
International Education Council

Minutes of 13 October 2022

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate International Education Council was called to order at 3 p.m. on 13 October 2022, via Webex video conferencing by David Huffman, chair.

Members in Attendance: Ellen Breakfield-Glick, Charles Bruce (substitute for Eric Archer), Valerie Chan, Joan Conway, Bradford Dennis, Jessica Gladden (substitute for Shannon McMorrow), David Huffman, Elena Lisovskaya, Joseph Milostan, Michelle Metro-Roland, Xiaodan (Abby) Wang, Jim Whittles, Paulo Zagalo-Melo, German Zarate Sandez (substitute for Anna Popkova)

Members Absent: Jun-Seok Oh

Ex Officio in Attendance: Lisa DeChano-Cook

Guests: Reetha Raveendran, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Acceptance of the Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Breakfield-Glick, to accept the 13 October 2022 agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Conway, to approve the minutes of 15 September 2022 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Huffman reported that American Council on Education (ACE) Lab 2.0 advisors met with IEC officers to address challenges and opportunities regarding the internationalization component of the draft University Strategic Plan.

Chair Huffman provided a presentation at the Faculty Senate meeting on 6 October 2022 regarding IEC accomplishments for 2021-22, selected charges for 2022-23, and key components of the University Strategic Plan for which IEC is providing advice.

On 12 October 2022, President Montgomery distributed an email to the campus community supporting women's rights and freedom in Iran. IEC strongly supports this and wants to encourage support for the difficult issues students are facing, which ties in directly with several of IEC's charges.

The strong U.S. dollar, increasing inflation, and wars are causing financial hardships for WMU students. WMU must provide adequate resources for them.

International Education Week is coming up in November. It was asked if any events are being advertised. Zagalo-Melo stated that due to staffing constraints, events have been scaled back. DeChano-Cook added that it coincides directly with Geography Awareness Week. Zagalo-Melo and DeChano-Cook agreed on the joint promotion of events hosted by the Department of Geography, Environment, and Tourism with Haenicke Institute for Global Education (HIGE) during International Education Week.

Chair Huffman commented on a recent Chronicle of Higher Education article¹ stating that student visas dispensed by the U.S. have increased to pre-pandemic levels. Zagalo-Melo stated that this was due primarily to the backlog worldwide at embassies in processing student visas. Even though WMU had a record number of applications, the US consulates were not able to process all of them. Regarding Ukrainian students, WMU provided emergency funding for students with temporary protective status, and WMU is also reaching out to Russian students.

Ex Officio DeChano-Cook reported that the IEC presentation at the 6 October 2022 Faculty Senate meeting was informative and that faculty senate members learned new things about the IEC and its role.

Reports of University Representatives

Zagalo-Melo reported that President Montgomery referred to the ACE Lab 2.0 visit and that WMU is ahead of the curve nationally regarding internationalization. The ACE Lab 2.0 team advisors met with President Montgomery and had positive comments about the ACE Lab 2.0 visit. Zagalo-Melo stated that the ACE Lab 2.0 advisors worked with IEC on methodology for the implementation of the internationalization strategic plan.

Zagalo-Melo shared that HIGE is currently working on launching several global learning initiatives. Opportunities for cross-cultural learning will be announced later this year. HIGE is implementing an E-[Verify software that matches the I-9 form to the employee record in national security](#). Universities that have this system can allow students to stay in the United States for STEM training for up to three years rather than just one. This system will help with graduate international recruitment. Chair Huffman asked whether the 3-year OPT in STEM fields impacts both graduate and undergraduate students. Zagalo-Melo replied that it has a bigger impact on graduate students. The web-based software is free but requires training.

