



OKLAHOMA CITY UNIVERSITY

Petree College of Arts and Sciences • Office of the Dean
2501 N. Blackwelder • Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106-1493 • (405)208-5446 • Fax (405)208-5447

February 21, 2012

To Whom It May Concern

In the summer of 2011, the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) designed and taught an intensive 3-week residential course for Oklahoma City University (OCU) in Chicago known as "Developing Leadership in a Time of Transition." This was an undertaking of OCU's Oikos Scholars Program. Students who successfully completed it earned three hours of credit.

This course combined contextual academic study on systemic issues of justice and environmental ethics with relevant fieldwork in Chicago neighborhoods. Both dimensions were conducted within the environment of a holistic residential learning community that involved both students and faculty. This proved to be a powerful combination of experiential learning that has been difficult to occasion on our home campus with its multifaceted demands that impinge on busy students.

Our experience with this residential program has been extremely positive:

- ICA has a commitment to academic integrity and has a highly skilled staff;
- ICA is a flexible and innovative organization that has also partnered creatively with OCU in organizing and hosting other special conferences;
- ICA has been a good institutional partner both academically and administratively;
- ICA staff was attentive and intentional about student safety in the City of Chicago;
- Confidence in these statements is based upon first hand-experience of an OCU faculty member who was present during the initial program;
- Students returned to campus from this course with renewed energy, new insights, and motivation to undertake new initiatives; for example, some played a major leadership role in establishing the new student environmental sustainability club on campus;
- The residential course at ICA was complementary to OCU's overall mission in general and the Oikos Scholars Program in particular.

I can confidentially recommend ICA's residential course for the consideration of other universities and colleges that are seeking to enrich opportunities for exposing students to the challenges of justice and environmental ethics in today's world. I also would be happy to respond to any particular questions that such institutions might have about this program.

Sincerely,

Mark Y. A. Davies, Dean
Petree College of Arts and Sciences
Oklahoma City University