



University of Nevada, Reno

February 6, 2024

The Honorable Amy Carvalho
NSHE Board of Regents, District 12
P.O. Box 61151
Boulder City, NV 89006

Dear Chair Carvalho,

I humbly request that you consider Dr. Carmelo Urza for the honor of being recognized as a 2024 Distinguished Nevadan. The accomplishments of this notable individual were brought to my attention by Congresswoman Dina Titus (NV-01), with recommendations of several other respected Nevadans.

Dr. Urza not has only changed the lives of young Nevadans, but college students across the country and the world. He is the founder of University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC). Starting at the University of Nevada, Reno with one visit to the Basque Country in San Sebastian, Spain, USAC has grown to offer 50 rigorous programs in 25 countries. Thanks to the work of Dr. Urza, over 10,000 students have had the opportunity to take part in this transformational activity. 3,000 of these students are from NSHE's southern institutions.

The University of Nevada, Reno's mission includes preparing our students for global citizenship. While Universities across the country endeavor to bring a global perspective to their campuses, the opportunity to visit another country and be immersed in a new culture, sometimes with a new language, is a life changing opportunity for all involved. Dr. Carmelo Urza changed the world and has left a lasting legacy. This is exactly the kind of work we honor with the Distinguished Nevadan award.

While I understand that the deadline for Distinguished Nevadan submissions has passed, I believe that we would be passing up a tremendous opportunity to honor a person that was instrumental in sharing our Nevada students with the world. The University of Nevada, Reno would be honored to recognize such a world changing figure during the University's sesquicentennial year.

Sincere regards,



Brian Sandoval

Office of the President
Clark Administration, Room 201
University of Nevada, Reno/0001
Reno, Nevada 89557-0061
(775) 784-4805 office



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 18, 2024

President Brian Sandoval
1664 N. Virginia Street
Reno, NV 89557

Dear President Sandoval,

Thank you for considering Dr. Carmelo Urza for the Distinguished Nevadan award at your spring 2024 commencement.

Dr. Urza is very deserving of the award. The University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC) that he established in 1983 grew out of an informal faculty and student exchange between the University of the Basque Country and the University of Nevada, Reno's prestigious Basque Studies program. Beginning with the single site in San Sebastián, Spain, Dr. Urza gradually expanded USAC to sites on every inhabited continent. Today USAC is one of the largest and most successful study abroad programs in the United States with over 50 programs in 25 countries.

Since its inception, USAC has placed over 10,000 students in its programs abroad. Among those, UNR accounts for approximately 7000 students. The others come from UNLV, associated universities, and from students at any U.S. university who meet the requirements for acceptance (qualify). Dr. Urza has also encouraged collaboration with other Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) campuses and some Nevada high schools to introduce the idea of studying abroad early in students' lives. Except for in Anglophone countries (the United Kingdom and Australia), the programs focus on foreign languages and cultures which equip the participants for success in today's integrated world. As any student who has studied abroad with USAC will attest, the experience is fulfilling and can be life changing.

Dr. Urza served as UNR's study abroad coordinator for over three decades. He retired as CEO of USAC in 2017, leaving a legacy that will continue far into the future. The USAC brand is well established and respected in the universe of foreign study programs, enhancing the reputation of the University of Nevada, Reno and of the entire University of Nevada System of Higher Education.

Many of Dr. Urza's former colleagues and associates share my high regard and admiration for him. These notable and accomplished individuals include Dr. Alyssa Nota, his successor as USAC's CEO, Dr. David Shintani, UNR's representative to the USAC board, Susan Thompson, former Director of International Programs at UNLV, and Patricia O'Connor who served alongside him for 39 years as the Resident Director of USAC in San Sebastián.

Owing to the great success of his creation and the opportunities USAC has created for Nevadans and students from around the country, I strongly believe that Dr. Urza certainly deserves the recognition conferred by the Distinguished Nevadan Award. I can think of no better example of soft diplomacy than the exchanges he has inspired and directed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dina Titus". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

Biography of Carmelo Urza

A first-generation immigrant Basque who spent his first ten years in America on a large sheep ranch off the Snake River in Idaho, Carmelo received his B.A. from Boise State University, MA from the University of Nevada, Reno, and Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. He was the first head of the University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC), retiring after 36 years as President and CEO. When he retired, USAC had more than 300 employees in 28 countries serving almost 4,400 students annually, contracts with 49 foreign universities and a U.S. university membership from coast to coast.

