

CAPA London Update 2/07

The numbered points are recommendations stated in the review of 3/06. The update is listed below each point.

General Academic:

1. Clarification of expectations, academic policies, and a standardization of courses syllabi
*CAPA had already begun a process of standardizing syllabi, including stating expectations more explicitly. The most recent syllabi provided for this spring are excellent and clear.
2. Standardized earlier feedback and faculty input on major papers and projects
*As it is earlier in the term, this was hard to ascertain, but evaluations seem to indicate less anxiety.
3. Improved availability and opportunity for communication with faculty as a requirement, both electronically and in-person
*There seems to be excellent improvement in this area, and the level of faculty engagement is improved. The training provided and clearer expectations are improved.
4. More specific guidance and feedback to students concerning written projects
*This was not specifically discussed, but seems to be less of an issue with the streamlined syllabi.

PELA:

1. More direct and explicit articulation of connection between course and internship component
*A new section of the PELA course and internship orientation has been developed, devoted to the discussion of the goals of the course. This provides an early opportunity for students to consider and reflect on the course, as well as assisting with context. The use of the ex-students on the staff has also provided testimonials, and they attend the internship orientation. The staff seem to feel these changes have greatly assisted students and are tracking the evaluations carefully.
2. The inclusion/expansion of the use of panel of experts including American expats
*This has not yet happened, although MaxSA activities have provided some excellent speakers and discussion. We discussed possibilities to contact U of MN alumni or program alumni in relation to this.
3. Use of integration activities as assignments
*The PELA course has been more standardized, with the assignment of Roland Bushall as a sort of "lead instructor" to oversee the course sections and ensure continuity. As his list of activities was the model for this

suggestion, this is good news. He is working with instructors to incorporate integrations activities into all sections.

4. Expanded or articulated office hours by internship staff for student interns
*Walk-in hours are posted and scheduled, but are still underutilized by students. However, more proactive check-in e-mails have been introduced and have been highly successful. Students have been e-mailing much more actively with questions and concerns, so the larger goal of encouraging engagement seems to have been accomplished.

Student Services:

1. Improvement and expansion of student information of the CAPA website
*While this is an ongoing project, a web steering committee has been created and plans for improvement are actively underway.
2. Specific diversity discussion to be added to orientation
*One of the new “icebreakers” being used at orientation involves discussion of stereotypes. This is used to segue way into a discussion of race and culture in modern Britain. An exercise regarding language is designed to do the same. Discussion of use of the student union at Imperial College has been expanded to mention religious, GLBT, and culture clubs on offer more explicitly.
3. Expanded first aid training for SAA’s
*Given the turnover of SAA and time and expense involved in training, two program coordinators are being trained and are designated as crisis managers. As these staff members often go on excursions and would be called for most emergencies, this seems an excellent decision.
4. Re-branding of activities currently offered as “MAXSA”
*John Christian continues to dialogue with Michael Paige and has support and approval to use this branding in appropriate and course related activities. Given the SOR relationship and MaxSA requirement, this will also support attendance as such events and promote the relationship between the reflections and activities.
5. Modification of the selection process for student council members
*Process seems to be working well. I did recommend a stated or written list of responsibilities and expectations be given to representatives to ensure active and ongoing commitment.

Submitted by Martha Johnson, 2/07