

International Education Committee Report to the Senate for 2016-2017

Submitted by Louise B. Williams, Chair
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Members: Kristina Edwards; Leona Konieczny; Sarah Stookey; Renata Vickery, Fumi Showers, Paul Resetarits, Ghassan El-Eid, Louise Williams, Xiaoping Shen (IS Fall 2016); Matthew Faust (IS Spring 2017), Paul Petterson (IS Spring 2017); Momar Ndiaye (CIE non-voting)

The committee worked on a number of issues in the 2016-2017 academic year

1. Funding opportunities to encourage study abroad

The committee continued to discuss ways to provide more funding for study abroad for students.

We continue to work on our Network for Good giving page. Cindy Cayer and Charles Johnson from Institutional Advancement addressed the committee in October with advice about how to solicit donations.

The Committee got a list of alumni who had studied abroad from the CIE to be combined with a list generated by Institutional Advancement.

The Committee drafted a letter to be sent to alumni was written.

Some members of the committee attended the Fall Career Fair and asked employers to fill out a form about the importance of study abroad in hiring decisions. Quotes were included in a giving request.

The Committee discussed current scholarship funding, from the CCSU Foundation and the Provost's office. It discussed how scholarship money is distributed to the various CIE programs. Members of the Committee would like to have a better understanding or assurance that fund raising for the scholarships would be distributed fairly and also create new pathways to help minority students take part in CIE programs to more fully align the representation of students taking part in the CIE programs to the representation of students on campus.

The Committee also discussed ways to identify grants from outside agencies to fund study abroad. Rod Waterman, of the Grants Office, addressed the Committee at its March meeting. He discussed possibilities of obtaining grants for study abroad from the Fulbright-Hayes program, the USAID, and UN development programs. A database of faculty and their research interests might help identify possible applicants. Multi-school and multi-institutional efforts, or ones that combined faculty-student research should be encouraged. The Grants office would organize a workshop for faculty in the Fall to help with applications.

The Committee invited President Toro to the May meeting to discuss all these matters.

2. Foreign faculty

The Committee agreed that the presence of foreign-born faculty at CCSU is very important for the internationalization of the campus, and that the needs of those faculty should be kept in mind.

It discussed the concerns for foreign-born faculty about new legislation restricting travel and visas from certain countries, and agreed that the University must monitor this situation closely and provide as much assistance as possible.

The Committee also discussed concerns of foreign faculty about obtaining visas and green cards. Currently, CCSU only supports H1B visa applications, which are difficult for faculty at a teaching institution, rather than a research institution, to obtain. The Committee discussed other visa options and agreed to recommend that the university look into it. After consultation, President Toro agreed to change university policy and make it easier for foreign faculty to obtain visas.

3. Partner Institutions, Linkages, Dual Degree programs

The Committee was updated by the Director of the CIE about ongoing efforts to establish relationships with foreign universities on dual degree programs. He was working on such a program with our Communications department and a Japanese University. Work also is being undertaken with a Korean university.

The Committee discussed ways to encourage more programs with universities in under-represented areas such as Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

4. CIE functions and needs

The Committee discussed the functions of the CIE and ways in which it could be improved. The severe shortage of staffing in Spring 2017 was discussed. The Committee has concerns that given the lack of staff that some of the current programs will be underserved. The Committee believes that the current staff has and will continue to work to keep programs running as well as possible but note that additional staff would provide better successes in the programs provided by CIE. The Committee agreed to ask the Provost and President to provide more staffing.

5. Increasing Faculty participation in study abroad

The Committee continued to discuss the idea of holding an orientation day for Fall 2017 to help new faculty members design courses abroad. The Committee especially would like to expand offerings in schools with fewer international experiences, such as Business and Engineering.

6. International Students

The Committee discussed the decline in international students at CCSU in recent years and possible strategies to bring more foreign students here. This year CCSU has 18 exchange students and about 200 international students. IELP (Intensive English Language Program) has 30 students this year and had 50 last year.

The Committee learned that often international students are attracted to certain U.S. universities by word of mouth – existing students tell their friends and relatives about their experiences. It was determined making international students more welcome at CCSU would improve our reputation abroad. Some ways to improve their experiences might be holding a regular coffee hour/event to which international students and students who are interested in studying abroad are invited. The idea of creating a multicultural center in the renovated DiLoreto-Willard building also was discussed.

7. Transfer articulation with partner institutions abroad

The Committee continued to discuss ways to improve the centralized database of courses that students can take to fulfill the major or minor requirements. Erin Beecher of the CIE continues to work with department chairs to create comprehensive lists of courses that students can take and keep up with their degree requirements.