

COST Annual Meeting and Conference
The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia
April 14 – 17, 2019

Attendance

Sending Site Representatives

Angela Parsons – Auburn University
Bill White – Ashland University
Douglas Bower – Eastern Illinois University
Sherie Williams – Grand Valley State University
Anna Abramenka – Grand Valley State University
Marty Lash – Kent State University
Bobbi Lussier – Middle Tennessee State University
Anne Perry – Northern Kentucky University
Ginger Webb – Northern Kentucky University
Frans Doppen – Ohio University
Tammy Brown – University of Alabama
Melinda Alsobrook – University of Alabama
Anna Hiers – University of Georgia
Sharon Brennan – University of Kentucky
Julie Cleary – University of Kentucky
Jenny Mahon – University of Nevada – Reno
Carol Rogers – University of Wisconsin – River Falls
Florence Monsour – University of Wisconsin – River Falls
Leslie Rush – University of Wyoming
Amy Spiker – University of Wyoming
Shelley McFarlan Jewell – University of Wyoming

Receiving Site Representatives

Lorraine Connell – Melbourne/ Darwin/ Adelaide, Australia
Evelin Wright – Cologne, Germany
Melody Martin del Campo – Guadalajara, Mexico
Batt Burns - Ireland
Hans Campman – The Netherlands
Lynda Boyd – Christchurch, New Zealand
Prakash Singh – Port Elizabeth, South Africa
Alberto Veiga – Ourense, Spain

Honorable Members and Guests

Carolyn Howell – University of Georgia
Yolandia Eubanks – University of Alabama

Monday, April 15, 2019

Meeting called to order by Sherie at 9:00am

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Request for volunteer to take on role of Secretary and record minutes.
Florence Monsour – UWRF volunteered

Bill White led opening activity highlighting the idea that we, as COST and individuals, hold the keys to helping students flourish as teachers and individuals.

1.1 Approval of 2018 Minutes

Doug Bower motioned to approve the 2018 Minutes
Lorraine Connell seconded
Unanimously Approved

1.2 Director's Report

Sherie Klee shared points of pride for her tenure as director and concerns moving forward. COST moved to Grand Valley State University in 2014. Since that time, we have gone completely online with the application, gained fiscal stability, and eliminated the need for costly, external risk management and liability insurance.

As stated in the bylaws, next year the Directorship position will go up for vote. A number of factors must be considered if anyone is interested in putting in their name: Financial package for Program Coordinator position; Financial account management by institution; Ability to process overseas payments; Transition can be expected to take one year.

1.3 Budget Report

2018-2019 Balance Sheet reviewed (See updated Balance Sheet attached)
2019-2020 Proposed Budget presented (See Budget attached)

Discussion

It took some changes to the way things were previously operating to get us into the black, and we are committed to maintaining a cushion. The question remains, how much of a cushion is appropriate? Flat rate of \$25,000 suggested as well as a percentage of revenue going to a contingency fund. A subcommittee might be needed to come up with a plan. Also requested that Anna creates a spreadsheet of past years' budgets to get a big picture view, and a narrative of possible expenses we would need a reserve for.

1.4 Administrative Report

Anna Abramenska reported on a new protected access website feature that would allow both sending and receiving coordinators to share site-specific resources and information in one, safe place. A request was put forward for suggestions on what kind of information everyone would like to share. Original vision is to have a place with detailed

information about each receiving site, coordinator (including photo), placement school names and calendars, local pictures, and placement capabilities and requirements. Many receiving sites have mentioned the desire coming from the schools we place in for some sort of letter or certificate to show their partnership with COST. We now have letter of appreciation and certificate of appreciation templates, and we would like to start collecting school names and any notable/ additional responsibility (housing, transportation, cultural orientation, etc.) they have taken on to make COST a success in that receiving site.

After reviewing the most recent student teacher COST evaluations, the same themes as in the past arose. Many of the challenges that students express (language barriers, understanding school curriculum, expectations about the role of coordinators, cooperating teachers, home stays, etc.) could be addressed in an online training module. A key element of these trainings would be guiding questions (“Have you asked your coordinator about xyz?”). The idea is to give an additional resource and layer of guidance for students as they prepare, not just to go abroad, but to fully participate in COST and get the most out of their student teaching abroad as possible.

