

International Education Committee

Report to the Senate for 2019-2020

Submitted by Dr. Matt Ciscel, Chair, on April 29, 2021

Committee Members: Helena Adams, Cassandra Broadus-Garcia, Sourav Chakraborty, Matthew Ciscel, Sheri Fafunwa-Ndibe, Wangari Gichiru, Michael Wizevich, Leyla Zidani-Eroglu, Mathew Foust (IS Program Director), Momar Ndiaye and Zongxiang Mei (CIE, non-voting), plus student representatives Emily Kostich (graduate-level), Cierra Sturdivant (undergraduate-level), and Martin Reyna (SGA)

The committee worked on several issues related to internationalization of the university during the 2020-2021 academic year:

1. Faculty Opportunities to Lead Courses Abroad

The committee received regular reports from the CIE about course and study abroad conditions at each meeting (always with an eye to when these options might be safe again). Traditionally, these have been the bread-and-butter of efforts to offer international experiences to CCSU students. Courses abroad have been cancelled since the pandemic reached Connecticut in March 2021, but the CIE, with the help of the committee, has pushed to be prepared to offer courses abroad as soon as it is safe to do so.

On March 17, the committee collaborated with the CIE to hold a workshop via Teams for faculty about how to propose and run a successful course abroad. Several IEC members attended and spoke about their own experiences. About a dozen faculty participated, which is a large increase over recent past years. The process of approving courses abroad is still ongoing at the time of the writing of this report, but there were already several courses proposed for Spring 2022 and a couple for summer 2022 when the CIE last reported to the IEC on this.

2. Pathway Program Plan and the Intensive English Language Program (IELP)

The IEC Chair has continued to work gradually on the Plan as outlined by the summer task force in 2019 and approved by the CIE that Fall. The pandemic has slowed this process.

Nevertheless, the IEC has made some progress this year: creation of two new ESL courses and revision of two other ESL courses in the English Department to serve the needs of the program for credit-bearing ESL, coordination with the full-time instructor (and interim director) of the IELP to create a plan for aligning credit and non-credit ESL for program students, and meeting by the IEC chair and CIE director with higher administrators such as Karissa Peckham, David Dauwalder, and the Deans to gain support and plan next steps. The IELP and the proposed Pathway program remain without directors.

3. International Lecture Series

The CIE reported in Fall that it has funds available for an international lecture series. A sub-committee was formed (Broadus-Garcia, Chakraborty, Wizevich, and Zidani-Eroglu) to organize a virtual lecture series in Spring 2021. Climate change was chosen as the first topic, and possible speakers were identified and contacted. A potential guest speaker in the visual arts was also invited. The ongoing pandemic made attracting speakers and organizing the event challenging, despite the virtual/online nature of the event. In the end, there was one very successful event, featuring Dr. Maureen Raymo (an eminent geologist) who spoke about climate change science to a group of over 100 on the evening of Thursday, April 8, over Zoom. The IEC hopes to expand upon this success in Fall 2021.

4. Faculty International Travel Research Grant (Hyundai)

After the 2020 activities from the previous round of this grant were canceled due to the pandemic, the fund announced through the CIE that there would not be a competition in 2020-2021. The IEC is hopeful that the funding and these activities that it supports will be revived during 2021-2022.

5. Academic Programs with an International Focus or Component

The co-director of the interdisciplinary International Studies Program (Foust) gave regular reports on the activities and work of this program. The program underwent several small curricular changes this year, driven partially by some problems in being able to offer courses in the Middle East regional focus. Challenges remain as far as resources and attracting faculty to participate. Opportunities for internationalization of programs across campus remain.

6. Campus Internationalization Survey

The IEC chair put together a survey questionnaire for the campus to find out what the international education preferences and interests of the students, faculty, and staff are. The IEC discussed and revised the survey during the spring, but time constraints has meant that the survey has not yet been distributed and will have to wait until Fall Semester.