**International Education Council**

**Meeting Minutes**

**December 6th, 2019**

**Blair Hall Third Hall 3108 Floor Conference 3108**

**Members present:** Dr. Rick Anderson, Mr. Godwin Gyimah, Dr. Nichole Hugo, Dr. Vanesa Landrus, Dr. Mei-Ling Li, Dr. Jeanne Okrasinski, Dr. Bailey Young

**Members absent:** Dr. Ahmed Abou-Zaid, Dr. Kristin Brown, Ms. Mary Fleming,Dr. Catherine Polydore, Dr. Tina Wang

**Ex-officio present:** Dr. Claudia Janssen Danyi, Mr. Mutombo Andy Kabasele

**Ex-officio absent:** Dr. Ryan Hendrickson, Ms. Sara Schmidt, Dr. Tanya Willard

**Visitors present:** Ms. Bethanny Cougill, Ms. Emily Tooy, Ms. Lauren Schuberth

1. **Welcome**At 9:01 Dr. Rick Anderson opened the meeting since the Chair, Dr. Tina Wang, was absent.   
     
   1. Approval of minutes: At the time, there wasn’t a quorum of members, so the approval of minutes will need to be moved to the next meeting.   
     
   2. Study Abroad Student Membership Question: Dr. Rick Anderson explained that Mary Fleming, the current student representative for Study Abroad will be graduating in December, but plans to start graduate school in the Spring semester. She is interested in continuing as the student representative even though she will no longer be an undergraduate student. Since her term lasts a year and she was chosen while she was an undergraduate, if it’s fine with the Council, she will be allowed to continue as the Study Abroad representative. There were no concerns voiced by the council regarding this arrangement.
2. **Dean’s Report: Dr. Ryan Hendrickson**(Dean Hendrickson was unable to attend the meeting so Dr. Rick Anderson provided the Dean’s Report.)

1. William V. Weber Program in Study Abroad – Dr. Rick Anderson said that the Dean wanted the Council to know that Dr. William Weber has given a $100,000 gift to the Office of Study Abroad. Out of the total, $60,000 will go towards the established endowment for future scholarships and $40,000 will be used for immediate scholarships. Because of this very generous gift, the Study Abroad Office will now be called the William V. Weber Program in Study Abroad. There will be an official ceremony in the spring and hopefully the Council will be able to attend. Dean Hendrickson wanted to thank Dr. Weber for his continued commitment to the Study Abroad program.   
  
Dr. Vanesa Landrus asked if this name change would cause any confusion to students searching for the Study Abroad office online. Mr. Andy Kabasele let her and the Council know that the office would still be Study Abroad and that any online search would still work when searching for only “Study Abroad”. Dr. Landrus was also concerned that the Council was not informed about this name change prior to the decision. Other Council members noted that these type of name changes routinely occurred at the administrative level. Dr. Claudia Janssen Danyi asked if the new word “Program” might cause students to think there is only one Study Abroad program instead of hundreds of individual programs to choose from. Both Mr. Andy Kabasele and Ms. Emily Tooy explained that they couldn’t name the office in case of a move in the future and naming a program (department) has a different process than naming an office. Mr. Kabasele also wanted to note that many of the students who received Dr. Weber’s scholarships this semester (8 total) would not have been able to participate without the additional funding from the scholarships. Dr. Landrus asked if the discussion could continue at the next meeting when Dean Hendrickson was available to answer more questions.

2. Global Culture Night Recap – Mr. Godwin Gyimah and Ms. Bethanny Cougill updated the Council on the Global Culture Night in November. They had a good crowd and are already thinking about how to make improvements for next year. Ms. Cougill plans to request the Grand Ballroom next year so there will be more room and a stage that will help people see the performances better. Overall they were happy with the outcome. They noted it was a very festive night.

