

Contract creates dispute

By STEVE HOOKS
Of the Emerald

An "international dispute" of sorts temporarily barred 45 foreign students from classes at the American English Institute last term.

The AEI is a self-supporting, non-profit institution with University ties. It offers an intensive non-credit English program for foreign students.

Many students enter the AEI to prepare for the Test Of English as a Foreign Language, which is required for admission to the University. The AEI, however, teaches English skills for college life and beyond, says director Iris Moye.

The students affected by the problem were sponsored by agencies of their governments. The agencies paid the Japan-based International Language Services to arrange the students' study programs in the United States, she says. The ILS, in turn, contracted with the AEI.

"However, the ILS has a bad record for paying us," Moye says, adding that the ILS was more than a term behind in payments. She says the AEI was "dealing with an agency that had established a bad reputation."

Moye says the AEI, on the advice of the University Office of Business Affairs, changed the contract with ILS so the institute would "get paid in a timely fa-

shion." One aspect of the contract allowed the AEI to bar ILS students from classes if payments were late.

Students whose governments contracted with ILS were informed during the summer of the new agreement between ILS and the AEI, she says.

ILS was late again in paying the AEI last fall, Moye says. The 45 foreign students were prevented from attending classes for nearly two days at the beginning of fall term, "even though it grieved me enormously to put the students in the middle," she adds.

During those two days, Moye met with the students to explain the situation. She recommended the students contact their sponsoring agencies and ask the agencies to put pressure on the ILS.

The time out of class did not hurt the students' progress in the program, she says.

Repeated efforts were made to contact ILS offices in Japan and Long Beach, Calif., Moye says. The situation was complicated when each office claimed the other had responsibility over the matter.

"You wouldn't really keep them (the students) out of class, would you?" she quotes one Long Beach ILS official as asking her.

"They (ILS) simply were not prepared to accept the earlier contract agreement," Moye says.

The payments arrived and the students were admitted to classes, but she says the AEI is advising foreign governments to not arrange students' programs through the ILS.

The Venezuelan government arranged its students' programs through ILS, Moye says. She recommended the government-sponsored scholarship agency in Venezuela stop using ILS to set up student programs, but says communicating with the Venezuelan agency was difficult.

Two Venezuelan students barred from classes say they were out of classes for most of the first week, not just two days. Moye stresses that all students were admitted to classes after less than two days and that those students might have misunderstood the situation. Some Venezuelan students didn't know their government had contracted with ILS until they were barred from classes, she says.

Sergio Antillano, a University graduate student from Venezuela, says he was also temporarily barred from AEI classes when he attended in 1979 due to late payment. He says ILS was not involved at that time.

"I disagree morally with the attitude of kicking students out," he says.

Moye was not director at the time, and says she was unaware of the incident until asked about it.

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AEI test assists students

By STEVE HOOKS
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Some foreign students arriving at U.S. universities have only minimum English skills and their governments limit the time they can spend in basic English classes, says American English Institute Director Iris Moye.

The AEI offers intensive non-credit English classes to "non-native" speakers of English and has ties with the University linguistics department. Its chief customers are foreign students who must pass the Test Of English as a Foreign Language for admission to the University.

But Moye points out, the institute isn't "in business to just get students into the University."

The AEI has a TOEFL preparation class as part of its program, says Moye, but merely passing the test does not mean the student will have enough English skills to survive all university courses. The AEI program is designed to teach students skills above and beyond the minimum University requirements, she says.

Students whose governments allow limited time in a basic English program are usually attending U.S. universities on scholarships, Moye says, adding she would like to see more advanced screening of students for English skills.

"If they (the governments) are going to impose a time limit, it's very important to screen students before they arrive."

Sergio Antillano, a University graduate student from Venezuela, studied at the AEI.

"It takes you too long to learn the English you need to pass the TOEFL," he says.

Antillano adds that while some instructors at the AEI were

good, he thinks "as a whole, the institute fails in preparing students in English skills."

A current AEI student from Venezuela, who asked not to be identified, says the government allows only three terms for its students on scholarships to complete the program and pass the TOEFL. The AEI starts TOEFL preparation only at the advanced stages of the program, the student adds.

"I can understand why students feel that way," Moye says of the students' frustrations, but adds that unless students are screened for English skills in advance, "We can't guarantee students being

prepared for college within the time period."

"There are universities all over the country filling the ranks with foreign students without minimum English skills," she says. "In some cases, this borders on the criminal," she adds, referring to the lax admissions requirements of some universities.

In contrast, the University may raise its admissions requirements for foreign students.

Peter Briggs, assistant director at the Office of International Services, says the Admissions Office proposed raising the minimum TOEFL score required for admission.

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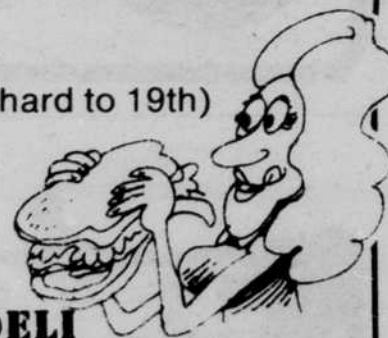
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