

**International Education Council
Meeting Minutes
December, 3rd, 2021
Blair Hall Conference room, 3108**

Members present: Dr. Kristin Brown, Ms. Jenny Chi, Dr. Nichole Hugo, Dr. Vanesa Landrus, Dr. Mei-Ling Li, Ms. Olivia Triplett, Dr. David Viertel

Members absent: Mr. Akhil Azmeera, Dr. David Melton, Dr. Vernon Woodley

Ex-officio present: Mr. Mutombo Andy Kabasele, Dr. Ryan Hendrickson

Ex-officio absent: Dr. Michael Gillespie, Dr. Amy Rosenstein, Ms. Sarah Schmidt, Dr. Tanya Willard

Visitors present: Ms. Lutete Celina Carlos

I. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Li called the meeting to order at 9:04.

She presented the minutes from the November 5th, 2021, meeting. After review the Council approved the minutes as presented with Dr. Nicole Hugo abstaining.

II. Reports

1. International Students and Scholars and Study Abroad: Mr. Mutombo Andy Kabasele

- a. Mr. Kabasele presented the current number of Spring 2022 international applications and I-20s issued. Many of the applicants are interested in the Technology program which capped its spring admissions to 500 students, with the hope of about 20 percent yield. Also, there have been quite a few denials for Nigerian students recently at US embassies. He also noted some international applicants will be affected by the new travel ban in certain southern African countries.
- b. In addition to the new travel bans, there are new rules for those traveling to the US. Regardless of vaccination status, travelers also need a negative COVID test one day before the travel begins. This could cause problems if there are any delays during the travel. He recommended that all international travelers be fully vaccinated. Also, going into the winter months, there could potentially be more travel bans, and he is concerned that students who travel home over the holiday may not be able to get back into the US. Currently he is discouraging students to travel abroad because of this concern. OISS has been working with the housing office to make sure that international students who live on campus can stay over the holiday. They may have to pay a small fee to stay while the dorms are usually closed. Right now, the biggest concern is making sure they have food to eat while the dining halls at the dorms are closed. Dr. Kristin Brown mentioned that the athletes are provided food over the holiday and maybe international students who are still on campus could be included with those athletes. Mr. Kabasele plans to hold an exit/reentry session for international students before the end of the semester.
- c. Mr. Ben Rienbolt provided an update on Global Culture Night. He said it was well attended and there were many performers from numerous countries. There were some activities planned for International Education Week that was canceled because of the unplanned mental health days

announced by the President. Also, it was the week before Thanksgiving so attendance was low for other events. They had two “Glimpses of...” presentations. One about Zimbabwe and another about Saudi Arabia. Many of the planned activities that had to be canceled will be held in the Spring semester. Also, in January they will hold another orientation for two days. They are also planning two welcome dinners with local churches during the evenings. There will also be the exit/reentry session that Mr. Kabasele mentioned and OPT and H1B sessions will be held soon.

- d. AIS Update: Mr. Akhil Azmeera was unable to attend, but Mr. Rienbolt provided an AIS update. They hope to participate in the Women’s Economic Empowerment initiative in the Spring. They are also looking to hold a roller-skating event and are hoping to visit Casey, Illinois, and see all the big things. They will also be celebrating Holi again next year sometime in April. Dean Hendrickson recommended that the Holi celebration be held on a weekday when more students will be on campus and able to attend.

2. Study Abroad: Ms. Celina Carlos

- a. Ms. Celina Carlos provided an update on the Study Abroad Activities. They held a faculty led Study Abroad Panel which had great attendance. Many of the faculty who have led study abroad programs in the past were able to talk to students and answer questions. The Study Abroad office had planned to participate in International Education Week activities, but those activities were also canceled because of the mental health days. They held an Open House for faculty who are interested in leading a program abroad. There are still many questions about what will happen in the future with COVID restrictions, so some faculty are reluctant to consider a study abroad course right now. Students are still interested in traveling, but there are still many uncertainties.
- b. They are still working with Study Abroad Ambassadors, but since the last students who were able to travel was in 2019, many of them have graduated. They hope to bring back some of these students and have more activities in the Spring semester to keep students interested in Study Abroad opportunities.
- c. She updated the Council on external virtual study abroad courses. She believes that even after the pandemic is over, these types of courses will still be around, so the office has created a course code for students to use to receive credit at EIU for any external Study Abroad virtual courses they take. The new course is currently under review and should be approved soon. This course will have a smaller course fee than the usual Study Abroad courses since they will be less work and cost to prepare and oversee.
- d. Ms. Carlos also noted that deadlines are coming up for both scholarships and applying for programs. In January they plan to have another Study Abroad fair and plan to start advertising soon.

III. Dean’s Report: Dr. Ryan Hendrickson

1. Dean Hendrickson let the Council know that they will hold a meeting with the Study Abroad leaders soon to discuss how to move forward with programs during the pandemic. There are many risks when considering traveling during this time and trying to keep up with each country’s rules and expectations. They have found an insurance policy that will provide funds to students who might become COVID positive while studying abroad and need to stay during the quarantine period.

Currently vaccinations aren't required to study abroad, but depending on the country, vaccinations may be required to enter museums and restaurants, which would cause a de facto vaccination requirement.

Ms. Jenny Chi asked about policies or protocols for international students studying at EIU who become ill and may be unable to attend classes. Dean Hendrickson said that all students have EIU health insurance, but they also encourage students to get additional insurance to cover this sort of situation. Mr. Kabasele also noted that he can assign students who are unwell to a reduced course load which can help them keep up with their coursework. Also, Dean Hendrickson mentioned the funding available to international students in cases of emergencies. Mr. Ben Rienbolt can also assist any students who are struggling as the international advisor.

Dr. Li moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 am.

Minutes submitted by Mary Mattingly