

2018-2019
UNIVERSITY SENATE ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Name: International Education Council

Number of Meetings Held this Year: 4

Committee Chair: Sharon An

Committee Members: (list here)

Sharon An (Chair)	Hajime Mitani	
Nasrine Bendjilali	Huan-Tang Lu	
Ai Guo Han	Courtney E. Richmond	
Nina Krey	Heng Yi Michael Chu	
Yupeng Li	Xia Liu	
Keir Andreas Politz		
Edward C. Smith		
Jan. M. Smolarski		

Purpose of/Charge to Committee:

“Improve the internationalization of Rowan University; plans and presents programs related to Education in all countries; recommends practices and policies that will enhance the internationalization at Rowan; and assists in the development and establishment of such practices and policies.

Summary of Activities this Year:

The International Education Council held four meetings this year, focused on promoting new services and exploring retention strategies for the international students at Rowan University. The council discussed some barriers to internationalization at Rowan and what kinds of strategies to be implemented to overcome those barriers. The council met with the director of the International Center Dr. Gokhan Alkanat and assistant director Ms. Ghina Mahmoud, and the assistant director of International Recruitment and Admissions Ms. Kesiane String. They were invited to attend the IEC meetings and made presentations on their efforts and activities for recruiting and providing services to the international students. The council members investigated the current status of the international students and were pleased by Dr. Alkanat’s report that there has been about a 20% increase in the number of international

students at Rowan; about 50% undergraduate students and 50% graduate students. The International Center would like to have about 5% of all Rowan Students be international students, which would be about 1000 students. Currently, our percentage of students who are international students is still very low, compared to other comparable institutions. Most of our international students come from India, China and Saudi Arabia. There are students from 42 other countries, but significantly fewer students come from each individual country after these top three.

To have more international students for diversity on Rowan campus, a lot more efforts need to be made. The council discussed with these directors about the current barriers and challenges, such as unusual requirements that make it difficult for international students to apply and come to Rowan. The key is to break down barriers and make the pathway much easier for international students to apply and successfully come to Rowan. The goal is to make Rowan University one of the best universities in the country for the international students.

The IEC investigated the current practices and services provided to the international students and the findings show that brief orientations from different areas or offices are offered when students first arrive, and some peer mentoring activities are provided. During the year, there are some social events, trips to cities and shopping, employment workshops offered to the international students. Currently there is one active international student club with about 30 active members. It is organized by students who run the club and events, as well as supported by the International Center.

This year the council also had some discussion on the Study Abroad program based on the presentation from Dr. Alkanat, regarding the issues that there is no funding available for low-income students to study abroad and fewer than 2% of Rowan students study abroad. The council members thought that more information is needed to understand barriers in this area.

The International Education council also examined some newly created internationally-focused academic programs, such as Area Studies which includes Latin American Study, Asian Study, European Study, and the fast growing International Studies Program which now has about 70 majors and more than one hundred minors. The council strongly supports these programs as they really help to promote internationalization at Rowan university.

2018-2019 COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

SUGGESTIONS:

The council members deem that in spite of a lot of efforts have been made in the past year, the percentage of international students at Rowan is still very low. Therefore, much more resources are needed to develop more efficient strategies to recruit much more international students. It was suggested that some Asian faculty members at Rowan have a lot of connections with the universities in their own countries and they could be good resources for recruiting much more international students. At the same time, more special programs and new services for the international students need to be established on campus to help the international students adapt well to the American educational learning environment. The frequency of those existing events, trips, programs offered to the international students should be increased in order to help further assimilate the international students and help them adjust to the new cultural and social environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In coordination with International Center, explore the development of resources, organize and promote more internationally-focused events, clubs, programs for the international students. These students, when they first arrive from foreign countries, come across culture shock, language barriers, research difficulties. Currently, there is a special writing program for the international students. The library instruction programs for the international students which were successfully conducted in the previous years should be resumed as many international students benefitted a lot from learning how to use scholarly resources for their academic courses and class projects through the library instruction sessions which were specially designed to accommodate their various levels of language proficiency and different learning needs. The council members deem that retention of the existing international students is equally important as recruiting. For this purpose, to outreach and offer special support to the international students are critically important to retain them and attract more international students to Rowan University. Reestablishing faculty guided mentor program is recommended as we did it before. The goal is to make Rowan University one of the best universities in the country for international students.

The IEC members also suggested that the scholarship for Study Aboard program, especially for low-income students should be considered and developed, if possible.

The IEC members also recommended that ESL program could be relocated to Glassboro campus if space is available, so that those students will be able to participate in the international events, special programs, clubs for the international students on campus and it will also be more convenient for the International Center to oversee the ESL program.