORE™, Comprehensive Orientation and Re-entry, to guide students’ progress toward personal goals for cultural immersion and intercultural learning.

I. Involvement in Other Academic, Political, Economic and Cultural Institutions
   1. The IES Abroad Center offers guidance to students on local opportunities.
   2. Representatives of local institutions are members of the faculty.
   3. Requirements for minimal student participation are a part of the coursework.

J. Re-entry into Home Culture and Home Institution
   1. The IES Abroad Center offers a reentry program to students related to the re-adjustment to their home campus.
   2. Students are able to identify academic, career, and personal skills gained in studying abroad through CORE™ re-entry programming.
   3. The IES Abroad Center informs students about opportunities to return to the host country, post-graduation.

II. Student Learning; Assessment and Intercultural Development

A. Intellectual Development
   1. Students demonstrate that they have met learning outcomes in IES courses.
   2. Students develop their skills in critical thinking through reflection and research.
   3. Students develop different learning strategies necessary to integrate into the academic culture at local universities.
   4. Students develop their ability to understand and critique a variety of perspectives.

B. Development of Language and Communication Skills
   1. Language instruction follows the guidelines of the IES Abroad MAP for Language and Intercultural Communication.
   2. Students are engaged in setting goals for their language learning.
   3. IES Abroad sponsors appropriate tests of students’ language skills to document their achievement.
   4. IES Abroad language faculty prepare students at highest language levels for appropriate in-country exams that demonstrate mastery.
C. Cognitive Growth
1. Structured opportunities for students to analyze and reflect on their experiences contribute to their awareness of cultural difference.
2. Academic studies, support services, and integrative activities contribute to students’ communication skills across cultures.
3. Assessment of students’ cultural learning is used to enhance the curriculum and co-curriculum.

D. Interpersonal Growth
1. On-site orientation and integrative activities are designed to assist students in adapting to the culture of the host country and in becoming more comfortable in interacting with persons of different cultural backgrounds.
2. Integrative activities are designed to assist students in acquiring general adaptive skills that prepare them to live in a different culture.
3. Students are offered opportunities to explore their leadership potential in the IES Abroad community.
4. Students’ self-reports on their intercultural development are gathered in end-of-term student evaluations.

E. Intrapersonal Growth
1. Curricular and co-curricular activities support students in taking responsibility for their own decisions.
2. Curricular and co-curricular activities support students in gaining a better understanding of their values and beliefs.
3. Curricular and co-curricular activities support students in developing self-awareness in a cultural context.

III. Resources for Academic and Student Support

A. Faculty Qualifications
1. Faculty, including language instructors, have academic credibility and appropriate credentials in their host country.
2. The scholarly achievements of academic faculty meet local university or equivalent standards.
3. Academic faculty generally are currently engaged in scholarship.
4. Faculty are selected to teach IES Abroad courses based on their ability to teach, their disciplinary expertise, and their commitment to the IES Abroad goals and standards.
5. Faculty are involved in developing new courses according to the IES Abroad Center’s curriculum design for approval by the Curriculum Committee.
6. Faculty are sensitive to gender and cultural differences amongst students.
7. New faculty participate in an IES Abroad Orientation and existing faculty participate in IES Abroad training on teaching strategies, innovations, and program learning goals.
8. Professionals who teach a practicum have relevant experience in their field of expertise.
9. Faculty are evaluated by student surveys for each course they teach and Center Director or Academic Director reviews evaluations.
B. Administrative Staff Qualifications
   1. The IES Abroad Center Director and staff are collaborative and mutually reinforcing in meeting student needs.
   2. Center Director and staff are courteous, sensitive, and accommodating to student needs and demonstrate a commitment to student welfare.
   3. Center Director and staff are committed to study abroad and the development of intercultural knowledge and skills.
   4. Center Director and staff are interested in and able to work with undergraduates from the U.S. and are committed to IES Abroad goals and standards.
   5. Center Director and staff members participate in annual performance evaluations.
   6. Center Director has appropriate administrative experience and appropriate academic experience.
   7. Center Director represents the IES Abroad mission and student interests creditably at local universities.
   8. Center Director is proficient in the English language and the language of the host country.
   9. Center Director has an appropriate knowledge of the academic expectations of American colleges and universities and plans and administers the IES Abroad Center program in that context.
  10. Persons under contract who are responsible for accounting, legal counsel, internship supervision, and/or housing arrangements are qualified to work in the local venue.
  11. Center Director and staff participate in training and development sponsored by IES Abroad to assist students in their overall success in IES Abroad programs.

C. Academic Advising
   1. The IES Abroad Center advisors have the necessary training to assist students with registration requirements.
   2. Advisors are knowledgeable about IES Abroad courses and requirements.
   3. Advisors are knowledgeable about local university rules and requirements and the local academic culture to assist students.
   4. Advisors follow the IES Abroad Academic Policy Guidelines.
   5. Advisors are readily available to students.

D. IES Abroad Center Facilities
   1. A private office is available to the IES Abroad Center Director and staff for consultation and advising students.
   2. Faculty have access to a private room for advising students.
   3. Students have a place where they can gather and meet informally.
   4. Classrooms are adequate for IES Abroad courses.
   5. The IES Abroad Center is well located for student access to the local culture.
   6. Center follows a written plan for routine, preventative, and deferred maintenance of facilities, equipment, and grounds.
   7. Reasonable accommodation is attempted to meet the needs of students with learning and physical disabilities.
   8. IES Abroad Center facilities are operated according to environmentally responsible and sustainable practices.
E. Access to Local Educational and Cultural Institutions
   1. The IES Abroad Center has agreements, preferably written, with universities for registration, course enrollment, grading, and credit equivalencies.
   2. Center has agreements, preferably written, with universities for access to sponsored activities and student clubs.
   3. Center has agreements, preferably written, with universities or other agencies for access to sponsored sports activities.
   4. Center provides information regarding cultural opportunities.

F. Research and Learning Resources
   1. Resource Center contains up-to-date references.
   2. Students have access to one or more libraries at local universities and relevant research centers.
   3. Students have access to specific collections including on-line and digital resources, and audio and video materials to complete class assignments.
   4. Students are adequately informed and encouraged by IES Abroad to take advantage of research resources available to them.
   5. Resource Center hours are convenient for students, within bounds of building security.
   6. Students have access to a reliable high-speed Internet network and a comfortable and a quiet area in which to work.
   7. Learning resources are made available to students according to best practices in sustainability.

G. Housing and Home Stays
   1. Public transportation is readily available near the housing unit.
   2. Housing arrangements are based on the opportunity for a high level of interaction with the host culture.
   3. Housing is well located for student access to local culture.
   4. Housing provides students with sleep and study space.
   5. IES Abroad staff are trained to manage conflicts between a student and roommate or student residence manager that may arise.
   6. IES Abroad staff educate students on energy conservations methods in their housing unit.