
International Education Council

Minutes of 16 February 2023

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate International Education Council was called to order at 3:01 p.m. on 16 February 2023, via Webex video conferencing by David Huffman, chair.

Members in Attendance: Vuvu Antonio, Fathima Bachilee, Ellen Breakfield-Glick, Charles Bruce, Joan Conway, Bradford Dennis, Jessica Gladden (substitute for Shannon McMorrow), David Huffman, Elena Lisovskaya, Jun-Seok Oh, Michelle Metro-Roland, Joseph Milostan, Abby Wang, Jim Whittles, Paulo Zagalo-Melo, German Zarate-Sandez (substitute for Anna Popkova).

Ex Officio in Attendance: Zeljka Vidic

Guest: Julian Vasquez Heilig, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Acceptance of the Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by Whittles, seconded by Bruce, to accept the 16 February 2023 agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Gladden, seconded by Conway, to approve the minutes of 19 January 2023 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Huffman reported that the Fulbright reception was a success. Chair Huffman reported that WMU had four Guggenheim fellowships in the past and hopes to be able to see that again. He reported about a meeting with the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at which they discussed that communication across institutional divisions is operating independently and is inconsistent. Chair Huffman noted that Fulbright accomplishes promoting cooperation and placing WMU on the world stage. He announced travel plans to Denmark and Sweden, and his application for a sabbatical and Fulbright to Kenya. Chair Huffman reported that the WMU Strategic Plan has been published, which includes an action plan team led by Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Julian Vasquez Heilig and Candy McCorkle, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion.

Ex Officio Vidic did not provide a report

Reports of University Representatives

Zagalo-Melo provided the Haenicke Institute for Global Education report. He is currently working on a strategic digital marketing strategy for HIGE. Zagalo-Melo expects that the implementation of the plan will be in the spring and fall of 2024.

Milostan reported that recruiting for Study Abroad will begin soon. WMU has generous scholarships for summer I and summer II semesters. Applications for the Summer I semester are past due, and applications for the Summer II semester are due at the end of February 2023. Zagalo-Melo reported that WMU Essential Studies Courses are attempting to get students involved earlier in Study Abroad programs, which will provide an opportunity for students to gain experience in Study Abroad earlier in their careers.

Zagalo-Melo announced that the International Festival will be held on 2 April 2023 at the Bernhard Center. He is currently developing partnerships with Sri Lanka. Zagalo-Melo will present at the Annual Meeting of International Education Administrators about the global initiatives at WMU. He has been contacted by faculty regarding how WMU can help earthquake victims in Turkey. Zagalo-Melo reported that WMU will do whatever can be done and is looking for ideas to help. Metro-Roland reported that the HIGE international emergency fund will be provided to students in need in Turkey; however, only five WMU students may be nominated. HIGE will fund as much as possible and is requesting feedback on how others in need may be assisted. Bruce asked if the colleges are aware of the six students in need, to which Zagalo-Melo reported that the faculty are.

Reports of Councils/Committees Standing Committees

Whittles reported that the College of Aviation International Committee did not meet but sent out notices for study abroad to London and Greece. Whittles reported that the Director of the program in Greece is coming to the United States to meet with Milostan and the College of Aviation. The College of Aviation is getting organized and developing partnerships.

Gladden reported that the College of Health and Human Services International Committee is working closely with students to form an International Registered Student Organization (RSO).

Wang reported that the Hayworth College of Business International Committee met on 10 February 2023. Study Abroad programs this year were announced for Portugal, Thailand, and India, and Japan is being considered. Zagalo-Melo reported that the College of Business will have a minor in Business in Portugal in the summer of 2024. It will be taught by a WMU faculty member in person in Portugal at Nova University in English. It is one of the top business schools in Europe, in the top 100 universities in the world, and the top business university in Portugal. Students can attend for a few weeks, but the full minor is eight weeks. The goal is to have consecutive two-week courses.

Lisovskaya reported that the College of Arts and Sciences International Committee has not been reactivated since COVID-19. The CAS dean is sending requests to faculty to reinstate the committee in the fall.

Chair Huffman reported that some IEC members are not on the international committees in their colleges. Zagalo-Melo suggested that it could be a role of the IEC to design a network between the IEC and the college international committees. IEC could gain a lot by defining the way to connect and network. Chair Huffman suggested that IEC members should reach out to the colleges and establish the network. It is not an EIC charge but can be considered.

