

International Education Council (IEC)

Meeting Minutes

December 1, 2020

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Zoom

Attendance

Council Members:

Ahmed Alwan (*Oviatt Library*); Vanessa Andrade (*Tseng College, DSIO*); Sandra Chong (*MDECE*); Jimmy Gandhi (*Chair, Tseng College*); Drake Langford (*CSU ACIP*); Kah Chun Lau (*CSM*); Kunpeng Li (*DNCBE*); Marta Lopez (*International & Exchange Student Center Rep.*); Shadi Majoob (*CECS*); Natalie Mason-Kinsey (*CSUN Chief Diversity Officer*); Rudri Oza (*International Student Rep.*); Andrew Surmani (*MCCAMC*)

Department Liaisons:

Talin Bakalian (*Nursing*); Chhandak Basu (*Bio*); Tracy Buenavista (*AAS*); Kimberly Embleton (*Oviatt*); Daniela Gerson (*Journalism*); Dick Heermance (*Geo Studies*); Uma Krishnan (*FCS*); Jing Li (*Math*); Ricardo Medina (*CECM*); Sonia Norris (*Theatre*); Carrie Pullen (*HS*); Rania Sabty (*EOH*); Khanum Shaikh (*GWS*); Maryam Tabibzadeh (*MSEM*); Anais Valiquette L'Heureux (*CJS*); Na Wen (*DNCBE*); Vickie Yu (*CDS*)

Call to Order

Jimmy Gandhi, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

Presentation of IEC Internal Internationalization Data

Jimmy shared the International Internationalization Data Powerpoint with the group.

Discussion

Tenure & Promotion

One member shared that a lot of faculty are involved with international honors society.

Another member pointed out that she and another faculty member in her department are doing international work. It should carry a lot of weight but instead it counts as “community service” for tenure and promotion and seems more like a box to check.

One member suggested talking to the department chair about the importance of international education and use international experience as feedback as well as community service, thinking of it from an impact perspective. These conversations need to happen at the faculty and department level.

One member shared that international teaching experience shows up under teaching not just service for tenure and promotion. There is a lot of literature showing how positive international education is and it should be recognized by CSUN.

A question was posed: should international experience be a requirement/section of the tenure and promotion process?

One member stated that we see less success across the board because there is no institutional support. Some people are more successful because they find industry partners, have personal connections, etc., so we should not make international education a requirement of tenure and promotion without this institutional support first.

Study Abroad

One member was surprised by how high/positive the internal survey results were for CSUN, when UCLA has 20% of their students studying abroad and we are closer to 1% or less.

Another member explained that high numbers of students going abroad need academic support (faculty and curriculum support). For example, a curriculum requirement, faculty encouragement, etc. We have high numbers of student studying abroad for other CSUs but our numbers are still low compared to US universities overall.

Institutional Support for Faculty

One member posed the question: how do we get more faculty release time? Half of our faculty do self-funded international research. We need institutional change to support international experiences for faculty. The committee should talk to new AVP for Research (Chris Sanford), but right now, we are facing even more budget cuts due to COVID-19. We should use this committee to highlight international research, etc., so we are not working in a silo.

Another member shared that she would love to do international research, but has no idea how to make it work within the current structure and course load.

One member noted that colleges could make travel money available to faculty, which can be an incentive for international research and then scale up.

However, another member pointed out that faculty travel money has been taken away in her department.

Someone suggested taking a two-pronged approach, discussing changes needed at the department level (policies) and the institutional level (resources).

One member added that it is also important to show that international education positively effects faculty members and research. It is not just students that benefit, but benefits for faculty are never highlighted. Why is this not spoken of at all at CSUN?

Another member pointed out that voluntary course release right now does not include research or service to buy out courses.

One member brought up that faculty international experiences are individual efforts that seem fragmented and individually championed.

Someone added that course release can be acquired in a couple of ways: One is through the large grant release program (grants) that provide 3-units for every \$9K in overhead obtained. Another is by securing support from the dean of your college. A third is by securing support from your department, though most of this funding has been cut in recent budget cuts. A fourth is through a “voluntary” pay cut. A 24-unit/year load is simply not sustainable if the University values research as well.

One member shared that, according to CSUN’s website, our seven planning priorities are (1) Student success (2) Focus on employees for success (3) Visibility and reputation of the university (4) Plan for a future less dependent on state funding (5) Increase research activity and sponsored programs (6) Sustainability (7) Using athletics as a tool for engagement.

One member argued that the teaching load is important, but the research conducted internationally will impact students through the quality of teaching. This is not a zero-sum game.

Another member echoed the point that a 24-unit/year course load is unsustainable alongside research and writing.

More resources are needed, including financial support, travel support, new MOUs pursued to create foundation relationships (because finding individual connections is challenging), etc.

Someone asked the question: are there any opportunities for short-term travel grants with students?

One member pointed out that this is a great opportunity for us to get this ask with a new President and AVP of Research. It is also important to get the word out to all faculty. We need to prepare faculty who are coming into CSUN and are used to a lighter load to transition well to our system. CSUN needs an equitable approach to travel monies because certain departments can cut the budget and others do not, which isn’t fair. We need to create an equitable process for international travel support because some deans advocate more for certain things than others do.

Support for International Travel

Someone noted that funding is tied to incorporating student travel, but student travel has a lot of red tape. Resources helping accompanying faculty in the approval process would be helpful.