THE HISTORY OF USAC

The Precursors

Before the arrival of USAC, the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) had a long history of study abroad startups. From the 1960's - 1980's, there were several internal initiatives to create programs in Mexico, London, Italy, the Basque Country, Korea and Turkey. None survived in the long term.

William Douglass, the Coordinator of the fledgling Basque Studies Program (BSP), created 6-week summer programs to the Basque region of Spain in 1968, 1972, and again in 1976. In 1974, Pat Bieter, professor at Boise State University (BSU), organized an academic year long program with approximately 70 students and half a dozen faculty to the Basque town of Onati. After three ever smaller programs, future attempts were ended.

In the early 1980's Professors Douglass and Bieter joined efforts in the hopes of establishing an on-going academic year long program. Each was able to secure a \$7,500 contribution from their respective institutions, and private contributions brought the total amount of seed money to \$28,000. In the summer of 1982, Pat and Bill offered me the position to head up the bi-university initiative.

I think it's worth noting that this was only five years after the death of Franco, and that it was a turbulent time in the Basque Country. Douglass had also received a commitment of collaboration from Gregorio Monreal, the rector of the newly established University of the Basque Country (UPV-EHU). The new Consortium program was slated to be located at the Vitoria, Alaba campus, where liberal arts classes were to be offered to UNR and BSU students.

In August, I visited the campus being formed in Vitoria-Gasteiz. It did not yet have an administrative office and Enrique Knorr, the vice President, worked from his home. The "campus" was in an old, seminary. It soon became clear that there were no spare classrooms nor housing available. I contacted Gregorio Monreal and begged to be allowed to move the hypothetical American program to its campus in the seaside city of Donosti/San Sebastian. He acquiesced and, a year later, went so far as to move his own office to a small administrative building downtown so that the program could use his personal office and portable classrooms at the Law School.

To be or not to be.

Upon my return to Reno after my scouting trip, the attorneys from UNR and BSU asked to meet with me. They suggested that a non-profit corporation should be established from which the Consortium could operate. I panicked at the thought of codifying a model which may not serve us well going forward, and it seemed that being a totally independent legal entity would distance the Consortium from the universities and thus, from the very audience I hoped to attract. Finally, since the entity had no real assets,

how would this independent corporation be able to pay for office space, process contracts, print materials, advertise and so on?

Although I didn't know it then, that meeting was to set the tone for the next 32 years. The university attorneys were doing their jobs by trying to create legal space between the Consortium and the universities in order to protect their clients from lawsuits. On the other hand, I believed it was important to represent the program as part of the known and respected entities of UNR and BSU for credibility's sake and access to university resources. It seemed important that the outside observer could see we were located and supported administratively at two U.S. universities and one in the Basque Country. The ambiguity created was not an ideal situation but was far preferable to being an independent corporation that nobody had heard about.

Exasperated, the attorneys eventually concluded the meeting likely thinking: "He has no idea what he is doing." They would have been right. But I knew I didn't know and that I did not have the background to get locked into an independent legal structure. Ambiguity was not my goal; I would have preferred to be an intrinsic part of the U.S. universities. Since that was not possible, I opted to be an outlier that acted as if we were part of them.

I wasn't the only one opting for ambiguity. UNR agreed to manage the funds through the Basque Studies Program (BSP) *as if* it were any other university program. It was made clear to me that I had a segregated \$28,000 to spend the first year. No other funds would be forthcoming. That included my salary of \$20,000 which was distributed to me on a UNR letter of appointment (LOA). LOAs, I should note, are only valid if there is money to pay for them. Since we adhered to UNR's management practices, UNR also provided us with legal and financial oversight, relieving USAC from shouldering these very important functions. The UNR Vice President of Finance, President or the Chancellor of the system signed legal agreements with other universities on behalf of USAC. We did, however, regularly consult attorneys abroad. Every country had their own laws and policies, and we were careful to be in compliance with them.

I was lent a tiny office in the library and allowed to promote this pie in the sky program in the BSP newsletter, (LOOK UP THE ISSUES FROM 1982-3) primarily to the Basque populations in Idaho, Nevada, and California. The newsletter was critical to our early promotional efforts. I also drove around the American west attending Basque festivals and postering universities with promotional material.

