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The International Education Committee of the Academic Senate met twice this year, in March and April 2012. The Chair (Piya Chatterjee, Associate Professor, WMST) was on sabbatical in Fall 2011.

In Fall 2011, Acting Chair Professor Christina Schwenkel (Anthropology) attended a few meetings around the new campus-wide set of initiatives around increasing the number of international students at UCR. These meetings were designed by Noel-Levitz, a consulting firm, hired by the university to design, and implement, a strong recruitment plan for international undergraduate students. The IEC, however, did not meet in the Fall to discuss these developments during that quarter. Meetings in Fall and Spring 2012 did began to engage these issues directly, as noted below.

A. UCIE Meeting.

The Chair participated in a system wide UCIE conference-call on March 16, 2012. The Executive Committee meeting was chaired by Professor Kum Kum Bhavnani (UCSB), and did not initially include the EAP Director and his staff. The EC mapped out the central themes around the Education Abroad Program in light of the budget cuts, increased scrutiny of UCEAP/UCOP finances, student fee increases (which has a direct impact on student’s electing to go abroad) and “third party provider” issues in various parts of the world. Detailed consideration was also made about the composition and procedures around academic oversight of EAP programs and centers.

The EAP Director then offered his report around the budget and the overall environment for EAP which has seen a drop in student enrollment. He suggested that there were three factors that caused this drop in enrollment: (i) General trend of fee increases which prompts students to carefully consider this option; (ii) Reduction of, and significant turnover of staff in EAP programs; and (iii) the emergence of campus-based programs which compete directly with EAP. UC-EAP planning will include careful scaling back of programs; continue to look at the “balance” between campus programs and EAP, and further the academic integration initiative. Professor Ann Blaine (UCSD) put together a comprehensive report of the Academic Oversight Plan and offered a detailed account of the feedback and proposed revisions being worked through the EAP office. “Growth” and “Sustainability” continue to be the anchor-points of all planning. UCEAP celebrates its 50th Anniversary at UCSB this year.

Another UCIE meeting will be help on May 18, 2012. Unfortunately, the Chair will not be able to attend because of her participation at a UCR conference panel on that day.
B. UCR International Committee Meeting Discussions.

On March 19, the IE Committee discussed the exciting initiative catalyzed by the Chancellor to increase international student presence on the campus.

Faculty were “brought up to speed” about the Noel Levitz consultation. Dr. Douglas Christiansen, the Senior Associate Consultant of this firm, is spearheading the initiative and has helped administrators, and other stakeholders, create the templates to move forward, starting Fall 2011. The consultants are looking forward to designing the recruitment plan effectively and welcome all stakeholders.

As such, teaching faculty on the committee, especially, can offer an important perspective on issues of both “recruitment” and “retention” of international students. In short, they are important stakeholders in questions of outreach, quality of teaching offered and the overall questions of retention. As such, the committee concurred that Chair of the committee (and other members of the committee) need to be involved directly in this dialogue about how to shift UCR into engaging questions of “global” diversity. Moving through Academic Senate channels is the most appropriate way to do this.

The committee focused its energies to figure out 1) what had transpired so far in the design of the initiative and 2) some faculty expressed their concerns with retention issues and international student experience at UCR—in the classroom and outside of it. Pedagogical challenges around understanding the special needs of “lost” international students in highly impacted classrooms (and increased teaching loads for faculty) is a variable that is, and will be, underscored in future deliberations.

There was some discussion about tuition-costs of international students so that the committee could get a better sense of what is at stake for them. Some members of the committee (who are integrated in the consulting process more directly) did note that a number of Associate Deans are full aware of the support and outreach issues at the academic level and are concerned about how much of this revenue stream (from international student tuition) comes back to direct advising and support of these students.

