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MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 7, 2009

TO: UT System Academic Institution Provosts
UT Study Abroad Contacts
Chief Legal Officers

FROM: Barry D. Burgdorf
Vice Chancellor and General Counsel

SUBJECT: Study-Abroad Programs Best Practices

In the last few years, the media and some legislators have focused on real and perceived conflicts of interest and alleged abuses that can arise in the context of the business relationships between universities and study-abroad providers. During this time, OGC has provided ad hoc advice to UT institutions in response to specific inquiries from campuses. As these issues continue to arise, I wanted to take a moment to identify some best practices:

- Selection and approval of study-abroad providers should be based on a set of well-established criteria. The “Standards of Good Practice” published by the Forum on Education Abroad provide helpful guidance in this area:

<http://www.forumea.org/documents/ForumEAStandardsGoodPrctMarch2008.pdf>

OGC can also assist with RFPs and RFIs as tools to ensure objective selection of providers.

- Lists of approved providers should be reviewed periodically to insure that those listed continue to meet the established criteria.
- Institutions should not engage in revenue-sharing arrangements or accept incentive-based rebates, refunds, or discounts from study-abroad providers. In particular, institutions should not accept cash bonuses based on the number of applicants or participants in a given provider program.

- Institutions should not accept reimbursements from study-abroad providers for travel expenses, including expenses for transportation, lodging, or meals, incurred by faculty or staff for site visits or conferences hosted by any study-abroad provider.

Please share this memorandum with appropriate institution officers and staff and direct any questions or concerns to me, Dan Sharphorn (dsharphorn@utsystem.edu, 512-499-4370), or Karen Lundquist (klundquist@utsystem.edu, 512-499-4465). Steve DePaul, Director of Global Initiatives (sdepaul@utsystem.edu, 512-499-4443), can also assist with these matters.

BDB:bh

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