When I took the helm of the newly-formed entity in September of 1982, I had 8 months to: design a program. This included: determine fees, budget, insurance, calendar, courses, finding classrooms and housing, hiring faculty and staff, securing university credits, planning field trips...and recruit 30-40 students to spend a year in a location then best known for its violent and oftentimes deadly struggles of independence with Spain. All before email and cell phone. I called the entity the "University Studies in the Basque Country Consortium," with the tortured acronym: USBCC. It would be 1989 before we adopted USAC as a name. Both Douglass and Bieter provided advice about

their experiences organizing and promoting failing programs. All Consortium expenses for year two were paid by the fees provided by the 22 students recruited for that year.

Sandra Ott, a recent Oxford Ph.D. was hired as Resident Director (RD) of the program in San Sebastian, also on a UNR LOA. Sandra was very competent and committed and we learned a great deal. Nonetheless, and despite our best efforts, we were unable to cover all expenditure. During the first three or four years we ran a deficit of several hundred to several thousand dollars. Art Roberto, the budget head of UNR, kindly suggested that I may want to increase the fees, which I did, for several years. Each spring, I would do a belly crawl across campus to beg controller Ginny Kersey for year-end monies to cover the deficit. After the fourth year, we were able to cover all our costs and earn a slight surplus. Ginny promptly used the surplus to pay the university the funds I had borrowed the years previous. Enrollments languished until I rolled the dice by lowering fees significantly. Lesson learned. --USAC would always pay its own way

A more stable foundation

It did not take long to realize that study abroad was an unstable industry. Monetary fluctuations were frequent and could suddenly cost us 30 percent of our funding in a given year. If something serious impacted our only program the initiative would end. We needed to broaden our base. Our second program was created in Pau, France. Pau is located on the edge of the French Basque Country thus offering both a French and Basque study dimension. Indeed, many Basque emigrants in the U.S. are French speakers.

Italy came next. In 1986, I met UNR Italian professor Franco Manca and Bill Douglass in Florence, one of the most popular studies abroad sites in the world. Both were in Italy working on their own projects. Florence was overrun by U.S. students and tourists, and perhaps 40-50 U.S. university programs were already located there. I was unable to even secure a meeting with university administrators.

We then traveled north to Turin/Torino. As the first capital of Italy, it had magnificent palaces and piazzas, one of the best Egyptian museums in the world, and a rich industrial base, home to Fiat, Lancia, Alfa-Romeo, Ferrari and Olivetti. Thousands of southern Italians flocked there to work. We met Franco Ferraresi, the provost of the nearly 600-year-old University of Torino. Highly intelligent and affable, he was interested in our project and secured a meeting with the rector of the university which then had 50,000 students.

We were also taken to see the Scuola di Amministrazione, a unique Business College founded by the university and the Agnelli Foundation (Fiat, etc.). Its director, Dr. Giorgio Pellicelli was a member of the Agnelli Board. A brilliant man with a high level of English proficiency, he was our first faculty hire. He set the bar and we always had excellent professors there.

These three programs (Basque, French, and Spanish studies in Spain and France and Business in Italy) were the foundation of the USAC's unique identity. Amongst a growing study abroad industry, we were the organization who imbedded its programs in authentic foreign universities away from the Paris' and Romes'. We cultivated the image of being different.

The next program was in Santiago, Chile (1992), followed by Australia (1992) Brighton, U.K. (1993) and Germany (1995) and followed in the same year by Thailand, and Costa Rica. By the time I retired in 2017, USAC was operating hundreds of program sessions in 49 locations in 28 countries. In most countries, we created NGO corporations with corresponding bank accounts through which we contracted employees, processed finances and conducted business. An unexpected bonus was that these programs also provided us with a money exchange dimension. We would hold or increase currencies that were surging and minimize currencies that were faltering. Millions of dollars were at stake so even a small percentage gain made a difference.

To not overwhelm a site with huge numbers of foreigners (mostly Americans) we rarely exceeded 60 students per program. When establishing the program fees for a cycle, we took several factors into consideration such as previous year's fees (and resulting number of students), competitors fees, the economy, exchange rates, and; contractual changes with host universities. The goal was to price the program so that we recruited the maximum number of students for spaces available. Recruiting too many was a waste of effort and may lead to frustration when students couldn't go. Too few students minimize the value of economies of scale. As specific programs would routinely fill up, we would create another program in that country. Eventually, Spain had five programs, Italy four, Costa Rica three, and China and France two each....

