October 14, 2014

TO: SUNY Potsdam Campus Community
FROM: Margaret Madden, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
RE: Revised Policies for Short-term, Faculty-led Travel Courses

As the campus increasingly focuses on the importance of high impact programs and applied learning, we continue to encourage and support the increased offering of both domestic and international travel courses. However, good stewardship of financial resources and increased sensitivity to, and regulation of, risk management requires us to standardize policies and procedures regarding travel courses.

While we recognize that many of our faculty have extensive experience in offering these opportunities to our students, it is important that we closely monitor all components of travel courses to ensure both fair and consistent practices regarding the academic, financial, and safety components of travel courses.

In an effort to ensure these principals, and in response to the College's current financial situation, the attached policies and procedures shall be effective immediately.
Domestic and International Travel Course Policies

**Purpose:**

To ensure that course related travel by SUNY Potsdam students to domestic and international locations is undertaken in a manner that minimizes foreseeable risks to the student and the College, ensures fair and consistent program budget planning and provides well-organized academic offerings.

**Scope:**

These policies apply to all SUNY Potsdam administered domestic and international travel courses where travel involved a minimum of one (1) overnight stay.

**A. Travel Course Approval Process:**

a. All courses that have a travel component to either a domestic or international location must be formally approved through the submission of the “Travel Course Proposal” document in which the leading faculty address course components such as: academic content, travel itinerary/logistics, traveler safety and risk assessment and program operating budget. This includes courses that have a permanent course number or have been offered in the past.

b. Once approved by the Department Chair and appropriate curriculum committee if applicable, the proposal will be submitted to the Travel Course Review Committee for Review. The Committee is comprised of the School Deans, Coordinator of Special Sessions (Extended Education) and Director of International Education. The Committee will address the feasibility of the travel course including, program destination and itinerary, safety and liability standards, projected student enrollment, and program operating budget.

i. Travel Course Proposal submission deadlines are:

1. 2014-2015 academic year (including summer 2015) – November 1st
2. All future academic years (spring, summer, fall, Winterim)– April 1st of preceding year

ii. Once approved, the Travel Course Review Committee will make recommendations to the Provost for final approval. All decisions will be communicated in writing to the leading faculty, including confirmation of appropriate compensation.

**B. Program Budgets:**

a. All domestic and international travel courses must be financially self-supporting. Therefore, participant program fees (collected by Extended Education) will include all program operating expenses, including faculty compensation and travel expenses. (See Faculty Compensation & Travel Expenses below)
b. All program budgets must include all billed and non-billed program expenses so that students may make an informed choice regarding their participation. The Extended Education Office and/or International Education will use the overall program budget to calculate a “per student program fee” – this will be put into a student budget format for the Office of Financial Aid

c. Budgets must specify the minimum number of students required to support all course expenses. Courses will be cancelled if the minimum enrollments are not met by a specified date. If the minimum number of students have not committed to the course with a preliminary deposit by that date, the course will be cancelled and the deposit refunded.

d. All program budgets must include a minimum 8% emergency contingency fee to cover budget shortfalls due to unforeseen costs or currency fluctuations. If this fee is not needed/utilized, it will be refunded back to student participants upon conclusion of the program

e. Program budgets will not generate revenue for any department or division

f. Program budgets will not be permitted to carry a balance from one year to the next. Any remaining program funds at the conclusion of the experience must be refunded back to participating students.

g. In the interest of full disclosure to student participants concerning what program fees cover, information packets given to them will outline the allocation of expenses for the trip.

C. Faculty Compensation & Travel Expenses

a. The proposal must specify how faculty are to be compensated. Faculty compensation can take a number of forms, typically release time or monetary, and should be discussed with your department chair and/or dean. Any monetary compensation must be built into the budget as part of the participant program fee.

b. Faculty compensation and travel expenses will be included in the budget discussed above. If participation by more than one faculty member is contemplated, the budget needs to specify the enrollment threshold needed to support travel expenses and compensation for the additional faculty member(s). Alternate scenarios will be considered, especially in cases where a third party program provider is providing free or discounted travel for faculty leader(s).