

International Education Council

Minutes of 21 March 2024

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 21 March 2024, via Webex video conferencing by Bradford Dennis, chair.

Members in Attendance: Eric Archer, Ellen Breakfield Glick, Joan Conway, Bradford Dennis, Tarun Gupta, Lucius Hallett, Elena Lisovskaya, Michele Metro-Roland, Anna Popkova, Pam Wadsworth (substitute for Shannon McMorrow), Abby Wang, Jim Whittles, Paulo Zagalo-Melo

Members Absent: Zoya Kaleem, Joseph Milostan, Macy Potter

Ex Officio in Attendance: Osama Abudayyeh

Guests: Jun Oh, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences; Stephen Newell, Haworth College of Business; Jim Whittles, Aviation; Barry Olson, Student Affairs, Steve Butt, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Nicolas Witschi, College of Arts and Sciences; Daniel Guyette, College of Fine Arts, Jennifer Harrison, College of Health and Human Services; Representative, College of Education and Human Development

Quorum

A quorum was present with 14 members in attendance, of the nine needed to establish quorum.

Agenda

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

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Gupta, seconded by Whittles, to approve the 15 February 2024 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Dennis reported that College of Arts and Sciences dean, Dr. Carla Koretsky was unable to attend today but offered to speak at IEC 18 April meeting.

Ex Officio Abudayyeh did not provide a report.

Reports of University Representatives

Zagalo-Melo reported the following:

1. Portugal travel with the dean from the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) for partnership development. The trip was beneficial for showing CHHS faculty what can be done in terms of partnerships.
2. The renewal of the Ghuizou University of Finance and Economics (GUFÉ) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will occur in the next few weeks. GUFÉ has enrolled over a thousand students and is celebrating its tenth anniversary in June. Zagalo-Melo will attend this event in China.
3. Upcoming visits from the Congolese ambassador and a strategic partner, Indonesia Jakarta International College.
4. Staff transitions: Lee Ryder, Senior Director of International Student Scholar Services, Haenicke Institute for Global Education (HIGE) is retiring and will need to be replaced. HIGE is also looking for a Marketing Manager. Christie Bierlein has been appointed the permanent manager for international partnerships. At present, there are 70 partnerships.

Kaleem did not provide a report due to her absence.

Potter did not provide a report due to her absence.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

Gupta reported that the College of Civil and Construction has had two department-level welcome

meetings for international students. This will expand to all-college meetings for both undergraduate and graduate students in the future.

Wadsworth reported that CHHS will have dinner in April for its international students.

The Welcoming Students Working Group met and gave recommendations to HIGE and about Registered Student Organizations (RSO). Also looking at what other universities are doing to welcome students. The group wants to create a survey of WMU international students and plans on publishing the results. Popkova offered to join Metro-Roland, Wang, Breakfield-Glick, and Dennis in this working group. The Global Tech Working Group is finalizing its Memorandum of Action (MOA) to encourage the Faculty Senate to re-launch this program. Archer and Zagalo-Melo will create a template to be presented and approved at IEC April meeting.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Chair Dennis requested the subcommittees to submit a summary of activities to include in the IEC annual report.

Olson responded to questions posed at the IEC January meeting. Regarding international student hardship withdrawals, the Faculty Senate has dealt with this issue. Dr. Reetha Raveendran, Dean of Students, and Eric McConnell, University Ombuds have been working to address student needs in these situations. A suggestion was made to invite Dr. Raveendran to discuss this issue at a future IEC meeting.

Olson also addressed the issue of academic integrity breaches by international students. International students are 7.5 times more likely to be involved in an academic integrity issue. Questions were asked about the frequency of incidents by college. Olson will provide data as available. Zagalo-Melo stated that HIGE is developing an academic integrity program for international students which will offer credit to ensure participation. Chair Dennis suggested that the University Libraries can help international students navigate source and citation issues and encouraged faculty to contact their department's librarian.

The question had been raised about funds to help international students in times of emergency. Zagalo-Melo said that HIGE has a protected emergency fund for international students.

Speakers

Representatives from each college were invited to talk about their international committees to learn what college-level international committees' activities and how each sparked enthusiasm from their faculty to participate in meetings and activities.

Wadsworth reported that CHHS committee was concerned about marginalization of international students and their loneliness. In response to this, CHHS have held lunches and potlucks which were followed by discussions about students' adjustments to life at WMU. The students created an RSO, which proved to be a very difficult process. Wadsworth mentioned that CHHS are having difficulty getting faculty to participate in international committee work.

Newell reported that Haworth College of Business (HCOB) faculty has traditionally shown great interest in international committee work, perhaps because of the Global Business Center and HCOB's numerous Study Abroad programs.

Whittles reported that Aviation has never had a formal international committee, but rather a small group of faculty members with global interests. Whittles cited the college's former ties to some international airlines and several faculty members who have led Study Abroad programs. Student and faculty interest in international committee work has faded since the pandemic.

Butt reported that because 80% of engineering students and many faculty members are internationals, the international committee in the College of Engineering (COE) has been working well for years. Engineering, partnered with HIGE, has assisted international students financially. CEO has initiatives in countries such as Portugal, Turkey, Hungary, Thailand, and the West Indies.

IEC inquired about the transportation problems faced by students, especially after evening classes or work shifts. Oh stated that College of Engineering and Applied Sciences committee has been exploring “on demand” type of solutions and possible agreements with Kalamazoo Metro. Using under-utilized campus vehicles has also been explored, as has the use of an app for scheduling. Oh has expressed willingness to work with colleagues on this issue.

Chair Dennis asked what the IEC can do to encourage interest in international committee work. Newell stated that faculty and deans need to be enthusiastic about international programs. Zagalo-Melo stated that deans help drive the message for internationalization. Zagalo-Melo suggested the following:

1. Invite HIGE to participate in your events. Study Abroad and Global Learning can help with projects that a department may want to implement.
2. A representative from each international committee should be on the IEC.
3. Instead of hosting events exclusively for international students, invite American students, especially those who have done Study Abroad or have an international interest. Integration with American students is important.

Harrison noted that Study Abroad helps build relationships, and that Fulbright scholars are more globally engaged. Chair Dennis mentioned that Global Learning Outcomes exist, and he provided the link. Chair Dennis suggested that faculty require at least one international source when assigning research projects.

Announcements

The election for 2024-25 IEC officers will be held at the next meeting on 18 April, along with the decision on the modality of the 2024-25 meetings.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Whittles, seconded by Zagalo-Melo, to adjourn the meeting at 4:59 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The International Education Council will meet next on 18 April 2024 at 3 p.m. via Webex via video conferencing.

Approval

Submitted by Joan Conway, Secretary

Minutes were approved on 18 April 2024.