A comment was made that many students don’t know about other students placed in the same country. A recent update to the application form allows students to select if COST may share their contact information with other COST students placed in the same location at the same time. A concern was that some students may elect not to be in contact with others due to a desire to have an independent experience. If you see a student’s application come through that does not want to be in contact, please feel free to follow up with them and explain this is not about interacting with other students as much as having contact information. Some receiving site coordinators already take the lead and send a group email to put students in contact with each other – this is seen as the most consistent and effective method. Anna is also able to send a group email if a request comes in to share information.

As always, we are looking for student spotlight stories to update our website. Please send any student stories and pictures to Anna.

1.4 Placement Statistics, Evaluations and Discussion

1.4.1 Summer 2018, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 placements:

Total: 111, ranging from 1 to 16 per institution, per year.

Withdrawals: 4

1.4.2 New Zealand, Ireland and Australia are most popular, likely because they are our English-speaking sites. Considerations for these sites are placement lengths with stricter visa laws and proof of Federal Background check required for Ireland. Ireland is also no longer supporting EdTPA placements. Mexico, China and Ecuador are chosen less often. Help set expectations for students.

1.4.3 General points found in student exit evaluations remain same as previous year:

- Almost all students wish they had researched the school and education system/ curriculum before departing.
- Many expected more contact with Receiving Site Coordinator (Each coordinator's level of involvement is different. While they are the main point of contact for any questions, concerns or emergencies in country, student teacher expectations about level of involvement should be managed)
- Language barriers in school and homestays also noted as a major challenge. Encourage students to learn basic words/phrases of host language.

1.5 Discussion | Receiving Sites

Spain – had issues with payment for the apartment, so it is no longer an option. Spain is a 100% homestay site.

Ireland – Housing has always been complicated. Students need to be very responsible for themselves.

Guadalajara, Mexico – still under level 3 travel warning, so we are not placing there, but we are still placing in Queretaro and Merida.

Bahamas – has a different culture in promptness of response to emails and other communication. Placement details are also later in coming, but they always come through. Valdez is looking into additional placement options on a different Island.

If students are facing challenges or need help, their first line of communication should always be the receiving site coordinator. Sending site coordinators should also be communicating directly with receiving site coordinators if problems arise. Receiving site coordinators should also be copying sending coordinators on emails with students.

As always, no student is allowed to make their own housing arrangements as accommodations need to be vetted by the receiving site for risk management purposes. Our MOA with every receiving site assures that housing is approved. Some coordinators cannot confirm the exact homestay until very close to arrival. This causes students to become anxious. Please assure your students that they will live well and get to their placements. For those who need an accommodation address for paperwork purposes, a coordinator's address could work.

Question about how to communicate with parents who are not supportive of participating in COST or studying abroad (usually based on media coverage of events overseas). How can we give them the information they need? We're hoping the new coordinator portal or training module creation will give us the right platform for sharing information that may be helpful. There are additional

resources for parents published by NAFSA (national study abroad association). Another option suggested is to host an informational meeting and ask your students to invite someone who is significantly supporting them from home.

Question arose about how we can get more receiving site coordinators involved in the meetings. Suggestion to invite via Skype or video conference call.

Suggested actions to do with students:

Review homestay etiquette with students in a pre-departure orientation. Website has a short questionnaire to ask a host family on the first night. Review picture-taking and website-posting etiquette. Ask before taking pictures (especially of children) and err on the side of not posting any pictures of children on blogs or social media.

1.6 Receiving Site Breakout Session Report

Suggestion given that sites that are struggling should be offered some sort of scholarship to attend the annual meeting.

Suggestions to include on the Coordinator Portal:

Information and updates about Conferences and Annual Meetings
Introductions/ bios written by Receiving Coordinators
Visas, background checks, and other requirements (ZAV, working with children, etc.) This includes links to the forms or application materials where available.
Accommodation Information (costs, contact information)
Information about schools
Website links for curriculums
Copy of school calendars

Concern about the timing of payments coming from COST to receiving coordinators each semester. Anna addressed this and will work on moving the payment processing dates up each semester.

