
International Education Council

Minutes of 17 November 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 17 November 2022, via Webex video conferencing by David Huffman, chair.

Members in Attendance: Ellen Breakfield-Glick, Charles Bruce, Valerie Chan, Bradford Dennis, Jessica Gladden (substitute for Shannon McMorrow), David Huffman, Elena Lisovskaya, Michelle Metro-Roland, Jun-Seok Oh, Chasy Somwhang, Abby Wang, Jim Whittles, German Zarate-Sandez (substitute for Anna Popkova)

Members Absent: Joan Conway, Joseph Milostan, Paulo Zagalo-Melo

Ex Officio in Attendance: Lisa DeChano-Cook

Guests: Remzi Seker, Vice President for Research and Innovation

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Acceptance of the Agenda

The Faculty Senate Executive Board would like IEC to discuss raising the Duolingo scores. It was added to the agenda under New Business.

[MOTION] It was moved by Dennis, seconded by Whittles, to accept the 17 November 2022 agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

The 13 October minutes were amended to change the phrase “due to budgetary constraints” to “due to staffing constraints”.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Breakfield-Glick, to approve the minutes of 13 October 2022 as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Huffman introduced Chasy Somwhang, International Student Relations Director, Graduate Student Association representative.

Chair Huffman reported that Julian Vasquez Heilig was announced as the new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for WMU. Huffman suggested inviting Vasquez Heilig as a guest in spring 2023. Huffman has already invited Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Candy McCorkle as a guest for spring 2023 and is in the process of finalizing a date. Chair Huffman attended the International Student Potluck meeting on 13 October. He noted that Zagalo-Melo and Milostan are not present at today’s meeting since they are in Portugal, strengthening WMU’s partnerships and study abroad programs.

Chair Huffman shared that several important reports are available [\(1\) the American Council on Education “Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses 2022 Edition”](#) ; [\(2\) the U.S. Department of Education “Succeeding Globally Through International Education and Engagement” updated March 2022](#) ; [\(3\) in Conjunction with item 2 also see the joint commitment by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education “A Renewed U.S. Commitment to International Education”](#) ; [\(4\) in conjunction with international education week November 14-18, the Institute for International Education produced the Open Doors Report](#) .

Ex Officio DeChano-Cook did not provide a report.

Reports of University Representatives

Due to his absence, Zagalo-Melo did not provide a report.

Reports of Councils/Committees Standing Committees

Whittles reported that the College of Aviation's international committee met and discussed the distribution of a letter to students. Immediately, there were 25 responses expressing interest in Study Abroad. Whittles reported that the College of Aviation is considering offering a program in Rome and Greece next summer, which will be discussed at the committee's next meeting.

Gladden reported that the College of Health and Human Services' international committee received funds from the college for hosting a lunch for international students and faculty.

Bruce reported that the College of Education and Human Development international committee is not meeting this semester. The new interim dean is evaluating the committee's overall. The international committee is on hiatus.

Breakfield-Glick reported that the College of Fine Arts international committee intends to reinstate a study abroad program for next spring that has been on hiatus due to the pandemic.

Wang did not provide a report for the Hayworth College of Business international committee.

Oh did not provide a report for the College of Engineering international committee.

Lisovskaya did not provide a report for the College of Arts and Sciences international committee.

Metro-Roland reported that the Global Engagement Award Workgroup has begun meeting. DeChano-Cook reported that a Memorandum of Action would not be necessary to proceed because the current language for the award is broad enough. The group collected ideas of activities that staff might accomplish to receive the award, and will brainstorm for promoting the award. DeChano-Cook reported that if the workgroup recommends a change to the language of the website regarding the award, it can go to the Faculty Senate Executive Board and does not require an MOA.

Metro-Roland reported that the Fulbright Workgroup reviewed documents from Ohio State on best practices. The workgroup reviewed Fulbright sabbatical and non-sabbatical awards, teaching schedules, and current recommendations. The workgroup is looking at WMU Fulbright Award recipients to determine existing college support, teaching support, and barriers encountered. The workgroup will research what happened after a Fulbright recipient received an award, and what the reception and support were like after the award. The workgroup intends to create a set of recommendations rather than a policy. There is a lot of flexibility in departments, so departmental policy cannot be limited, but rather help in promoting best practices.

