

1 Resolution # 13 - 08

2 *The University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA)*

3 **Of the 2008 - 2009 Session**

4 [October 22, 2008]

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6 *Be it Enacted by the Association, having been considered by the*  
7 *Committee on Academic Affairs,*

8 **Resolution**

9 **The Pressing Need for Study Abroad Board of Arbitration programs**

10 (Decided: [26/0/0])

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12 **Nature of the Problem:** Many students expect to study abroad as an essential part of their  
13 learning experiences at the Pennsylvania State University. For many, this is not so much a  
14 choice as a critical semester or year in their undergraduate scholar life. Institutions hosting  
15 such students typically have different cultures of academia and different standards of  
16 grading. When the Pennsylvania State University attempts to apply the classes taken  
17 abroad on a student's transcript, these different academic cultures are often not reflected  
18 leading to scenarios where a student who earns a B in a foreign country may have easily  
19 earned an A for the same amount of work and effort at The Pennsylvania State University.  
20 It is difficult to appeal such a grade because of distance and lack of a central communication  
21 body between student and institution. This often affects a student's Grade Point Average in  
22 an unduly negative manner and serves as a disincentive to enroll.

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24 **Recommended Course of Action:** The Pennsylvania State University, through its  
25 academic colleges or geographic locations, should implement a method of arbitrating  
26 transcripts in times when a student believes his or her grades awarded abroad would not  
27 be commensurate with equivalent course work completed in the Pennsylvania State  
28 University system. The Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) recommends that the preferred  
29 method be a board of students, faculty, and degree-program administrators within a unit to  
30 which a student could appeal such grades. To this end, the AAC recommends that the ACUE  
31 Committee for International Programs review this proposal and support the AAC in its  
32 efforts to seed such a board at one of the academic colleges within the University for trial  
33 and follow-on expansion pending proof of concept.

34 Respectfully submitted,

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36 Matthew R. Smith, Chair  
37 Academic Affairs Committee  
38 University Park Undergraduate Association Senator, University Faculty Senate

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40 Sam Loewner, Undergraduate Education Subcommittee Chair  
41 Academic Affairs Committee  
42 College of Liberal Arts Delegate

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44 Richard Shermanski, College of Liberal Arts Representative  
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1 Undergraduate Education Subcommittee, AAC

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3 Leah Liu, Eberly College of Science Delegate

4 Undergraduate Education Subcommittee, AAC

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6 Nicholas Heim, College of Education Representative

7 Undergraduate Education Subcommittee, AAC

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9 Committee Vote:   7  /  1  /  0  

10 Signature of Assembly Chairman:

*Ralph K. Ceivello*

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*[Signature]*

[President]

Affirm

Veto

The University Park Undergraduate Association