
International Education Council

Minutes of 17 March 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 March 2022, virtually via Webex video conferencing by D. Eric Archer, chair.

Members in Attendance: D. Eric Archer, Joan Conway, Bradford Dennis, David Huffman, Shannon McMorrow, Michelle Metro-Roland, Ann Miles, Jun-Seok Oh, Anna Popkova, Xiaodan (Abby) Wang, Jim Whittles, Hanny Wuysang,

Members Absent: Griffin Baginski, Ellen Breakfield-Glick, Paulo Zagalo-Melo

Ex Officio in Attendance: Marilyn Kritzman (substitute for Matthew Mingus)

Guests: Reeva Raveendran, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Joe Milostan, Director of Study Abroad and Faculty Enrichment

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Agenda

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

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Miles, seconded by Wuysang, to approve the minutes of 17 February 2022 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Archer stated that the elections for IEC officers will be held at the next meeting. Archer is on sabbatical next year and is not able to continue in the role of chair. Popkova is also on sabbatical next year, and McMorrow hopes to be on sabbatical pending tenure decisions. McMorrow has a substitute lined up for the next year to represent CHHS. Archer will present some action items next month, specifically a MOA that was previously discussed. Five women leaders from Moldova will visit Kalamazoo next month, focusing on youth issues, social services, and related subjects.

Ex Officio Mingus did not provide a report.

Reports of University Representatives

Due to Zagalo-Melo's absence, the Haenicke Institute for Global Education report was not provided.

Metro-Roland reported that the faculty and staff Fulbright competition scholar applications are under review. Of the Afghan students WMU is advocating for, two students have arrived in the U.S., and a third was denied a student visa but is working to obtain a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV). The U.S. consulate in Kabul is not issuing visas currently. Funds have been frozen or are depleted due to the war in Ukraine. WMU has also reached out to impacted students to nominate them for monetary awards.

Reports of Council/Committee Standing Committees

Due to Zagalo-Melo's absence, Chair Archer provided the American Council on Education Internationalization Lab 2.0 report, which is entwined closely with the efforts of the University Strategic Planning internationalization workgroup. Jim Butterfield, Archer, and Zagalo-Melo are planning to travel to Washington, D.C., for an in-person meeting in late April. Strategic planning activities continued during the month of March and included approximately 50 people who attended the 2 March meeting on the topic of

global learning. A cross-section of the WMU community attended. Milostan stated that it was helpful to hear the students' perspectives. The event was advertised by both GSA and WSA. Chair Archer stated that after receiving feedback from the listening session attendees and from the University's work with the ACE Internationalization Lab 2.0 process, the internationalization strategic planning workgroup will submit recommendations to the strategic planning steering committee by the end of April. Information from the draft internationalization plan will be shared with the IEC. This information will be made available on Teams, and IEC members are encouraged to provide feedback. Mingus, as a member of the university-level steering committee, is also available to receive feedback.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Metro-Roland reported that in 2015-16, WMU established the Global Engagement award for faculty and staff, which included specific criteria as part of the MOA that was developed from IEC. A discrepancy exists between the language of the MOA and the eligibility criteria appearing on the HIGE website for the award. Metro-Roland asked about the role of emeriti in the award. HIGE is trying to increase outreach to emeriti faculty to support ongoing internationalization efforts at WMU. The IEC members were asked for feedback about the nature of the award and who should be the focus. Huffman commented that it is a lifetime achievement award, over the course of a whole career that may continue after retiring from WMU. Miles stated it is an award that did not exist in the past, meaning that emeriti retiring before the award existed would not be recognized; however, emeriti should be encouraged to be globally engaged. Dennis agreed and stated that the MOA contains the specific language; thus, the website needs to be corrected. Metro-Roland commented that historically it was meant to be equivalent to the faculty scholar award, but there are no financial implications. Another possible iteration is a career achievement award. McMorro suggested a separate category for emeriti. Metro-Roland stated that if there were an emeriti award, it should also come from the IEC and the Faculty Senate. Archer proposed the topic be postponed until the next meeting.

