**International Education Council**

**Meeting Minutes**

**September 4, 2020**

**Virtual Meeting MS Teams**

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

**Members absent:** Mr. Umid Janbekov

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

**Visitors present:** Ms. Bethanny Cougill, Ms. Mary Fleming, Ms. Krishna Thomas

1. **Welcome**At 9:00 Dr. Kristin Brown called the meeting to order.

1. Introduction of members: All of the new and returning members introduced themselves.
2. **Approval of Minutes**

1. The minutes of the May 1st meeting had been emailed to the Council prior to the meeting. After review, Dr. Vanessa Landrus moved to approve the minutes from theprevious meeting. Dr. Nichole Hugo seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved the minutes with no objections or abstentions.
3. **Reports
(International Students and Scholars and Study Abroad : Mr. Mutombo Andy Kabasele)**

1. Mr. Kabasele updated the Council on international student numbers since last spring. He said that the US Consulate had been closed for the last six months, so many students haven’t been able to apply for visas to come to EIU. OISS had over five hundred interested students but none were able to get interviews for visas. These students have requested a deferment until the Spring 2021 semester. Currently there are 258 international students enrolled. Mr. Kabasele gave the breakdown of students by gender, county of origin, and by majors and their college. He also showed the number of graduate and undergraduate international students. No one knows what’s going to happen in the future, but he’s hoping the numbers will be better in this spring semester.

2. He also updated the Council on Study Abroad activities. He said that there are no programs for Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 at this time because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but there are programs currently approved for Summer 2021. He provided the list of programs and their destinations. The applications will be open in mid-September, but they will wait to see if they will be able to go forward based on the pandemic situation at that time. He noted that all universities are struggling to find ways to continue study abroad programs during a pandemic.

3. Ms. Krishna Thomas updated the Council on the International Orientation this Fall. Because of the pandemic, they decided to hold a virtual orientation this year. OISS created an online training course using D2L that covered various topics such as housing and transportation. Since it was a course students completed online, OISS tried to make the material more comprehensive than the previous in-person training. They had sixty four students enrolled in the orientation training this fall. In addition they also let all international students know that OISS is available to help make their transition to EIU a success. Mr. Kabasele thanked Ms. Thomas and Ms. Bethanny Cougill for their work on this new training program.

 4. Mr. Kabasele let the Council know that the Department of Homeland Security provided new guidance regarding international students and online classes because of COVID-19. New international students are limited to take only one online class and the other classes need to be either in-person or hybrid. Returning international students are allowed to take all classes online if needed. This new rule is currently only for the Fall semester. The DHS will issue new guidance for the Spring semester if necessary.

Dean Hendrickson noted that EIU was part of the more than 200 schools that joined Harvard and MIT to challenge DHS regarding restrictions for international students taking online classes. The DHS did eventually drop their most restrictive stance that banned international students from online-only classes, so from his perspective, the result was successful.

 5. Ms. Bethanny Cougill updated the Council on various outreach activities she has been working on. She has been working with Ms. Krishna Thomas on the virtual orientation course to help the new and returning student have a successful semester. She is also discussing with Mr. Kabasele how to hold OPT and CPT training. They may hold online courses over Zoom if there is enough students interested.

Regarding the Association of International Students (AIS) she said they currently have an interim President, Mr. Umid Janbekov, since many of the previous members graduated. She has sent out an email to all international students letting them know that they are automatically members of the AIS and asked if anyone is interested in holding positions in the group. Next week they plan to meet at the campus bowling alley that has virus protocols in place that should keep the students safe. She is still thinking about options for Homecoming and what activities AIS would be able to do this semester with all the restrictions because of the pandemic. Dr. Kristin Brown asked about OISS sponsored trips to Champaign international grocery stores as in the past. Ms. Cougill said unfortunately, that those trips are currently too risky and have been canceled. She said she hopes the students will find other ways to get to Champaign if deemed necessary.

1. **Subcommittee Assignments**1. Dr. Kristin Brown explained the roles of the two IEC subcommittees, the International Student Scholarship committee and the Study Abroad Scholarship committee. She asked for volunteers for each. Dr. Vanessa Landrus, Dr. Angela Vietto, Dr. Vernon Woodley, and Dr. David Melton volunteered for the International Scholarship committee. Dr. Kristin Brown, Dr. David Melton, Dr. Mei Ling Li, and Dr. Jenny Chi agreed to serve on the Study Abroad scholarship committee.
2. **Dean’s report: Dr. Ryan Hendrickson**

1. Dean Hendrickson gave an update on the William Weber Scholarship. He said that all students who received the scholarship last year but were unable to use it because of cancelations due to the virus, will still be eligible for the awards once the programs are active again. He also noted that Dr. Weber has continued to fund the scholarship and it continues to be a great benefit for students.

2. He provided additional details about Study Abroad. The Fall programs were canceled, but only two students were affected. The Spring programs, at this time, are not approved for travel, though this could change at a later date. He is hoping for Summer 2021, but will make a decision sometime next year.

 3. He let the Council know international students who are not on campus will receive their books through mail, though he noted that there has been some concerns about mailing international students books. There were discussions about the cost of mailing them and also the potential of books being delayed because of customs, but EIU will work to make sure all international students have the books they need.

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

 Minutes submitted by Mary Mattingly