Expanding the Membership base

As we created more programs, we expanded the membership base of the Consortium. The original Members of UNR and BSU were quickly joined by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and the University of Iowa (UI). It was no accident that I held degrees from three of the four first members, lending credibility to the notion that business, like many things in life, is personal. They believed in the USAC vision, joining when we could only offer promises. To gain equal footing, new Members paid the same amount as the founding universities, \$7,500 each.

At UNLV I was welcomed warmly by Provost John Unrue and Dean Tom Wright. I didn't know it at the time, but I would have a lifelong association and friendship with Tom. He taught history in half a dozen programs and; was an all-star with students, staff and host university colleagues. Besides teaching, he did research and published with one of our local professors in Chile. His wife, Congresswoman Dina Titus--then a political science professor at UNLV and state senator, also taught for USAC and later

drafted a proclamation recognizing USAC's contributions to the state in both of Nevada Legislative branches.

Every university that became a Member added credibility to USAC. USAC also added another dimension to each Member university, primarily by enhancing the depth and variety of their educational experiences. Secondly, we provided a serious international experience for the faculty and staff of those universities, a wealth that would pay out over decades.

These contributions were recognized and capitalized on by the Member universities. For example, in 2014 UNR printed a small brochure that was distributed to potential students. It was entitled: "5 reasons to be Nevada Bound." Reason #1 was: "Attend a National Tier 1 university." Reason #2 was: "Experience Reno-Tahoe mountains," Reason #3 was, you guessed it: "Study Abroad: 42 Cities, 25 Countries." Students were encouraged to visit the UNR campus where, among the beautiful grounds and buildings, they could visit the basement of the Old Gym adorned in flags from various countries and home to the USAC home office. I believe every member became more attractive to students when it adopted the ancient four headed Basque symbol (lauburu) of USAC.

In the 80's, Steven Loughrin-Sacco was the chair of the foreign languages at BSU. He called one day; he had moved to the U. of Toledo to become their Director of International Programs. Upon arriving, he realized they didn't have anything like USAC. Would we be interested in Toledo? Would we? Heck yes. A couple of years later Steve had moved to San Diego and Debra Pierce replaced him at Toledo. A few years after that, Debra called. She had recently become the new Director of International Program's at Loyola University in Chicago. She asked, would I be willing to have lunch with the provost in Chicago to discuss a potential Loyola membership? Would I? Heck yes! A few weeks later, the three of us were having lunch at a swanky downtown Chicago eatery. After my "pitch", the provost turned to me and said something to the effect of: "I see you have a lot of very attractive programs. Loyola has one: "Loyola in Rome" since 1956. There are many on campus committed to that program, if I were to sign off on USAC and have your Italy programs compete with our Rome one, by noon I would be exiled from Chicago!". And so, we made a deal, Loyola would control USAC admissions for its students, and USAC's Italy programs would not be eligible to Loyola students.

By the year 2000, the Consortium had taken a life of its own. There was a synergy about the organization: Carlos Salas created programs in Costa Rica, Cuba and Uruguay; Alvaro Carredano Chile, Felix Menchacatorre Bilbao, Luis Fernandez Valencia, Susan Thompson promoted the Czech Republic, Bob Neuenschwander China.... The number of friends and associates that were a part of the success of the consortium cannot be underestimated.

We were born as an unknown organization in the western US specializing in eccentric Basque Studies. By the time we set our sights on the Eastern US, we were a large and

known entity. In short order, we were able to recruit key universities, the University of Maine, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Hunter in NY city, Goucher, University of South Carolina, Clemson and finally the University of Florida. It was an eclectic collection of institutions with little in common except for their desire to improve their students' access to affordable, quality, study abroad.

Early on, we realized that most International Programs Offices at our Member universities were very thinly staffed, oftentimes a faculty member relieved of teaching a class to act as the head of the International Programs offices. USAC's arrival on campus would inevitably create a lot of interest. Students and faculty would flock to the office to secure catalogs and to ask questions and enroll. It was wonderful for USAC but oftentimes it overwhelmed the poor staffer. As a result, and with the approval of the USAC Board, we created an Administrative Fee to compensate each Member based on the number of students being sent on Consortium Programs. With these funds, they could subsidize their staffers' time and perhaps even hire a part- or full-timer. It became a win-win formula.