The Welcoming International Students Workgroup has not yet met. Discussion was held regarding IEC Charge 7. Chair Huffman asked for a volunteer to take the lead for this workgroup to organize a plan of action in spring 2023.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Chair Huffman led a discussion regarding stressful events that impact international students. Whittles highlighted news items regarding drought and famine in Africa, oppression of women in Iran, and the war in Ukraine. Whittles mentioned the news story regarding the Halloween stampede in Seoul, Korea. Whittles sent messages to family and friends of students impacted. Whittles reported that it is a good idea to reach out to students when events like this occur. Metro-Roland added that students sometimes have different relationships with faculty, since the faculty are in positions of authority. If something happens, students might not want to reach out to faculty. Metro-Roland reported that the burden is on faculty and staff because students may be reluctant to bring it up. DeChano-Cook responded that faculty may not be aware of the needs, and that is why they do not reach out. DeChano-Cook added that maybe IEC could recommend that the Faculty Senate ask faculty to reach out to their students to take a more proactive approach. Several IEC members provided examples where contacting students in need was well

received. Lisovskaya suggested that IEC draft a memo to department chairs to initiate discussions at faculty meetings. DeChano-Cook noted the need to have the Executive Board's approval for the distribution of such a memo. Chair Huffman will ask Zagalo-Melo for assistance. Metro-Roland suggested that best practices could be distributed to Dining Services, Residential Life, and Recreational Life staff in order to aid students. Somwhang supported the suggestion.

Chair Huffman introduced Remzi Seker, Vice President for Research and Innovation. Seker provided his background and what attracted him to Kalamazoo. Seker wants to leverage research to help students. He reported that his vision is to focus on applied research and creative scholarship, to serve students, arts, and corporations in the area, internationally, and locally. His main goal at WMU is to acquire more funding to support student research, especially undergraduate research. He expressed the need for an office for undergraduate research. Seker asked IEC members to be willing to mentor students for research. He is creating a research advisory team to advise students on research projects that will include a faculty evaluation of the proposal process. He would like to challenge freshmen, sophomores, and juniors to begin research and create innovative ideas to apply for and receive seed funding to produce. Seker is currently working with students to patent their ideas. Metro-Roland noted that students often lack opportunities for research on campus and that some work opportunities on campus are restricted to domestic students. Chair Huffman stated that WMU has a lot of talented students and can make students more competitive for Fullbright Awards or Study Abroad. WMU could make students more eligible for opportunities and involve them in hands-on activities. Seker replied that if students applied for a fellowship with the National Security Agency (NSA), for example, WMU has an agreement with them. The NSA wants to come and recruit students for deciphering and intelligence gathering if WMU can create opportunities for them. The more opportunities WMU can provide, the more opportunities the students will have post-graduation. Seker responded that this is the gift that keeps on giving, keep reaching out.

Chair Huffman reported that the Executive Board has asked IEC to discuss raising the Duo-Lingo Scores. A video created by Witschi was presented to provide context regarding the Duo-Lingo Scores proposal, since Witschi could not personally attend the meeting. Chair Huffman shared the program improvement proposal form. DeChano-Cook explained that the proposal is to increase requirements for Duo-Lingo as other institutions across the U.S. have already done so. The proposal recommends raising the standard from 105 to 115 for graduates and from 95 to 100 for undergraduates. Metro-Roland questioned the rationale. She noted that Duo-Lingo has become popular because it is online and has increased access to assessment for students. Before Duo-Lingo some countries required students to go to one testing site to take the tests in print. Somwhang reported that the highest available score in Duo-Lingo is 160, so 105 to 115 is a good score, but not the best.

[MOTION] It was moved by DeChano-Cook, seconded by Whittles, to approve the proposal as presented. A vote on the motion was postponed until the next meeting.

Announcements

Chair Huffman suggested that a representative from Merze Tate College be added to the council membership. Ex Officio DeChano-Cook stated that IEC will need to justify adding a member to the Executive Board.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Whittles, seconded by DeChano-Cook, to adjourn the meeting at 5:07 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The International Education Council meets next on 8 December 2022, via Webex video conferencing.

Approval

Submitted by Bradford Dennis, Secretary

Minutes approved on 8 December 2022