

UNIVERSITY SENATE
ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORT 2019-20

Committee Name: *International Education Council 2019-2020*

Number of meetings held this year: 4

Committee Chair: Sharon An, Yupeng Li (Co-Chair)

Committee Members: [\(list here\)](#)

Sharon An	Yupeng Li	Yong Chen
Ping Lu	Ben Wu	Ning Wang
Kul Kapri	Stuti Jha	Bo Sun
Thanh Trung Nguyen	Heng Yi Chu	Xia Liu
Huang-Tang Lu	Hajime Mitani	Yuhui Li

Purpose of/Charge to Committee:

Improves 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 academic year. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the last meeting was held online through Webex. The meetings were designed for the committee members to discuss the current practices and policies and resources at Rowan University for promoting the international related education including the recruiting, enrollment and engagement for the international students. The committee discussed some barriers in promoting internationalization at Rowan and possible strategies that could be implemented to resolve those issues.

The council reached out to the stakeholders related to international education across the university and was able to invite representatives and leaders from the International Center, International admission, and International Studies program for discussions and presentations. Dr. Duke-Bryant from the International Studies program attended the IEC meeting and gave presentations on the current status and trend of the program. The International Studies program has been growing very

fast, and has a lot of exciting developments in the past year. The committee was also pleased to know there are some financial supports that could help some students to participate in the study abroad program as promoted by the International Studies program and the International Center. Lauren Pollara, the International Admission specialist and Ghina Mahmoud, the associate director of the International Center also joined one of the committee meetings, and they provided valuable information on the current data statistics of Rowan University's international students. The number of F-1 students, including OPT, is now totaling 276, which demonstrates a big jump compared with the past years. Most of the students are from India, in total 77 students, both undergraduate and graduate students. Then the students from China and Saudi Arabia are 21 and 19 respectively. There are students from 39 other countries or regions, including Nigeria (11), Pakistan (9), Iran (9), Tunisia (8), etc. The International Education Council strongly supports these programs as they really help to promote internationalization and bring in diversity at Rowan university.

The council also discussed with the leaders from the International Center and the International Admission about the current barriers and challenges in recruiting and admission, and helped to figure out strategies on how to make the recruitment process more competitive and attractive to international students. The International Education Council fully supports all the efforts to make Rowan University one of the best universities in the country for the international students.

2019-2020 COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggestions:

The number of international students has increased dramatically compared to the previous years, and this demonstrates a steady upward trend for enrollment in the past years. The council members are very impressed by this achievement. Meanwhile, in spite of the efforts and the promising data, the percentage of international students at Rowan is still relatively low compared to the other comparable universities. Therefore, the committee hopes that more resources can be devoted to help recruit international students in the future. It is also suggested that some of our Asian faculty members have connections with universities in their home countries, and this could be good resources for recruiting purposes. In the meantime, some more special programs or services for international students need to be established or promoted further, so that our enrolled international students could adapt well into the Rowan community. The numbers of the events and

the programs offered to the international students and the visibility of these events should be increased along with our increased numbers of international students. This is very important for retention of the existing international students.

Recommendations:

Considering the current COV-19 pandemic situation, the council members would like to make the followings recommendation:

- (i) Provide online education programs to allow international students to study online from abroad. International students could have options: study online for two years and then come to Rowan University to study on site for another two years to complete some degree programs. They could also study online only for the whole degree programs. These programs may not have any restricted location requirement, and such options could open doors to international students who wish to come yet are blocked by the travel bans or discouraged by the pandemic concern. In the meantime, it can help the university to keep generating some revenue when international traveling is impeded by the epidemic.
- (ii) Look into the situation of our current international students, to find out what help and support they need during this pandemic period. Develop new strategies to support them during this trying time.

Under normal situation, when the concern of COV19 is alleviated, the IEC would like to recommend the following:

- (i) In coordination with the International Center, explore the development of resources, organize and promote more internationally-focused events, clubs, programs for the international students. The council members believe that it is critically important to offer special support to the existing international students in order to retain them and attract more international students to Rowan University from their home countries in the future. Rowan University has a tradition to hold foreign cultural week or cultural month to get together student groups and promote diversity. The council members recommend an International Cultural Day convention, as a once-in-a-year event, which will allow the international students to join for sharing their cultures, such as food fair, gift exchange, etc. This would be

helpful for international students to adapt to the community, and promote communication between the international students and the domestic students.

- (ii) Launch a faculty guided mentoring program for the international students since Rowan has a large proportion of international based faculty.
 - a) Field a faculty survey, regarding the faculty involvement of the mentor program. This could include the perception of support offered by the faculty members, interest of faculty members across different programs to support students via mentor programs, and possible suggestions that faculty members may have.
 - b) The International Center could send out the list of contacts for the available faculty members who are willing to join the mentor program and allow students to register for the program. The one-on-one mentoring program could have a large impact on student incentives in adapting to the Rowan community academically and socially, and also could help to promote the university worldwide through the wonderful international student services.