Talked about succession planning and where each receiving site coordinator might start thinking about an individual they could identify as a 'go-to' individual or organization to mentor to be able to take over COST if/when needed.

Noted that the classroom experience evaluations do not reflect the cultural experience. This is something that should be addressed as COST's goal is increased cultural competency.

Questions

What do we do when there is compensation needed (i.e. homestays not getting paid)? Sending sites can/ should hold grades until payments are made. Receiving sites should encourage homestays to write receipts for payments. Suggest

students pay accommodation fees every two weeks instead of one lump sum in case things don't work out and alternative arrangements are needed. (Students should be encouraged to use ATMs while abroad. Do not use travelers checks. Students should contact coordinators to find out how much to budget for accommodation before arriving). Ultimately, give the COST director the power to solve these problems through individual universities, which frees the receiving site coordinator to compensate families and ameliorate the situation.

Health concerns – While physical health issues are easier to address and talk about, mental health issues over the years have gotten worse. Many students may not even recognize that they have a mental health issue. Brief discussion about FERPA and what information can be share with whom. UWRF has a health portion of their study abroad forms that Carol will share. One question included is for the student to think about how they will address any issues they may have while abroad (have they thought about it, do they have a plan?).

1.7 Subcommittee meetings for afternoon

Each 2018-2019 subcommittee met to work on tasks and finalize a report to be shared.

Tuesday, April 16, 2019

Meeting called to order by Sherie at 9:00

2.0 Welcome from University of Georgia College of Education

Dr. Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett, COE Associate Dean

2.1 Receiving Site Updates

Melbourne, Darwin, Adelaide, Australia

Report given by Lorraine Connell

Been receiving students since 2001-2002. Can place 6-7 a year.

Melbourne: Elementary placements working well. No longer special education. Finding host families is proving difficult.

Darwin: HOT during the fall/ early spring. Laidback and small-town lifestyle.

Adelaide: Physical Education placement.

Will look into agricultural education placements through colleagues at Dukey Agriculture College in Victoria.

Placement lengths keep to 7-8 weeks to keep it to a visitor visa.

Cologne, Germany

Report given by Evelin Wright

Can place up to 5 students a year (3 fall, 2 spring).

Secondary: language arts, social studies and English can accommodate two placements a semester. Spanish as a foreign language is also valued in Germany, so could look into

placing Spanish language student teachers. BilinGo elementary school accepts one candidate per year.

Housing in shared apartment. Students work with a variety of teachers at multiple grade levels, team teaching.

All internships require ZAV approval. Students can stay longer than 90 days, but requires additional paperwork and \$30 as long as they maintain student status for entire time in country.

Guadalajara, Mexico – Instituto Thomas Jefferson

Report given by Melody Martin del Campo

Travel advisory is at a level 3, so COST is not currently placing in Guadalajara.

ITJ was just purchased by International Schools – British Partnerships

ITJ Guadalajara has a gifted and talented program in partnership with Johns Hopkins.

Inclusion and PBL. 80% of instruction in English.

Guadalajara is a mentor school, looking for new teachers, and very excited to receive former COST student teachers. If you have students interested in teaching abroad after COST, direct them to Melody/ ITJ.

The Netherlands

Report given by Hans Campman

Placed 13 students this year including physical education and a French language student.

Can accommodate placements up to 12 weeks, can usually stay longer without problems.

Currently placing in 16 schools. Elementary schools are possible, typically in small towns.

Schools are responsible for finding housing. Transportation to school – Bike.

In the Netherlands, it is free choice of schools, which creates a competitive market among schools.

Christchurch, New Zealand

Report given by Lynda Boyd

Placed 6 students this spring.

Can place K-12, early childhood, special education and other subjects.

Can place Agriculture Education students.

Classrooms are collaborative and bicultural. NZ is increasingly intercultural (South Pacific, Tongan, Fiji, Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese, Pilipino, etc.). You will hear Maori spoken in the classroom, and student teachers need to take the opportunity to learn some.

Most children wear uniforms, but teacher attire is casual.

Typically stay with host families (\$200 per week includes meals).