Most of the Member universities were very active in the Consortium and USAC became the primary study abroad program for their students. It was the Member's International Programs Office that represented USAC and /their programs on their own campus. Most offered all Consortium programs and worked with their faculty to design USAC in-house courses.

In the early years, I would occasionally meet with a few people from UNR and BSU to update them. As we grew, we recognized the need to formalize the universities' needs to be informed of USAC activities and issues. We created a Board of Directors, in contrast to the typical educational "Advisory Boards". The individuals serving on the Board were representatives of their universities, and in this way we formalized the member universities' ownership of USAC. Central Office people were the Consortium's executive branch. The Central Office in Reno continued to function autonomously, but we would take major issues such as the creation of new programs and the admission of new universities for a Board vote. The Members were bound by a "Charter" that all, including UNR, signed.

The location of annual Board meetings alternated between a Member University campus and a program site abroad. Representatives from Member universities were able to spend four or five days at the program city and host university, getting to know local faculty and administrators, visiting local sites of interest, touring residence halls, and home stays, sitting in on classes and so on. Resident Directors from many of the Consortium's programs would also attend and give presentations about their program.

As USAC grew, so did the governing board. Eventually, we capped member universities embers at 33. We were in high demand but most Members, with us for decades, had no interest in leaving. So, we created an Associate University (AU) status. These schools could participate in the annual meeting but did not have a governance role. And so, it continued. In the YEAR catalog, there were XX Associate Members. It didn't stop

there, and eventually we created a third tier with more than a hundred institutions which routinely sent us students.

USAC has become a huge organization, spanning the world and executing contracts with 49 non-U.S. host universities in 28 countries. By the end of my career, we were spending well over a million dollars on advertising to recruit nearly 4,500 students each year. The USAC Marketing Department took great pride in their work, as they should have. Nonetheless, I firmly believe that marketing was performed every day by every one of our 300 plus employees worldwide. As proof, we had an alumni recommendation rate exceeding 95%, strong, consistent growth and universities waiting in line to become members of the Consortium. In one early analysis, I estimated that word of mouth accounted for 40% of our students.

In house model

Most people tend to think of study abroad programs in the traditional “student exchange” model in which a university sends five students to London and accepts five students from London. The university structures and resources at both ends are utilized as if the exchange student had been home grown. Each school expects the other to feed, house and take care of the wellbeing of the partner universities’ students.

USAC’s “in house” model, which we used for most of our programs, was different. We sought out resources at a foreign university such as a group of small classrooms, one or two small offices, access to the university’s sports facilities, student activities, cafeterias and so on (more difficult than it sounds). We hired and compensated the faculty, either local or from the U.S., who taught courses according to the descriptions utilized at U.S. universities. We shared course syllabi with our member universities and suggested a department and number. There was sometimes an exchange of emails or phone calls to clarify course content, with the purpose of finding common ground. Initially, it was a struggle to find the appropriate course designations but, as time went on, we got more efficient at the process. In that fashion we were, in effect, delivering courses from UNR, University of Maryland, or University of Loyola. It was possible that 15 students could be sitting in the same basic business class but be enrolled at 15 different U.S. Universities.

As a result, many of the U.S. universities allowed their students remain enrolled at their home university while studying abroad. Students could then be assured that most, if not all, courses they took abroad could be applied toward their graduation requirements. It also gave them access to home university financial aid and scholarships. It gave students and parents the assurance that the study abroad option that their school offered had been vetted by it. With our assistance, it was the universities themselves that recruited their own students to participate in their own consortium/USAC programs. USAC had become the rarest of management models: it was a consortium that worked! It was a smart move on their part, since it would have cost them many millions to create the cornucopia offered by the Consortium. USAC had become the rarest of management models: it was a consortium that worked!

We were under no obligation to continue to hire faculty who were underperforming, originating from the U.S. or abroad. Foreign professors usually were selected from our host universities and taught an extra class for USAC. When foreign universities had exclusive contracts with their professors, we would request an exemption which would be articulated in our contracts with the host university. Systematically, we gathered feedback from our students learning that our courses were viewed as demanding and rated highly by the students.

