

International Education Council
Meeting Minutes
April 30th, 2021
Virtual Meeting MS Teams

Members present: Dr. Ahmed Abou-Zaid, Mr. Kofi Bazzel-Smith, Dr. Kristin Brown, Ms. Jenny Chi, Mr. Frank Gyimah, Dr. Nichole Hugo, Dr. Vanesa Landrus, Dr. Mei-Ling Li, Dr. Angela Vietto, Dr. Vernon Woodley

Members absent: Dr. David Melton

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

Ex-officio absent: Dr. Amy Rosenstein, Ms. Sarah Schmidt

Visitors present: Ms. Lutete Celina Carlos

I. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

At 9:06 Dr. Kristin Brown called the meeting to order.

1. Dr. Brown began by letting the Council know this would be her last meeting as Chair and she thanked the Council for their support during the year. New elections were held later in the meeting.
2. Dr. Brown then presented the minutes of the April 2nd meeting that the Council received by email earlier in the week. After review Dr. Nichole Hugo moved to approve the minutes and Dr. Vernon Woodley seconded the motion, the Council approved the minutes with no objections or abstentions.

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

1. Ms. Celina Carlos provided an update on the Study Abroad activities. She noted as reported before, there are no summer or fall faculty led abroad programs, but there is one virtual study abroad course this summer. Dr. Will Porter is presenting the program about interacting with Chilean music. Also, there are students who are involved in third party and direct enroll abroad programs.

They have been continuing promotional activities by posting flyers around about the summer virtual program. Also, Dr. Porter is working on a video to promote the class. Ms. Carlos noted that the Study Abroad Club has been helpful in getting the word out about study abroad opportunities. She hasn't been able to do in class presentations yet, but still hopes to in the future. Also, the "Let EIU show you the world" presentation was successful on orientation day.

She is planning for future projects to promote study abroad. Especially this summer, she hopes to work with faculty to plan for faculty led programs in 2022 when most likely travel restrictions will be eased. She also hopes to work on scholarship grants and opportunities since the added funds can help to boost enrollment in future programs.

2. Mr. Kabasele provided the Council an update on the International Awards ceremony that was held via zoom on April 21st. He recapped some of the award winners.

3. He gave an update on the application and admission numbers. Usually international students aren't admitted in the summer, but this year they are allowing graduate student applications in the School of Technology. Currently they have received thirteen applications and admitted eight. For the Fall semester they have seen a dramatically higher number of applications. There has been almost double the number of applications compared to last year. The OISS staff have been very busy with this increased workload, but they are doing their best to keep up.

4. Mr. Kabasele updated the Council on the current student visa situation. Because of COVID many of the US consulates are still either fully or partially closed. The ones that are open are dealing with large backlogs of visa requests from the past year or only emergency visa requests. Hopefully soon more consulates will be able to open fully and be able to process the visas in a more timely manner. The wait time has already decreased from up to six months, to about two months, so he is staying positive that the students who have been accepted to EIU will be able to get their visas and attend this fall.

Dean Hendrickson thanked Mr. Kabasele for the information on the current situation with visas, embassies, and consulates. He noted that with a new US President and COVID restrictions loosening, hopefully the embassies will be able to open more fully and the visa process won't be as big of an issue in the future.

Mr. Kabasele thanked the OISS staff for their hard work and Dean Hendrickson for his guidance during this busy time.

5. He also showed a list of all the student activities that has happened this semester and what activities are upcoming. In May there will be a graduation reception for the graduating international students. It will be held via zoom and Ms. Krishna Thomas will send out more information soon.

Dr. Vanessa Landrus asked if there were any English as Second Language (ESL) programs being considered at EIU now that TLC is no longer on campus. Mr. Kabasele said that students are encouraged to attend the UIUC program for anyone struggling to fulfil the language proficiency requirement. Dr. Landrus worried that program might be costly for some students and a program at EIU might be beneficial. Dr. Vietto noted that the ESL courses haven't been offered at EIU for many years and although it might be something worth considering, it might require hiring new faculty with specific skills to teach the courses. Dr. Mei Ling Li also mentioned that Lake Land College may also have a program that students could take advantage of at a lower cost. Mr. Kabasele said he would look into the other options further.

6. Mr. Frank Gyimah noted what a strange year it has been for AIS since all of their activities had to either be canceled or moved to a virtual platform. They also tried to have a few socially distant activities such as the new student orientation and the bowling night. In April they joined the Indian Student Association to celebrate Holi at Kiwanis Park. Also AIS members got together for a picture and an article about the struggles of meeting during COVID for the EIU yearbook. They also held a "virtual scavenger hunt" where students answered questions and

found things in their rooms. It's been a challenging year, but AIS has worked hard to stay in contact with the international students.

7. Elections: Dr. Kristin Brown again noted her term as IEC Chair is over and it's time to choose new Chair and Vice Chair positions. Dr. Brown nominated Dr. Mei Ling Li as the new Chair and Dr. Li seconded the motion. The Council all approved of Dr. Li being Chair for the 21-22 academic year. Dr. Ahmed Abou-Zaid moved to volunteer to fill the Vice-Chair position and Dr. Nichole Hugo seconded the motion, the Council also unanimously approved.

III. Dean's report: Dr. Ryan Hendrickson

1. Dean Hendrickson congratulated Dr Li and Dr. Abou-Zaid on their new appointments.
2. He provided more details about the Virtual Study Abroad Program this summer. He asked the Council to help advertise Dr. Will Porter's course so there will be enough students enrolled to go ahead this summer. It will run from May 31st – June 25th. Ms. Carlos has created a nice flyer that she can share with the Council to provide more details about the program. This course is categorized as a general education course and Dr. Landrus noted it also counts towards the Latin American Studies minor.
3. He updated the Council on the International Student Coordinator position. Ben Rienbolt has been hired for the position and will start on May 10th. He had previously worked in the Graduate School. As the Coordinator in the OISS office, he will assist with international admissions and the SEVIS program in addition to supporting international students.

Dr. Brown moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:58 am.

Minutes submitted by Mary Mattingly