One member shared that we did create a new travel process last year and we can make sure to communicate this to the Deans/Chairs/etc. Unfortunately, there is some red tape that we have to go through due to risk management and being a public institution.

Someone said that the travel reimbursement process is very slow. It can take several months to be reimbursed and training the administrative support to diligently oversee, these support functions should be a priority

Two members suggested that travel-grants would be a great idea to encourage people to do international travel. The grant would need 3 units of release time and a \$5k grant. The money is important, but it will not fix the problem without release time.

Someone suggest that the minutes be sent out as well as a link to find all the information about where to go for funding possibilities at CSUN for international work.

Institutional Culture

One member noted that faculty need not to be discouraged but also need to be actively supported. It shouldn't be who you know that makes you successful. The culture of CSUN shouldn't tell us to do the minimum to get by.

Someone added that the lack of support creates a culture where you don't want to do it because you are bogged down and it all seems too hard. It seems that short-term travel (such as integrated travel as a part of a course) would be an incredible valuable.

Learning From the Success of Others

Someone suggested that we look at how faculty who have been successful in international education at CSUN make it work and create a model for future use to help others. How long was the program? How was it structured? What worked? What didn't?

Survey

One member pointed out that we need to be data driven and asked the committee if we are ok to move forward with the campus wide survey and defining the stakeholders.

Another member suggested coming up with umbrella topics before coming up with questions, so that stakeholders could be determined based on the focus of the survey. The chair supported this idea and suggested the committee come up with broad topics, so that if there are categories we do not need to cover, we can remove them.

Someone suggested keeping the survey simple and short with space for open comments to increase response rates.

Another member shared that while she is new to CSUN, she does not see a strategic plan. It is important to have a Zoom focus group session to get experience from other people who have done international education and see what worked, what didn't, etc. in order to give recommendation to the President. Quantitative data is important, but it is also important to have data where the items are not already defined. She did not think

the survey was helpful but it was ok as a starting point to then as, “So then what?”
“What are the challenges? What are the recommendations?”

Someone pointed out that not all categories are related to all stakeholders. For example, faculty policies and practices would not be helpful to students responding so we may want to have students skip that section. The committee can use Qualtrics to set up a smart survey to auto select for students, faculty, etc. Another seconded this argument, saying that it is more important to hear stories and find out what their experiences have been rather than just quantitative research.

One member asserted that we want to create a structure but we also need to make sure the survey is flexible so that we don't box people in.

Another member proposed that the committee should discuss what we want to know and to ask of staff and administrators, and then determine whom from these large groups we want to target.

The chair stated that the committee will define our stakeholders and what we want to find out from them. Then, we will create a shared document to flesh out what we need.

Possible stakeholders include the Provost Council (Deans, AVPs, etc.), President's Cabinet (included in Ext. Cabinet), staff (but should define them to see who would actually be included in international education), and students.

Someone argued that the committee needed to determine the focus areas first before we define the specific groups, while another member suggested beginning with the specific groups (chicken or the egg dilemma).

One member pointed out that the committee needs more time to do this. The committee can use the comprehensive internationalization model as a guideline. The subcommittee can meet again and create a document on Box/Google drive to provide space for the committee members' input.

Another member pointed out that today was a focus group already, so we have some qualitative data already. Maybe we seek data through a combination of the survey and qualitative information.

Someone suggested perhaps creating a backward map from the survey results and focusing on what we want to tell the new President. What is our ask?

Another member asked, in terms of process, if the committee has spoken with other deans about the survey and model chosen. The chair explained that the model was chosen by the subcommittee through research and literature review.

Brief for the President Beck

Someone shared that the new president, Dr. Beck, is all about data and is a good listener. They suggested putting together a brief overview document for Dr. Beck about the committee and what we are up to. Dr. Beck is preparing for her new position and is starting to ask for overviews of committees. Internationalization needs to be a campus priority but the only person who can do that is Dr. Beck at this point. This is the right time to talk about it because there is not any travel happening now we can step back and be prepared when we are able to travel again.

If we can show her that it will cost X amount for central funding (for example \$1million) then it might be an easy line item. For example, what if we proposed an international version of the faculty research program, where the faculty writes a proposal with a committee that allows for release time and grants. This might also allow reimbursements to be paid from the pot and the pot be reimbursed rather than the individual faculty having to pay out of pocket. Natalie will share information on how to create the grant process.

The chair stated that he would complete the summary brief draft for Dr. Beck and work with others to finalize it. The brief will look at the history of the IEC and international education at CSUN, why it is important, and why she should care as the new CSUN President.

Action Items

1. The subcommittee will meet in January to come up with broad categories for the survey.
2. Jimmy Gandhi will work with Natalie Mason-Kinsey to complete the brief on IEC for Dr. Beck.
3. Natalie Mason-Kinsey will share information with the group on how to create the grant process.
4. Jimmy Gandhi will reach out to Talin Bakalian to schedule a meeting to discuss more about the IEC.
5. Jimmy Gandhi will reach out to Sonia Chong regarding where to find all the information about funding possibilities at CSUN for international work.

Topics for the Next Meeting

- Internationalization Survey
- Brief document for Dr. Beck
- Grant Process

Next Meeting

Our spring meetings will be scheduled in January for the spring semester.

Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, Jimmy Gandhi adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

*Minutes Prepared by Bryanna Benedetti-Coomber
December 22, 2020*