We also arranged students' housing, whether in local student residence halls, homestays, apartments with locals or with other USAC students... Program locations were very desirable and competition for housing was brutal and expensive, and we usually had a dedicated housing person at each site. Imagine finding 30 apartments each term as well as fielding student roommate and landlord complaints.

We were also responsible for student well-being. Resident Directors, staff and faculty were constantly in touch with students, monitoring their health and welfare without interfering. Everything the health centers see at UNR, USAC sees abroad: depression, eating disorders, alcoholism, suicides, pregnancies, sexual assaults, accidents, cancers, etc. Terrorism, in its many forms, became routine and we spent a lot of time assuring parents that their child was statistically safer abroad than in most U.S. cities. Epidemics (Avian flu, Sars, Swine flu, Dengue, Zika...) were abundant long before Covid. On occasion a student would have to return home. In every serious incident, the home university would be informed, and a four-way conversation would ensue involving the U.S. Member university, the parents, the USAC Central Office and the Program Resident Director.

I can't begin to explain the quality and effectiveness of the faculty and staff abroad and in Reno, many of whom were part of the organization for decades. It was an organization built on trust, especially the Member universities' trust that USAC will provide what it says it will and that we were always going to be there, especially when things went awry. It was, in fact, during moments of crisis that USAC earned its reputation.

Partnership model

The "in house" model didn't fit well everywhere, and we soon realized that some locations would work better with an alternative arrangement. In 1991, I hosted a barbeque for Roslyn Frank, a professor at the University of Iowa and her friend Jon xx, a math professor at Deakin University. Deakin was one of Australia's best, located in the seaside city of Melbourne. By the end of lunch, Jon and I had framed a program model that was different from the "in house" model we had used until then. What we designed was an exchange between Deakin and USAC. We would send students to Deakin, and Deakin would send their students to any of the available USAC programs. The exchange would not be limited to the usual quid pro quo arrangements. Rather, the side sending more students would pay a fee to the other entity for every student over what the other sent, paying about two-thirds the normal fee. In that fashion we would

avoid the typical exchange frustration of recruiting 20 students but having to turn down half of them because our partner did not have a corresponding number of students.

This model, with variations, allowed us to expand, with less investment and thus with less risk, into a myriad of English-speaking foreign universities: in the UK: Brighton, Bristol, London, Reading; in New Zealand: Auckland, Palmerston North, Wellington; Scotland: St. Andrews, Stirling; in South Africa, Stellenbosch and so on. We labeled these programs "Partnership Programs". However, with less risk came fewer rewards. "In house" programs potentially provided a far more efficient economy of scale.

Additional contributions to Members—

One of our key beliefs was that universities needed to have first-hand knowledge of the programs themselves to become strong supporters. One of our first strategies (borrowed from the now defunct NICSA consortium) was to create a Visiting Professor program in which the USAC Board would choose one U.S. professor from a Member university to teach on each term of each in house program. Member representatives would advertise the opportunity on their campus, collect and submit their applications to USAC who would distribute them to the full membership. At the annual meeting, Member Representatives would briefly describe, usually in glowing terms, his/her candidate. Resident Directors would then share their impressions about how an applicant's proposed course would fit in with their program's curriculum. The board would then select a new Visiting Professor to be included in the next catalog. Once abroad, Visiting Professors had the opportunity to give presentations to the host university on their areas of specialization, meet faculty from a sister department and, in many cases, partner up with their new foreign colleagues to conduct joint research projects and, apply for grants. Furthermore, upon returning to the U.S. the professor, newly enriched, brought new perspective and information to share with his/her students. In this fashion hundreds of U.S. professors from Members spent a term teaching abroad. Indeed, more than one hundred UNR professors (GET EXACT #) took advantage of this offer.

The FIDA (Faculty Individual Development Awards) allowed faculty from Member universities to participate in summer programs as students. They became students in nearly every way: understanding the intensity of USAC courses while improving their own knowledge and skills. Many visiting professors were surprised to learn they would spend many of their evenings preparing for the next day's lessons.

Additionally, several times a year USAC invited 12-15 professors and administrators from the Members to participate on a 10-day site visit of in-house USAC programs. Faculty and staff visited the physical campus abroad, ate at student cafeterias, sat in on classes, talked to students, especially those from their own school, became acquainted with program staff, and familiarized themselves with the area.