Metro-Roland reported that the Global Engagement Award Working Group completed work as reported last month. Language has been changed on the forms and website, and nominations will be requested soon.

Metro-Roland reported that the Fulbright Working Group sent the Qualtrics survey of nine questions out to former Fulbright scholar recipients. The questions focused on the benefits of the scholars' benefits and support received, barriers, sabbatical leave, resulting publications, presentations, and other open questions.

Dennis reported that the Welcoming International Students Working Group met. Dennis announced that Antonio volunteered to be a member of the working group. The working group worked on questions, generated the draft report, and consolidated the recommendations. Dennis also met with International Student Council President Kar Men Lee to gain input on recommendations.

Unfinished Business

Chair Huffman reported that the IEC should assess progress made on Charges 3, 4, 5, and 6. Many were discussed today, and some will be addressed in the strategic plan. Chair Huffman reported that there is some overlap in Charges 3 and 4. Zagalo-Melo reported that HIGE is putting out new programs, and it is

perfect timing to improve and expand upon what IEC has done in the past. Chair Huffman plans to meet with the Graduate Studies and Undergraduate Studies Councils in March or April.

Charge 6 is addressed by the international programs in Portugal and Sri Lanka. Milostan is making progress but could use more input from colleges, faculty, and staff.

Chair Huffman reported that at some point, IEC will discuss its role in the future and the larger impact to promote global and international efforts and asked for comments and suggestions. Zagalo-Melo heard from students interested in studying abroad that it is not advocated by the student advisors because it does not fit the students' requirements. Zagalo-Melo reported that this is a misunderstanding because a student's program can be modified to fit this program. This issue is not intentional but comes from a lack of information. IEC members were encouraged to send ideas and comments about global learning programs and study abroad.

Lisovskaya stated that in the past, there were funds to support international travel opportunities, supporting research, and attending international conferences. A question was asked if these funds would be reinstated. Zagalo-Melo replied that these funds still exist, but focus has shifted to development grants abroad. Former IEC chair, Jim Butterfield, investigated and learned that the travel funds were not created for the purpose of international travel opportunities supporting research and attending international conferences. The International Education Faculty Development Fund (IEFDF) has research grants for travel,, and this would be duplicating what already exists. Funding for development grants abroad is more aligned with what the fund was created for.

New Business

Julian Vasquez Heilig, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, discussed the functions of his office. Vasquez Heilig reported that there will be a wall of suggestions in his office and is interested in any questions and comments.

Huffman and Zagalo-Melo asked about a blanket insurance policy for WMU international students. Zagalo-Melo recommended doing what other universities have done: choose one provided and aligned with our health center and administrative policies and make it required for international students. Zagalo-Melo reported that it would be beneficial for international students to have a blanket policy to gain insurance coverage. Metro-Roland reported that WMU did have a requirement, but it was discontinued. Graduate students pay much more without blanket coverage. Vasquez Heilig replied that the best thing would be to submit a proposal.

Vasquez Heilig reported that internationalization is part of WMU's vision and one of the top seven priorities in the new strategic plan. Milostan asked about the announcement regarding the expanded partnership with Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) and study abroad opportunities. Vasquez Heilig reported that improvement in communication has upgraded the synergy. KVCC and WMU consider each other as partners. The graduation rate is somewhere between 60% and 70% for KVCC transfers to WMU.

Vasquez Heilig asked IEC about ideas to create international research opportunities. Other countries are ahead of WMU in areas such as sustainability. How can WMU take advantage of such opportunities around the world? Chair Huffman reported that when in Denmark, he met several U.S. students who received funding for international studies. Chair Huffman asked if WMU could be more intentional and support students in study abroad. Vasquez Heilig replied that nothing happens unless the faculty wants to champion the work and needs to bring it to life.

Paulo Zagalo-Melo reported that there are two strengths that IEC would like to continue to improve: international partnerships and international research. It would be a great opportunity to bring both undergraduate and graduate work. The impact factors that universities use are focused on sustainability and development.

Chair Huffman reported on several international students who have had successes in global impact. Chair Huffman also reported that he has invited graduate student visitors to his class to share their journeys, which was well received by students. Vasquez Heilig responded that WMU needs to tell its story better.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Whittles, seconded by Breakfield-Glick, to adjourn the meeting at 4:53 p.m. The motion was carried unanimously. The International Education Council meets next on 16 March 2023, via Webex video conferencing.

Approval

Submitted by Bradford Dennis, Secretary

Minutes approved on 16 March 2023.