The committee also continued its discussion (from the previous year) about the various categories of international students currently on campus. Sharon Duffy (Dean, UNEX) and Karen McComb (Deputy Director, International Education Center) generously offered to put together a matrix spelling out who is here and under whose jurisdiction. These include UCEAP/reciprocity students; matriculated UCR undergraduates; Visiting students through UNEX/Concurrent Enrollment; dismissed international students who are enrolling through UNEX; students involved in the academic preparatory program where students can meet the A-G requirements for UC admissions. It is important to note here that these different “pathways” were confusing, that one could see why international students might “fall through the cracks.”
For faculty, in particular, clarity about these classifications (and their distinctions) would assist in effective pedagogical outreach and support for these students. *This latter issue (about pedagogical and other forms of support for students) has emerged as an important concern for faculty on this committee and it is hoped that the discussion (between teaching faculty and administrators) will lead to effective policy and implementation.*

**On April 19,** the IE committee met again to consider these issues further. Sharon Duffy (Dean, UNEX) had shared the comprehensive Noel-Levitts report which included the various sub-committees or workgroups involved in laying the foundations for international student recruitment. Included in this range of committee is a “Support and Retention Services Work Group.” The Chair is confident that detailed discussion of this report will continue.

Sharon Duffy and Karen McComb offered their detailed matrix about various international student groups which included the following: i) what unit handled applications; ii) who issued visas; iii) enrollment mechanisms; iv) Access to ARC; v) Academic advising; vi) number enrolling in campus courses per quarter; vii) who provides general support; and other arenas of access and support such as health, dorm access and so on. This matrix provided a valuable snapshot of who is currently at UCR and which units are responsible for their journey here.

The committee was pleased to welcome Professor Steve Brint (Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education) who mapped out the contours of the initiative. He emphasized the importance of Academic Senate involvement and invited the new Chair (Professor Lucille Chia, History) to work with him and others.

Some ideas being generated to meet the challenges created by this constituency of students include: i) training academic advisors to work with the particular issues international students face, including various kinds of culture differences that can lead to mis/communication etc; ii) encouraging faculty to engage directly with students given that so many faculty members are involved with international and transnational research and teaching.

Academic challenges also include working with students who come in “below Writing 3” ability and building intensive “immersion” quarters around English, as well as “introduction to college life” in the US. Further integration with the Academic resource center (staffed with ESL specialists, for example) will be another avenue to explore. The student services component will include strengthening support frameworks outside of academic retention matters, vital though these are. These include problems of isolation; building peer mentoring and peer advising; and having effective orientation programs.

After Vice Provost Brint left, the committee continued with a lively discussion in which some faculty sought to engage these issues of “retention” and support in less abstract ways. Some of the ideas that were offered: i) create mentoring and support systems between international faculty from a particular nation with students from that nation; i) attempt to break through the communication challenges between student service
initiatives and faculty; iii) create mentoring and support systems between international postdocs and students; iv) Continue to build visibility for international students and what they bring to a campus by weaving these into academic activities as well e.g work and plan outreach activities with international students at the helm.

Committee members were also aware that while these are important ideas, they need to be supported by budgetary mandates. Committee members did concur that senate and faculty are a rich source of support for international students, and if opportunities are created then the Academic Senate can be an important “portal” through which communication about international student needs (as well as this initiative) could be conveyed, and enthusiasm generated to support their success and accomplishments at UCR.

It is important to note, in conclusion, that embedded suggestions were not taken to vote, but should be kept in mind for future decision-making.

The International Education Committee has customarily focused on the Education Abroad Program and this will certainly continue to be one of its important arenas of attention. However, it is important that these new and exciting campus-wide initiatives also remain a focus of engagement, inquiry and concern. In that, this year can be seen as a “transition” year in which local concerns started to become more significant.

The outgoing Chair is delighted to welcome Professor Lucille Chia, History, as the new incoming Chair of the International Education Committee.

Piya Chatterjee, Chair
Lucille Chia
David Crowley
Thomas Eulgem
Christina Schwenkel
Thomas Perring, Ex Officio
Sharon Duffy, Ex Officio
Bronwyn Jenkins-Deas, Ex Officio
Karen McComb, Ex Officio
Enrique Salas, GSA Student
Judy Kang, ASUCR Student