International faculty exchanges

Oftentimes, we would compensate foreign universities for the resources we used by providing travel grants that allowed their faculty the opportunity to spend a term in the U.S. Because of the effort it took to assist a foreign professor, most came to Reno, usually in the summer. On many occasions, we arranged for foreign faculty from host universities to teach in the departments of the U.S. Visiting Professors, thus doubling the human benefits. Several of us in the Central Office would take the time to introduce them to the faculty, organize presentations, and show them around the area. Faculty exchanges were a lot of work but were also investments with potential long-term value, especially when foreign visitors became influential back home.

On many occasions we were the intermediaries that placed foreign faculty at UNR or other Member universities to teach a myriad of courses. In this fashion we were instrumental in providing a valuable experience for both U.S. and foreign universities.

Scholarships

Each year we would create a scholarship pool from year end monies, oftentimes exceeding a million dollars in total funds. We were not concerned about giving students study abroad experiences a hundred years from now through Foundation accounts. We wanted to assist students now. Scholarships helped students afford program and living expenses, expanding access to the experience. INCLUDE THE ADDITIONAL POOL OF SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

Weaning time

As USAC grew, our needs changed as well, oftentimes pushing UNR policies to the brink or leaving USAC exasperated because of restrictive state policies. For example, USAC and state entities, had radically different responses to the Great Recession of 2008. State/university budgets were cut significantly, forcing difficult cuts in personnel and programs. Since study abroad programs are oftentimes considered a nice, but not essential, element, in a university system, most International Programs offices were radically cut across the country. We saw what was happening and saw it as an opportunity, albeit a risky one. We decided to bet the farm that we had sufficient budgetary discretion to fill the void and gain market share. The result was an unprecedented period of growth for the Consortium. Everyone was working harder than ever. UNR policy, however, severely limited or prohibited new hiring or raises.

Financial management abroad was always an issue for UNR. When we opened a program in Chengdu in 1988 China was in a wild, wild, West mode. There were few written laws applicable to international educational entities. The government was suspicious of religious and, by extension, educational groups. We could not create an NGO or have a USAC bank account. We had no choice but to have the RD establish a personal account in her name. Clearly, there were risks involved in doing that, but it was our only option.

Similar Consortium needs caused a lot of frustrations for all involved. It was becoming evident that UNR was uneasy about harboring a 35-million-dollar a year multinational

entity it could no longer oversee directly. It was necessary to find permanent solutions. After months of exploring options with the university system, it became obvious that we needed to create our own legal entity in the U.S. UNR was magnanimous, recommending Gus Rossi, one of their often-consulted attorneys to create a separate USAC NGO and draft the by-laws. It then took a lot of work to create an off-campus banking system and become officially recognized by the state and federal non-profit. Thirty-two years after my meeting with the BSU and UNR attorneys, the creation of an NGO had come full circle. We had come a long way. In the early years, I felt that each morning we would have to grab the rope attached to the front of the locomotive and slowly pull it uphill. By the end of my tenure, I felt we were strapped to the front of a locomotive speeding down the mountain, wheeee!

A few years after becoming an independent corporation, we purchased a house UNR owned at 1317 north Virginia Street and in August of 2017, we inaugurated a beautiful four-million-dollar, 12,000 sq. ft. modern glass and steel building. We paid cash. A year later, we bought the adjoining four plex to the north to accommodate future growth. Organizing the open house inauguration was one of my last official duties. At the time of my retirement, we had almost \$13 million in a rainy-day reserve account. UNR President Marc Johnson and I agreed that USAC should retain its physical footprint on campus to continue to make participation in study abroad a seamless process for UNR students. The irony is that it was not until we created a USAC NGO corporation that we truly became what we had always wanted to be: an official entity of UNR and other Member Universities. Together we were able to create a stable and extraordinarily successful study abroad organization.

I can't begin to thank all the individuals and universities that accompanied me on this journey. Together we provided more than 60,000, and counting, students the opportunity to live, breathe, socialize and interact with their fellow human beings around the world, gaining enlightenment, knowledge and sensitivity. I welcome the opportunity to thank UNR and NSHE for their generous support. We couldn't have done it without you!