**International Education Council**

**Meeting Minutes**

**October 2nd, 2020**

**Virtual Meeting MS Teams**

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

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

**Ex-officio absent:** Ms. Sarah Schmidt

**Visitors present:** Ms. Bethanny Cougill

1. **Welcome and Approval of Minutes**At 9:01 Dr. Kristin Brown called the meeting to order.   
     
   1. Dr. Brown introduced Mr. Umid Janbekov who is the new AIS interim President. He is also a graduate student in the School of Technology.

2. The minutes of the September 4th meeting were emailed to the Council prior to the meeting. After review, Dr. Vanessa Landrus moved to approve the minutes from theprevious meeting. Dr. Mei-Ling Li seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved the minutes with no objections or abstentions.

3. A copy of the revised bylaws had been emailed to the Council prior to the meeting. Dr. Brown explained that there were a few changes that needed to be made to clarify the language in the bylaws. After she went over these changes, Dr. Vernon Woodley moved to approve the new bylaw changes and Dr. Angela Vietto seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved the new bylaws with no objections or abstentions.

4. Dr. Brown updated the Council on the subcommittee assignments. Dr. Nichole Hugo and Dr. Ahmed Abou-Zaid agreed to be added to the International Student Scholarship committee. They will be joining Dr. Vanessa Landrus, Dr. Angela Vietto, Dr. Vernon Woodley, and Dr. David Melton. Dr. Kristin Brown, Dr. David Melton, Dr. Mei Ling Li, and Dr. Jenny Chi will serve on the Study Abroad Scholarship Committee. Dr. Brown offered for Dr. Melton to only serve on one committee, but he said he would continue to serve on both.

1. **Reports   
   (International Students and Scholars and Study Abroad : Mr. Mutombo Andy Kabasele)**

1. Mr. Kabasele gave the Council a breakdown for the current international students by gender, undergraduate vs. graduate, the countries of origin, major, and class levels. He also provided the number of applications and admissions for both graduate and undergraduate students.

2. He let the Council know that the fee for OPT applications was set to increase on October 2nd to $550, but a federal judge issued an injunction on this and other fee increases. Mr. Kabasele is glad to see this because the increase would be a hardship for many students. He has emailed all the international students to let them know of this update.   
  
3. He also updated the Council on Study Abroad. Currently all Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 study abroad programs were canceled because of COVID-19 and travel restrictions. The application for Summer Study Abroad is open, but a decision has not yet been made on whether programs will be allowed to go forward. The deadline is usually in February. Dean Hendrickson also gave details about the programs. He said that it is impossible to predict what will happen by the summer term. Currently all countries are at a Level 3 which is a high risk of COVID and travel not recommended. Also Europe has banned American travelers and those countries where Americans can travel, may have quarantine requirements upon arrival and also when returning to the US. Also currently Illinois has travel restrictions in place for state employees.   
  
Dr. Kristin Brown also voiced her concerns about traveling abroad during a pandemic. Mr. Kofi Bazzel-Smith recommended possibly holding virtual sessions with the schools or groups in the area where students would have been traveling to continue a relationship with those in the study abroad programs and to keep students interested in traveling in the future. Dean Hendrickson also mentioned that faculty would be creating videos explaining their programs since there won’t be a Study Abroad Fair this year. Dean Hendrickson said a final decision about Summer will be made by February 1st or sooner if it’s obvious the pandemic isn’t improving.

4. Mr. Kabasele let the Council know that they have started a new Study Abroad Club to help encourage students to study abroad. Hopefully the meetings will help develop student knowledge on diversity and culture. They are currently being held virtually through zoom every other Thursday from 7:00 – 8:00 and the next meeting will be October 8th.

5. Also he discussed further the Study Abroad faculty videos that are currently being filmed to promote Education Abroad Programs. These videos will be ready by October 21st, 2020.

6. Staff Update: Mr. Kabasele said that October 28th would be Emma Solmon’s last day in the Study Abroad Office. She has been working as a 900-hour employee and will reach her 900 hours at the end of the month. He said she has done a great job assisting Ms. Tooy in the office and they will miss her.

7. Ms. Bethanny Cougill updated the Council on various international student activities. She has been working to stay in contact with the students while in-person meetings are discouraged because of the virus. She has helped Mr. Kabasele set up OPT, CPT, and H-1B sessions and contacted students about International Education Week and homecoming trivia questions. In September they were able to have a bowling event and met with the Charleston Area Dog Club on campus. She listed many more events and upcoming plans. She also gave an update on the International Friendship Program. She currently has ten students signed up but only four hosts, so if anyone is interested in hosting students, they can contact her for more information.

8. AIS Update: Mr. Umid Janbekov let the Council know that he is hoping to hold a meeting with the new AIS members soon. He’s been collaborating with Ms. Cougill regarding plans for International Education Week and Global Culture Night. He hopes to use social media tools to talk more directly to international students and will maybe work on trivia and games using a new phone app.

1. **Dean’s report: Dr. Ryan Hendrickson**

1. Dean Hendrickson let the Council know that previously there hadn’t been an aggressive push in advancement for international alumni, but he will work with the Advancement Office to contact this group more in the future. Also, he said the CARES Act money can’t be used for international students, but many of them are struggling during the pandemic so he’s been working on directing help to those in need.

2. He also said that they have signed a new partnership with Jade University in Germany. He thanked Dr. Claudia Janssen-Danyi for her help in setting up this new partnership.

Dr. Brown moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:07 am.

Minutes submitted by Mary Mattingly