

UNIVERSITY SENATE
ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORT 2020-21

Committee Name: International Education Council

Number of meetings held this year: 4

Committee Chair: Yupeng Li

Committee Members: (list here)

Sharon An	Yupeng Li	Yong Chen
Ping Lu	Ben Wu	Ning Wang
Kul Kapri	Stuti Jha	Thanh Trung Nguyen
Huang-Tang Lu	Hajime Mitani	Juming Pan

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 pandemic, all meetings were online through Webex. The meetings were designed for the committee members to discuss the current resources and supports at Rowan University for promoting the international related education including the recruiting, enrollment and engagement for the international students. We have sustained a stable group of committee members who have served multiple years, and grown our council with new joining.

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 and International Studies program for presentations and discussions.

Ghina Mahmoud, the associate director of the International Center joined one of the council's meetings, and she has provided valuable information on the current data statistics of Rowan University's international students. Up to 2020 fall semester, the students with F1 visa is 225, with total non-immigrant students at 246. Student population is quite stable, despite the fact of pandemic. We have students from a total of 42 countries, where we have the largest number in Indian students, followed by students from China and Nigeria. Engineering student number tops other majors, then Computer Science and Business majors. We have 21 new students for non-F1

(L2/H4) in 2020 fall compared to 12 in 2019 fall, but only 38 new F1 students compared to 74 back in 2019. This is understandable due to the travel and visa restriction caused by the pandemic. Based on Ghina's admission information, Rowan has issued out I-20 for 254 students, with no exchange students. Further, online orientation seems more popular. The International Center's goal is to reach total about 1000 international students, which will be 5% of the total Rowan student population. They are currently having people exploring the education market in India and hope to expand our Indian students' enrollment.

Laura Kahler, the Study Abroad Advisor, has provided an update on Study Abroad program in 2020 fall. Unfortunately, all study abroad programs got suspended, usually we have around 150 students that participate in the study abroad program per year. Currently there is no virtual studying abroad option available.

Dr. Duke-Bryant from the International Studies and Area Studies program attended our meeting and presented on the current status and trend of the program. Due to the impact of COVID-19, the program will not require students to have the study abroad experience, which help provided some flexibility. Also, it is under discussion that virtual option of abroad study can be considered. The program is also trying to do partnership with international institutions, including American University in Cairo, with virtual options. On the other hand, student enrollment in International Studies and Area Studies was not affected largely by the pandemic, with 80 new enrollments in comparison to 85 new students in the previous year. We are also glad to hear that project "Global Security and International Studies: Integrating Health, Environment, and Emergency Response" secured funding from Dept of Education's Undergraduate International Studies Foreign Language Program. Dr. Lawrence Markowitz and Kelly Duke-Bryant will jointly implement the grant (around 300k), part of which will be used to support students to join faculty-lead abroad study. Provost office may also setup additional amount of scholarship to support study abroad.

the International Education Council strongly support these programs as they are helping promote the internationalization and bring diversity to Rowan. We fully encourage all efforts that can make Rowan University one of the best universities in the country for the international students.

SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Rowan University maintained a very stable international student population, despite the impact of the pandemic, which is promising. However, we still hope to see more devotion of resources in recruiting and supporting our international students. In the meantime, some special programs or services for international students need to be established. With the Atlanta shooting tragedy, which is hate crime on Asians, it is urgent for Rowan to help provide necessary support and sense of safety among students, especially those with Asian background. Students from Asian consist the majority of our international student population, therefore at this special time

point, both their physical safety and mental health should be considered with high priority. Our faculty members have diverse cultural background, and this could be good resources for recruiting and mentoring purposes. We are working collaboratively with the International Center to develop Faculty Reference List, allowing faculty to volunteer in mentoring students with similar country background, so that to help connect closely with our students and provide the students a sense of belonging.

Suggestions:

- (1) Develop and expand possible online courses that allow international students to study from abroad. International students could be offered 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.
- (2) Develop expressway/worry-free programs that allow international students to receive quick psychological support or to report on any xenophobic related concern. For example, assign advisors or mentors who specialize in helping international students. It is important for Rowan to deliver the message explicitly that students from all over the world will be welcomed here, and that Rowan is a safe and friendly place to obtain your education experience.
- (3) When the concern of COVID-19 is alleviated, explore the development of resources, organize and promote more internationally-focused events, clubs, programs for the international students. Rowan University has a tradition to hold foreign cultural week or cultural month to get together student groups and promote diversity. The council members suggest 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.
- (4) Launch a faculty guided mentoring program for international students. Rowan has a large proportion of international based faculty, which provide a solid foundation to offer volunteered mentoring program. The International Education Council is working collaboratively with the International Center to develop a Faculty Reference List. Base on this format, it is suggested that Rowan 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. The International Center could send out the list of contacts of 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.

Recommendations:

The International Education Council has stayed very actively and productively in the past academic year. We recommend that this committee continue to build strong collaborative relationships with various groups within Rowan community. We want to be able to assist the improvement of internationalization at Rowan University, and make it a friendly, inclusive and diversified institution that welcome students from all over the world.