3. Commencement Flag Update – Dr. Rick Anderson explained that in the past only the flags for the countries of students graduating were displayed at commencement, but sometimes OISS would miss a flag if someone applied to graduate late, or came a semester later to participate in commencement, and a student might be hurt or offended because their flag wasn’t displayed. In the future, OISS plans to display all the country flags of international students, even if they aren’t graduating. Ms. Bethanny Cougill mentioned that there are sixty countries currently represented at EIU, and this will be the first year to display all the flags, she hopes to make sure all the flags are displayed properly and to measure how much time it will take to set them up and take them down to store properly.

1. **Reports**  
   1. **Study Abroad: Mr. Mutombo Andy Kabasele** 
      1. Mr. Kabasele presented the number of students enrolled in the Spring 2020 Study Abroad programs. There was a 285% increase in the Spring 2020 numbers compared to the Spring 2019 numbers. He gave a special thank you to Ms. Emily Tooy who has been working very hard to increase the student enrollment in Study Abroad programs. Mr. Kabasele also gave a breakdown of other programs and the number of students who are studying abroad in the spring.   
           
         He also gave an update on the scholarship award winners. There were 18 total. Of those, eight were from the Dr. Weber scholarships, four were for minorities, and eight were given to those with financial need. Also, one received a full tuition waiver.
      2. He also provided the current Summer 2020 enrollment numbers. The deadline for Summer is February 7th, 2020, so the total number should increase next year. Also they are working on Fall 2020 programs. There are four pending right now. The deadline is March 6th, 2020.
   2. **International Student and Scholars: Mr. Mutombo Andy Kabasele**
      1. Mr. Kabasele shared the international enrollment and I-20 numbers for Spring 2020 and also as they compare to Spring 2019.
      2. He also showed the number of visa denials they have had received recently. For Spring 2020, OISS has 25 approvals and 82 denials. This is a concerning problem for OISS and international students. The largest denials came from Nigeria, India, and China. He has been working with students to help them with the process and give them tips if they are denied the first time. Also OISS has been writing letters for the students to add to their applications, hoping to help with the process. Dr. Claudia Janssen Danyi noted that international students she had spoken with mentioned how stressful and traumatic the visa process is, and that as a university we should find ways to support the students. Mr. Kabasele also mentioned the cost associated with the process and if the visa is denied, the students have to pay the fees again.
      3. Mr. Kabasele listed all the schools he plans to visit for recruitment opportunities in 2020.
      4. He also updated the Council on the progress of various partnerships. The partnership with Broward College and OAS (Organization of American States) are both in the final stages. The Miami Dade College partnership is still in process.
      5. NAFSA Conference Update: Ms. Emily Tooy and Ms. Bethanny Cougill both provided details of the NAFSA: Association of International Educators conference they attended in Milwaukee, WI. Ms. Tooy was a co-presenter at the conference and spoke about promoting inclusivity in Study Abroad. She also provided some statistics about how EIU is doing compared to the national average in this area and how she is working on making EIU’s study abroad programs more inclusive. She received positive feedback about the talk and feels good about EIU again being able to participate at the conference. Ms. Cougill discussed many of the talks she attended and the connections she was able to make while there. She felt the sessions were very helpful to her and OISS.
      6. TLC Update: Ms. Schuberth let the Council know that TLC is also struggling with visa denials, similar to OISS. She noted that they need fifteen students to be financially viable, but right now they only have seven. She has been working to find new partnerships and to bring in new students and also working with departments across campus. She’s hoping to set up a Summer Art Camp and also an ESL Summer Camp. She said if these partnerships work out, they will be able to continue, otherwise they may unfortunately close. Mr. Kabasele noted that with the level of denials, TLC may not be the only ones affected and asked the Council to contact their Senators and Congressmen to discuss this issue of international students’ visa denials. Even large universities have seen dramatic declines in international enrollment.
      7. AIS Update: Mr. Godwin Gyimah shared that AIS successfully ended the semester and are planning for future projects in the coming semester.
      8. Ms. Tooy reminded the Council that the next Study Abroad Fair will be January 30th, from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm in the University Ballroom and to please share this information with any interested students.

Dr. Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 am. The next meeting will be January 31st, 2019.

Minutes submitted by Mary Mattingly