Port Elizabeth, South Africa

Report given by Prakash Singh

Weather similar to Florida.

Homestays are strictly scrutinized and cost about \$400 per month. They wash the dishes, wash their clothes and cook for them.

Place in three schools: 2 primary and 1 secondary, can accept special education.

Ourense, Spain

Report given by Alberto Veiga

Local provider: D3N3 (De3eN3), Rosa, Dosi and Alberto

Detailed student handbook is updated every semester for students to prepare.

Spanish and Galician are primarily spoken, some English.

Can place in several content areas K-12, special education and accepts longer placements.

Reminder: Spanish students are learning English, student teacher will not be understood 100% of the time.

Student teachers will work with multiple teachers – can request fewer number of teachers to rotate.

Works with 16 schools and 24 host families. Shared apartment is no longer an option.

Some host families do not speak English. \$215 USD per week, 3 meals a day and laundry.

Anything over 90 days requires a visa and additional paperwork, but very doable.

Ireland

Report given by Batt Burns

EdTPA is not allowed in Ireland

Student teachers need proof of federal background check.

Accommodation is a problem in the cities.

Many placements are in rural schools.

Students will need to go to local police department upon arrival to register for residency permit – costs \$300-\$400.

Remind students of the importance to write a thank you note to cooperating teacher or principal.

Batt is looking for ideas/ help in succession planning. Willing to mentor a person to take on the role of overseas coordinator in Ireland.

2.2 Site Visit Report

Marty Lash (Kent State University) visited three potential sites in Italy. One in Rome, Florence and Trieste/ Udine. The Victoria Language and Culture Program, coordinated by Roberta Rinaldi and Chiara Ghizzoni in Trieste, has signed an MOA with COST to be the receiving site coordinator for student teaching placements in the northeastern Friuli-Venezia region of Italy. They can accommodate early childhood to 12th grade. Will begin placing students in Spring 2020.

2.2.1 Vote to approve Victoria Language and Culture Program in Italy as new receiving site.

Jenny Mahon moved
Bill White seconded
Unanimously approved

2.3 Side Site Visit Report

Sharon Brennan visited Hans in the Netherlands (March 11-12, 2019) and visited two of our placement schools. She was particularly impressed with the commitment to global learning she observed throughout the school, and how every space (even the stairwells) were used for instructional purposes. She also noted the use of a traffic light to help students self-regulate. A very beneficial visit. Thank you to Hans.

2.4 Site Visit Schedule Reviewed

University of Wisconsin – River Falls. Did not visit in 2018-2019 academic year, so will work with Sherie to determine where a new site visit might take place in 2019-2020. No additional site visit scheduled due to international conference in 2020.

2.5 Subcommittee Reports

2.5.1 Strategic Plan

Report by Bill White

Conducted a SWOT analysis and reported the results (see attachment). This information should help guide us as we move forward with subcommittee work and organizational planning.

2.5.2 Conference Structure

Report by Evelin Wright

Brought up suggestion to include the cultural activity in the middle of the conference to allow for as many as possible to participate.

2.5.3 Site Development Action Plan

Report by Jenny Mahon

Created a document explaining how COST works, role of receiving site coordinators, and information we need to collect when developing a new site. To be adopted as guidelines for site visits and data collection on current and future receiving sites.

2.5.4 Creating Legacy

Report by Lorraine Connell

Suggested a form to include contact information, emergency contact, living arrangement details (vetted?, phone numbers, emails), costs, schools and contact information for each, prospective people to mentor for succession.

Additionally, creating legacy looking forward to our 50th Anniversary (2022-2023) and the year leading up to it. “Where we have been, where we are going”.

Committee would like to start collecting documents, photos and stories. Will contact alumni for participation in some way.

2.5.5 *Student Handbook Development*

Report by Lynda Boyd

After reviewing handbook, committee decided to abolish it completely. The handbook is outdated as most member institutions have their own handbooks and all student teaching requirements outlined in this COST handbook are superseded by sending institutions. There was nothing in the handbook about cultural competence. It is in the mission and goals of COST to develop culturally competent teachers, but there is no information available about how we do that or how to help our participants become culturally competent. The committee believes COST should make a statement about cultural competence that is clear and addresses COST's mission. This committee is interested in exploring the topic of cultural competence in the context of COST and will roll over into developing an online cultural competence training module (or other suitable material developed specifically for COST) that will be interactive and guide the student in exploring cultural competence in relation to their experience. It would include a rubric, and it might include pre-departure and post experience exercises. This would be suitable professional development for those of us involved.

