

USG System Council on International Education (SCIE)
Study Abroad Subcommittee (SAC)

Date: Friday, September 26, 2025

Time: 11:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

Location: Virtual Platform on Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Aileen Tang, Alexis Melchior, Amy Burger, Anne Claudine Gaquere-Parker, Dr. Stacie R. Harrison Barrett, Beck, Carla Bluhm (CCGA), Carmine D. Palumbo, Christian Canizales, Colleen P Larson, Danielle Smith, Eric Spears, Erinn Bentley, Hannah Chisolm, Ilana Blumenfeld-Gantz, James Callaghan, Jennifer Evanuik, Jessica Lindberg, Joshua Hudson, Kevin Bucholtz, Leslie Bozeman, Paulez, Raquel Aponte, Sasha Cokuslu, Stephen Murray, TM Chiang, phone number (27)

Agenda:

- I. **Welcome:** Sasha Cokuslu, Vice Chair and Jennifer Evanuik, Member-at-Large
 - a. Meeting started at 11:02 AM
- II. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Sasha Cokuslu, Vice-Chair
 - a. **Status:** Approved
- III. **Nomination/Election of Open Positions:** Jennifer Evanuik, Member-at-Large
 - a. **Open roles:** Chair and one Member-at-Large (mid-cycle service to complete the current term rather than a fresh three-year term). Timing clarifications included mention that the first meeting for the new positions would take effect in January 2026, and that the remaining service would be about a year and a half, through spring of 27.
 - b. **Chair Elect: Open Seat**
 - i. **Chair duties:** provide leadership; serve as primary point of contact between the SCIE and SAC International Education Office; coordinate and facilitate meetings with committee support; initiate and monitor elections; keep committee members informed.
 - c. **Member-at-Large: Open Seat**
 - i. **Member-at-Large duties:** serve on the executive committee; represent USG institutions; facilitate involvement of new subcommittee members; assist chair and vice chair as needed.
 - d. **Member-at-Large Election**
 - i. Nominations received via email prior to the meeting: Jessica Lindberg (Georgia Highlands), Victoria Russell (Valdosta State), and Thomas Araya (Clayton State). At the time of voting, only Jessica was present in this meeting.

- ii. Jessica briefly introduced herself: long-standing passion for international education, seeking active contribution and representation of the state college sector.
- iii. Vote held while the nominee stepped out of the call; majority in favor (counts cited reached ~22); Jessica Lindberg was elected Member-at-Large.

e. **Chair Election**

- i. Self-nomination: Danielle Smith (Georgia Southern) offered to serve as Chair. She summarized 16 years of USG experience across study abroad, exchange, and international student services; prior leadership as committee secretary; familiarity with activities at scale during the Armstrong–Georgia Southern consolidation.
- ii. Vote held while the nominee stepped out of the call; majority in favor (counts cited reached ~22). Danielle was elected chair.
- iii. Onboarding next steps: Danielle will connect with the executive committee post-meeting to get up to speed; additional details to follow.

IV. System Updates: Sasha Cokuslu, Vice-Chair

a. **Course Attributes:**

- i. Reminder to correctly tag all study abroad course sections with the appropriate course attributes to ensure accurate reporting and consistency.
- ii. Reference materials: “Course Section Attributes Business Practice” (a PDF).
- iii. The USG page link was not working during the meeting; Sasha shared the PDF in chat.
- iv. Questions may be directed to Tammy Rosner; previous meeting minutes also outline helpful steps.

b. **USG Study Abroad Audit**

- i. The audit has been finalized across the USG and is now available; the SAC group is working to locate and share the link (they could not find it prior to the meeting and will follow up with Tammy).
- ii. Plan to revisit in January: discuss findings, how teams implemented changes, office impacts, and strategies for responding—especially where resources are limited.

V. Discussion:

a. **Gilman Scholarship Application:** Jennifer Evanuk, Member-at-Large

- i. Advising impact: Joshua Hudson (Director of Study Abroad, Georgia State; former Gilman Advisor Ambassador) noted Gilman changed essay formats, character limits, and some questions. Gilman has published resources and webinars to support advising.

- ii. A prior “mutual understanding” question shifted toward “diplomacy” because many students misunderstood the original intent; changes also aim to curb ChatGPT and some of the AI resources being used by applicants.
- iii. Members were encouraged to submit feedback to Gilman when the window opens; Joshua will ensure Jennifer or Sasha or Danielle share the feedback opportunity with the community.

b. **Insurance:** Sasha Cokuslu, Vice-Chair

- i. New insurance provider for USG introduced last year; many began using it as early as fall 2024.
- ii. Multiple participants reported significant issues compared to prior provider (CISI), covering on-the-ground support, administration, communications, provider access, and claims.
- iii. Mixed outcomes for students seeking care (e.g., one student secured telehealth and a prescription; another could not get connected). Process felt “clunky,” with unclear steps; a “cheat sheet” might help.
- iv. Reported disorganization and delayed/failed responses during emergencies; cited poor administrative tone (told to pay a known duplicate invoice).
- v. Students struggled with the insurance card process (random Gallagher emails, no welcome packet). No way to verify student has coverage in the portal. Program directors (PDs) could not pre-identify healthcare facilities (e.g., Buenos Aires); told to contact telehealth first even for pre-departure planning.
- vi. Unclear coverage for mental health, promised callbacks not received, delayed and minimal assistance (“oh, did you resolve this?” communication). Reimbursements slow; key staff on vacation during peak July period.
- vii. Difficulty arranging urgent AIDS testing after blood exposure; directions to hospitals were unclear; unresolved during program, causing distress.
- viii. Administrative burden: duplicate invoices; confusion over correct institutional contacts; inconsistent enrollment records (e.g., entire program enrolled but one student later flagged as not enrolled).
- ix. Customer service concerns: inappropriate tone from customer service rep; requests to pay incorrect invoices to resolve accounting issues; delayed responses.
- x. Coverage scope concerns: small, minimally detailed evacuation section vs. previously detailed CISI policies.
- xi. Concern about USG liability due to “over promised and under delivered” service and coverage; example of a student told they were not enrolled despite program enrollment.
- xii. Successful reimbursements for trip delays; extra hotels and flight costs reimbursed “pretty easily.”
- xiii. Eric Spears (chair of the system council) requested members email him concrete, institution-specific examples; can keep submissions anonymous.

He will compile a comprehensive message for Tammy to share with USG who may be able to speak to the insurance company on behalf of the system.

c. **Topics of Interest for a Lunch n Learn or Workshop**

- i. Members encouraged to leverage the network for support and knowledge-sharing (e.g., potential webinar series, small working groups).
- ii. Reach out to the SAC committee members to share feedback for lunch n learns or workshop ideas.

VI. Announcements

- a. January 30, 2026, is next meeting

Meeting Adjourned at: 11:55 AM on Friday, Sept. 26, 2025