Reports of Councils/Committees Standing Committees

College-level International Committees

1. Whittles reported that the College of Aviation meeting was postponed due to illness.
2. Gladden reported that the College of Health and Human Services had their first meeting. CHHS discussed how to better support international students and who in the college is doing international work.
3. Wang reported that the Hayworth College of Business International group met with Milostan and discussed short-term study abroad programs. The committee discussed long-term collaborative programs in Ireland, China, India, Thailand, and other countries. Chair Huffman asked if the Hayworth College of Business committee has looked at grants to help with international outreach. Wang replied that scholarships are offered, but they were not sure about any other grants.
4. Oh was not present, so there was no report from the College of Engineering International Committee.
5. Bruce reported that the College of Education and Human Development does have an international committee, but its meetings have not yet been established. An update will be provided at the next IEC meeting.
6. Breakfield-Glick reported that she spoke with Maria Cristina Fava, Assistant Professor, School of Music, regarding the College of Fine Arts International Committee. The committee will meet soon and set up an agenda.
7. Lisovskaya reported that the College of Arts and Sciences International Committee is not currently active, but would like to help re-establish it.

Unfinished Business

None.

¹ Fischer, K. and Bauman, D. "Number of New Chinese Students at U.S. Colleges Plummeted This Fall, Visa Data Show", *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 11, 2022, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/number-of-new-chinese-students-at-u-s-colleges-plummeted-this-fall-visa-data-show>.

New Business

Zagalo-Melo handed out an updated draft of the University Strategic Plan to share with the ACE Lab 2.0 advising team. Chair Huffman shared this draft and asked for feedback on selected components.

1. Supporting Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) that have an international scope
 - a. Chan met with about ten international students who are leaders of various RSOs. Chan would like to increase engagement between RSOs and international students and have more communication about what the various groups are doing. Zagalo-Melo shared that study abroad students help with the international festival and international student orientation. Chan mentioned that international students can be insular, but wants them to collaborate with other groups.
2. Increase Scholarship Support for Students Pursuing Global Learning
 - a. Zagalo-Melo shared that significant support is provided, but some additional announcements will come out later this year about new opportunities. Zagalo-Melo added that the first year of the global engagement program is free, but scholarships will allow students to continue into years two through four. WMU currently has 130 students in the global engagement program.
3. Additional components will be reviewed when the next version of the University Strategic Plan is released by the steering committee.

Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Raveendran stated that it is important to be in spaces like this, the IEC meeting with faculty, and to lean into faculty as partners and allies to work with students. She wants students to understand that she is accessible. Raveendran said that members of the council can see things with students in a first-hand experience. Call or email Raveendran if you need advice about how to help students, both domestic and international. She noted that it is difficult for international students to speak up and realize that they have rights and responsibilities. The First Year Experience Program can be a great way to help international students acclimate to WMU. Chair Huffman asked if there are some important issues IEC should focus on in a collaborative effort. Raveendran replied that mental health and well-being are very important. Breakfield-Glick mentioned that IEC should invite a guest to an IEC meeting to help learn what resources are available. Raveendran reported that WMU received funding for an additional counselor from a well-being proposal. There will be training for all First Year Experience instructors and peer mentoring programs for students. The teletherapy program for all students with WMU login access is available. A student can create a profile and select a counselor based on their needs. A student can register and pick an appointment, chat, telephone, or video. Every student gets three appointments and can apply for two more. If used frequently, the student gets a treatment plan with a counselor on campus. A student can access up to eight sessions with the Sindecuse Health Center. If a student has a continuous need, a counselor continues to see the student. A crisis hotline trained counselor is available. IEC has established a working group to generate ideas to welcome students. Raveendran replied that programs that work well have a link or connection to academics. If it is purely for fun, some graduate students may not have time to participate.

Announcements

Chan announced an international potluck to be held at Kanley Chapel on Thursday, 13 October at 5 p.m. Five student RSO groups are involved.

Adjournment

Chair Huffman adjourned the meeting at 4:58 p.m. The International Education Council meets next on 17 November, 2022 virtually via WebEx.

Approval

Submitted by Bradford Dennis, Secretary

Minutes approved on 17 November 2022.