Discussion was held regarding WMU faculty-led study abroad programs. Milostan is analyzing the current nature of study abroad programs at WMU, engaging with faculty for ongoing development, and recruiting students. Milostan is seeking feedback from all faculty involved with these programs. When asked what the best ways to solicit feedback from faculty directors are, the IEC members stated that a survey is optimal, but a 30-minute virtual feedback session is preferred. Miles suggested soliciting a group of three to four directors to interact with. Dennis suggested a round table discussion, where specific questions are posed. Wang suggested distributing an email to associate deans of each college. Miles stated there is a HCOB supply chain management course that deals with study abroad. Archer suggested connecting each college's international committee.

Chair Archer welcomed Associate VP for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Raveendran. Archer first met Raveendran in Singapore during a study abroad program. Raveendran is a native of Singapore and came to the U.S. at 27 years old and attended the University of Oklahoma. She has been in higher education for 18 years, at small liberal arts colleges, regional institutions, and now at WMU. She was in elementary education in Singapore for four years, working in international education. A graduate assistant position became available in student life, which led her to a career in student affairs and to her current role. She is very familiar with international students and various immigration processes and with the immigration struggles international students face. She wants to be a resource and advocate for international students. She mentioned that the U.S. has few students from Singapore, as most go to Australia or Europe. She speaks six languages, among them Mandarin, Singlish, and Malay. She has been in her current role at WMU for just over 5 months. She appreciates the partnership of Metro-Roland as an advocate for international students, as the Dean of Students cannot operate in isolation. Raveendran stated that she wants open discussion with faculty and staff, and plans to evaluate policies at WMU that impact students. She desires global engagement in the Division of Student Affairs. Her highest ideal is to serve and care for students. She shared issues and questions that have been raised. Such as how do students connect and build connections; students need to get back into the social fabric of

campus; mental health and well-being are of the utmost importance; and to whom can students reach out to when they are struggling.

Chair Archer asked what the IEC can communicate to faculty to help them understand their role in facilitating student life on campus. Raveendran shared opportunities that are part of new faculty orientation, but faculty need to continue learning how to meet student needs continually, in such a way that does not overburden faculty. There have been discussions with the WMUx Office of Faculty Development. Raveendran offered observations regarding WMU's current outreach and new possibilities. There is the Invisible Needs Project and food pantry, a student emergency relief fund, and book scholarships. There are increasing numbers of international students needing these types of services due to food insecurity and other financial needs. Metro-Roland shared that the organization Loaves and Fishes has reached out and is welcoming the international community. Other challenges include graduate assistantships being cut by two-thirds and housing costs increasing dramatically. The University provided \$70k in rent assistance during the COVID pandemic. Students cannot return to their home countries as much as they used to, and there are fewer on-campus employment opportunities. Conway shared there is a new type of isolation due to technology. Oh asked about the availability of international food in dining services. Raveendran shared that a stir-fry is not necessarily Asian, as some Americans think. It was suggested introducing more global kitchens in the residence halls as many international students want to cook for themselves. Additional counseling for students is needed for those facing challenges such as the death of a fellow student. Student Affairs is meeting with Kalamazoo officials about bus routes and timing. Metro-Roland stated that three USAID scholars had trouble with buses during the pandemic. For example, buses end at 9 p.m. and evening classes end at the same time. Oh stated that some international students are also not easily able to go to the grocery store or other locations in the community when needed. Some other institutions use third-party transportation options, such as Zipcar, to supplement transportation needs. Other council members addressed concerns related to international students accessing the on-campus food pantry. Raveendran shared some concerns about the food pantry, although she is grateful for the effort put into it. One concern is the diversity of food in the pantry, for example, spices, which many international students seek. The food pantry could also benefit from an advisory council to discuss many of the issues and needs raised in today's meeting. Archer shared that IEC is willing to partner with Student Affairs to address policies under review.

Announcements

Details for the next meeting will be distributed via email.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Dennis, seconded by McMorrow, to adjourn the meeting at 5:01 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The International Education Council meets next on 21 April 2022 via Webex video conferencing.

Approval

Submitted by David Huffman, Secretary

Minutes approved on 20 April 2022.