

Many wonderful programs originate in foreign venues. The recently anointed UM London summer program fits this pattern. In the winter of 1983, when I was Professor of Political Science at Syracuse University, I was asked by the Political Science Department Chair to organize a summer program in London that would combine theory and practice. I accepted the opportunity, and shortly after agreeing to organize this type of program I flew to London where I negotiated with the two principals, Roy Scott, Administrative Director of the Syracuse University London Programs, and Malcolm Keir, a British academic who was then teaching full time for Syracuse University. The negotiations were successful. I explained in detail that I wanted a special type of summer program, one that combined interviews with leaders and activists in London, brief seminars really, with four day-long lectures to begin the program. In the discussions I got what I thought we needed: an eight-week use of a classroom in the Syracuse University building in the Notting Hill area of London and a contract with Keir to teach a five-day introductory survey of British economics, politics, the transitions to the European Union, and the troubles at the time in Northern Ireland -- in general I contracted history with its special achievements and problems -- the usual desiderata of an introductory course useful for both students who had some knowledge of Great Britain and those who were strictly tabula rasa. Scott, Keir, and I agreed to work on a list of political intellectuals and leaders, members of Parliament, the leaders of the Adam Smith Institute, print and television journalists and editors -- individuals who might also provide' insightful interviews. On the academic side, I wanted the students to engage the speakers with information, even knowledge, rather than an innocent ignorance about politics in Europe and on the world stage. Of course, I planned to attend all program gatherings, including Keir's lectures and the interview sessions. And I did exactly that.

The Syracuse University London summer program was a great success from day one. We drew 18-23 students every summer (including, at the beginning, students from other universities). I was the Program Director for 20 years, traveling to London for 6-8 weeks every summer but one during those two decades. The staff and I also worked on improving the speaker list. Every winter I reviewed my notes on the interview sessions and expunged the names of speakers. Then I asked the staff for recommendations to fill the open slots. In this version of dialectical exchange, we usually emerged with better speakers each year. At the end of my tenure as Program Director we had compiled a list of speakers that was the envy of other programs.

Why did I step down as Director after the 2004 summer session? Because I had accepted an offer to chair the University of Miami Political Science Department. (In the spring term of that first academic year at University of Miami (2005) I was asked to continue chairing the Syracuse University London program through the summer term of 2005 -- and maybe beyond -- from my position at UM. I declined.) I have directed four versions of the program for UM since joining the faculty here. This past summer, 2015, I passed the baton to a younger member of the POL faculty, Joseph Uscinski. We split time chairing the program. I introduced Professor Uscinski to my London contacts and walked him through the way the program works.

Professor Uscinski will be an excellent successor, developing the program in new ways. From this point on I am a spectator, a fan, a free consultant if needed, as I watch the program take off in all the right ways over the next several years. I am certain it will give the University of Miami a presence in London with great benefits in student recruiting and faculty research.