

International Education Council

Minutes of 15 February 2024

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate International Education Council was called to order at 3:02 p.m. on 15 February 2024, via Webex video conferencing by Bradford Dennis, chair.

Members in Attendance: Eric Archer, Ellen Breakfield-Glick, Joan Conway, Bradford Dennis, Elena Lisovskaya, Shannon McMorrow, Michele Metro-Roland, Joseph Milostan, Macy Potter, Abby Wang, Jim Whittles, Paulo Zagalo-Melo

Members Absent: Tarun Gupta, Lucius Hallett, Zoya Kaleem, Anna Popkova

Ex Officio in Attendance: Osama Abudayyeh

Guest: Remzi Seker, associate Vice President, Office of Research and Innovation

Quorum

A quorum was present with 13 members in attendance, of the nine needed to establish quorum.

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by McMorrow, seconded by Lisovskaya, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Zagalo-Melo, seconded by McMorrow, to approve the 18 January 2024 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Dennis reported that the Fulbright Reception on 9 February was successful and well attended. A request to college international committees for a speaker to attend IEC March meeting was made. Confirmed speakers included Pam Wadsworth from the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS), Jim Whittles from Aviation and Jun Oh from Engineering. Chair Dennis will send a letter to deans to find out who among faculty may be interested in starting international committees in the colleges.

Ex Officio Abudayyeh reported that the Faculty Senate Executive Board approved a Student Affairs officer to be added to IEC as a non-voting member. Chair Dennis will follow up with Diane Anderson, Vice President of Student Affairs, to confirm details.

Reports of University Representatives

Zagalo-Melo reported on international enrollment statistics. International undergraduate applications are up 27% and admissions are up 107%. Graduate applications are down 27%, but admissions are up 61%. WMU has become faster and more efficient at processing applications. The number of transfers from other universities is up 49%, and these transfers tend to have a very high yield. There are over 80 partnerships of all kinds, mostly curricular articulations. It is unusual and impressive to have such a high number, and Zagalo-Melo credits proactive department chairs for this success.

Milostan reported on several partnerships including our global hubs in Portugal and the Dominican Republic. Haworth College of Business (HCOB) foundational courses will be offered in Portugal during Summer I, and Essential Studies will be offered in the Dominican Republic during Summer II.

Kaleem did not provide a report due to her absence.

Potter did not provide a report.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

McMorrow reported that there was interest from the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) faculty in learning more about the Fulbright program. There is low representation on the international

committee, but CHHS is working on increasing participation. A CHHS graduate student mentioned that it may be helpful to discuss the mental health implication of the Palestine/Israel conflict.

Wang reported that HCOB international committee met 9 February. Their faculty led 28 students to India December 2023. Several students experienced anxiety and could not participate in daily activities. Wang suggested that potential students could be screened in terms of ability to deal with culture shock. Wang mentioned study abroad options within HCOB.

The Welcoming Students Working Group met. There was a survey attempted but did not have many respondents. The group is considering another survey which could also become a research project for those involved.

The Fulbright Working Group reviewed a document from last year giving recommendations in terms of policy and promotions, and Fulbright-friendly leave policies. The document included suggestions to promote and publicize Fulbright opportunities.

The Study Abroad Working Group discussed developing a document that describes best practices for WMU colleges and departments looking to implement study abroad courses and programs. The charge from the Faculty Senate, though, implies that each college already has a process in place for approving and implementing study abroad courses, which is not correct. Not every college works the same way in terms of approving and implementing study abroad courses. The IEC April agenda will include discussion regarding if the charge should be changed.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Archer reported that he has met with various campus constituents about Global Tech, a virtual learning program from Podium Education. Global Tech is not an internship or a study abroad program, but rather global experiential learning. Participating in WMU departments, not Global Tech, receive the revenue, and departments select the courses and are the drivers behind the courses. Archer hopes that IEC can endorse its Memorandum of Action to encourage the Faculty Senate to re-launch this program which was successful last summer. Chair Dennis recommends that IEC move forward and will work to formalize the recommendation.

Seker presented on the many responsibilities of the Office of Research and Innovation (ORI). Since July 2023 there has been 17 patents submitted by WMU faculty and of course to breaking a record in the number of patents awarded. One of the threats to ORI is a government shutdown when ORI has to take on the added responsibility of making sure that all grants are funded. Seker stated that one of WMU's strengths is its ability to identify corporate partners. WMU has the ability to expedite agreements. In answer to a question about increasing international travel grants, Seker said that a separate fund cannot be set up for this due to provisions in the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Agreement which control foreign and domestic travel grants. In answer to a question about undergraduate student research, Seker suggested that interested parties reach out to Christine Stamper at ORI. Among Seker's initiatives is starting an Office of Undergraduate Research.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Abudayyeh, seconded by Milostan, to adjourn the meeting at 4:56 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The International Education Council will meet next on 21 March 2024 at 3 p.m. via Webex via video conferencing.

Approval

Submitted by Joan Conway, Secretary

Minutes were approved on 21 March 2024.