Suggesting another committee be formed to work on developing curriculum for other training modules, such as:

Pre-departure material

Health & Safety Abroad

Expectations of COST students and how they will be managed

Committee discussed the desire to see relevant workshops for COST personnel being part of the COST Annual Meeting and Conference structure.

2.5.6 *Withdrawal Policy*

Report by Carol Rogers

A new policy was presented suggesting a tiered payment policy from \$250 to \$900 depending on time of withdrawal (see proposed policy attached). Tabled for discussion.

2.6 Subcommittees 2019-2020

Intercultural Competence Module

Tasked with developing a curriculum specific to COST and student teachers developing cultural competence. This would then be formatted for eLearning and developed into an interactive, online training module. Could include rubrics and pre-departure/ post-experience activities.

Evelin Wright, Lynda Boyd, Sharon Brennan, Jenny Mahon, Marty Lash

Succession Planning

Tasked with looking into best practice for retirement procedures and passing COST responsibilities on to another individual or team.

Lorraine Connell, Bobbi Lussier

Alumni

Tasked with developing an alumni network and/or ideas for communicating and connecting with our COST alumni. Might also determine how to best involve alumni in our 50th anniversary celebration(s).

Hans Campman, Lorraine Connell, Leslie Rush

Publications

Tasked with creating a repository of publications that highlight COST specifically or are aligned with the work of the organization. Additionally, tasked with developing ideas and direction for joint studies and publications that can be worked on by COST colleagues.

Marty Lash, Frans Doppen, Jenny Mahon

Site Development

Batt Burns, Melody Martin del Campo

Training Modules

Tasked with determining topics and writing lessons for online, interactive training modules to be made available to COST participants during pre-departure, while abroad and upon return.

Angela Parsons, Tammy Brown, Julie Cleary

Strategic Plan

Tasked with taking results of SWOT analysis and developing a strategic plan or vision for COST as an organization.

Bill White, Prakash Singh, Tammy Brown

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

Meeting called to order by Sherie at 9:00

3.0 Proposed Withdrawal Policy Revisited

See attached proposed policy. This includes a withdrawal fee structure ranging from \$250 to \$900 fee for withdrawal depending on time of withdrawal from program. This fee would be collected by individual sending institutions and billed by COST.

- 3.0.1** Jenny Mahon moved to keep withdrawal policy as written and bring to each individual sending institution for feedback followed by an online vote to accept or reject.
Leslie Rush seconded.
10 Yes
4 Opposed
Passed.

Members will bring proposed withdrawal policy to individual institutions for review and feedback. An electronic vote on whether or not to adopt policy will be collected by the end of May, 2019.

3.1 2020 Annual Meeting

Taking place in Ourense, Spain

March 29-April 2, 2020

Best to fly into Madrid and take train to Ourense.

Welcome reception Sunday evening. Conference and meetings Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Cultural activity to be scheduled sometime within the meeting dates.

3.2 2021 | Sending Site Location

To be determined.

3.3 Member Research and Presentations*

Fostering Collegial Bonding Between School Mentors and their Student Teachers

Dr. Prakash Singh, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

COST - Port Elizabeth, South Africa

Preparing Globally Competent Teachers in a Rapidly Changing World through COST: Goals and Participant Responsibilities

Sharon Brennan and Julie Cleary, University of Kentucky

Addressed needs of P-12 students to succeed in our interconnected world and fulfilling the ever increasing EPP requirements.

Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing of Students Abroad

Anna Hiers, University of Georgia

Presented statistics of mental health in U.S. college students, resources for support, and how to listen and communicate with a student if they are experiencing symptoms of distress or mental illness (which can often be aggravated in new and unfamiliar situations, such as being abroad).

*Presentations and information will be made available on COST website > Coordinators > Research

