

International Education Council
Minutes of 21 November 2024

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate International Education Council was called to order at 3:03 p.m. on 21 November 2024, via Webex video conferencing by Bradford Dennis, chair.

Members in Attendance: Jessica Cataldo (substitute for Shannon McMorrow), Bradford Dennis, Dyanne Foskey, Tarun Gupta, Lucius Hallett, Anne Kairu, Elena Lisovskaya, Michelle Metro-Roland, Tamba Momoh, Anna Popkova, Reetha Raveendran, Yuanliang Sun, Abby Wang, Ying Zeng

Members Absent: Eric Archer, John Cooper, Joseph Milostan

Ex Officio in Attendance: Janet Hahn

Guest: Diane Riggs, Faculty Senate Undergraduate Studies Council Chair

Quorum

A quorum was present with 15 members in attendance, of the nine needed to establish a quorum.

Agenda

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

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Gupta, seconded by Wang, to approve the 10 October 2024 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Dennis reported the following:

1. Meetings with council, committees, and with LuMarie Guth, chair of Campus Planning and Finance Council, working on the transportation issue.
2. The working group for Global Student Learning Outcomes and the working group for Study Abroad have merged together as they are addressing similar issues. The working group will include Dennis, Milostan, Archer, and Hallett.
3. Lisovskaya joined the IEC to represent the College of Arts and Sciences (Social Sciences), which was the last vacant position on the IEC.
4. Student representatives from Western Student Association (WSA), Graduate Student Association (GSA), and International Student Council (ISC) will attend the IEC meeting on 12 December.
5. Danyelle Gregory, Associate Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion, has been invited to attend IEC on 16 January 2025.
6. Provost Julian Vasquez Heilig has been invited to the IEC 20 February 2025 meeting.
7. Laura Dinehart, dean of the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD), has been invited to attend the IEC 20 March 2025 meeting.

Ex Officio Hahn thanked Chair Dennis for his presentation at the Faculty Senate meeting on 7 November.

Reports of University Representatives

Zheng reported the following:

1. Brian Childs, the new Director of International Student and Scholar Services, started his position. It was suggested to invite him to a future IEC meeting.
2. Starting this fall, there is a new health insurance policy for international students. Previously, international students had no or insufficient health insurance. Haenicke Institute for Global Education (HIGE) and the President's Affairs are working on choosing an insurance package for international students in collaboration with IEC, WSA, and GSA. The new plan covers almost everything and has no deductible.

Zeng left the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Momoh reported the following on GSA:

1. In a revival stage and is rebuilding its network, meeting with student organizations, and being involved in addressing the insurance question discussed earlier by Zeng.
2. Connecting with students, including international students, and presenting at several events, including Bronco Bash and new student orientation.
3. Established a constitutional review committee and several other committees, working on making the organization more inclusive.
4. Holds bi-weekly meetings, board, and general ones.

Representative not present to report on WSA.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

Gupta reported the following on the College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS):

1. Met in November and discussed activities.
2. Received support from the dean's office for advertising the study abroad programs;
3. The projections for incoming international students are not very encouraging, but CEAS hopes to have welcoming international students' activities.
4. Gupta shared his observation that international students not only look at the ranking of the institutions but also at Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings and the World University ranking systems. Gupta suggested that maybe one reason WMU sees a decline is that WMU's ranking is very low in those two (1200-1250 out of 1500). Is there anything being done by the administration in regard to these rankings? Gupta mentioned surveying some of WMU's international students and learned that these rankings are considered and that these are the rankings other international students use.

Metro-Roland added that up until last year, WMU was not a part of the QS rankings. WMU started participating last year, might be worthwhile to follow up with Zeng. Hallett added that it would be useful to study the trends in the Salesforce data of student applications over the years. IEC to ask the Graduate College for that data. Raveendran asked why international enrollments are declining, especially when WMU has country representatives. Can a report from students help to understand what kind of impact students are making, since they are an extension of HIGE? It would be helpful to know what WMU international alumni's experiences have been; they are WMU's best ambassadors and representatives. Metro-Roland added that Zeng might have access to those reports from in-country liaisons. Momoh affirmed that current students are WMU's best ambassadors and added that the WMU application process is challenging.

Popkova reported that the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) committee met. There was discussion on how other colleges handle study abroad scholarship distribution and how to optimize the process and make it more inclusive. Metro-Roland suggested creating faculty recommendation forms instead of asking for letters to streamline the process for faculty and make it less intimidating for students to ask for these recommendations.

Chair Dennis reported that the Welcoming International Students committee met and discussed what the new political landscape in the USA means for international students.

Popkova reported that the Research working group met and discussed re-establishing funding for international conferences that used to be available to faculty but are no longer. Noted to create a set of resources for faculty who want to do international research.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Chair Dennis presented research insights on the future of international students and international education. Discussion included points about visa concerns and campus climate.

Speaker

Riggs discussed the following:

1. Transformative benefits of international engagement;
2. Ways for IEC and USC to collaborate, including First Year Experience (can that space be used to create some dynamism with regards to international engagement/education?);
3. Global Classrooms, managing post-pandemic student disengagement, rebuilding campus community, looking at study abroad as essentially experiential learning, and other ways of integrating internationalization into the students' college experience.

Announcements

Metro-Roland announced that the Global Classroom collaborative applications deadline is extended to 6 December. The University of Passau exchange opportunity is still open.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Sun, seconded by Wang, to adjourn the meeting at 5:03 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The International Education Council will meet next on 12 December 2024 at 3 p.m. via Webex conferencing.

Approval

Submitted by Anna Popkova, Secretary

Minutes were approved on 12 December 2024.