

Committee on International Students and Scholars
November 2, 2007 Minutes
Macon State College

Meeting convened at 10:05 a.m.

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Agenda Item # 2: Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

Dwight Call motioned for the approval of minutes from the last meeting. Liz Travis seconded. All agreed and the minutes were adopted.

Agenda Item #3: What is CISS? –Akanmu Adebayo, Sue Watson, and others.

As many members of the Committee on International Students and Scholars are new, it was suggested that an explanation of the committee be given; it was also suggested that the charge of the committee be reiterated to those who have been members for some time. The 2007 – 2008 Charge to the Committee was distributed and available for reference.

Adebayo addressed questions not specifically mentioned on the 2007 – 2008 Charge to the Committee and later referenced the charge to explain the functions of the committee. Among the questions addressed were:

1. Who are we?

Adebayo stated verbatim from the charge that we are those who “...have professional responsibilities or interests in any of the areas that affect non–U.S. citizens who study, teach, or conduct research at USG institutions.” Aside from those bodies mentioned in the charge, other institutional bodies that should be represented on this committee are the Registrar’s Office, Residence Offices, Academic Colleges, and Exchange Programs.

Adebayo also mentioned that “The Committee is chaired by a member of the System Council on International Education, who reports on the Committee’s activities and places the Committee Recommendations before the Council for Action.”

2. *To whom does this committee report?*

The committee ultimately reports via its chair to Rick Sutton at the Board of Regents, Office of International Education.

3. *With whom else does this committee work?*

Aside from working with the institutional bodies mentioned in the charge, this committee works with two other committees: The Study Abroad Committee and the Faculty and Curriculum Committee, and with four councils: the Africa Council, the Europe Council, the Asia Council, and the Americas Council. It was emphasized that there is overlap between the councils themselves *and* between the councils and the committees.

Sue Watson mentioned that information on the committee and the councils can be found at the USG Office of International Education Website at <http://www.usg.edu/oie/facstaff/committees/>. Past minutes from the CISS and other information pertinent to this committee can be found via this website.

In closing the explanation of the CISS, Adebayo urged that in proactively following our charge, we are preventing policies from being made by other committees and administrators that negatively affect the international population at USG institutions. The other option our committee has is to work to undo these decisions that have been made, which is less desirable than being proactive in policy decisions that affect the population for whom we advocate.

Agenda Item #4: Update from BOR – Sue Watson

1. Alternatives for degree-seeking students who wish to use methods other than the TOEFL for admissions purposes may be used as long as these institutions seek BOR approval. Committee members mentioned that this policy should only be in place for degree-seeking students, and not for exchange students.
2. The committee should look at the issue of transfer credits from USG institutions (from the study abroad and degree seeking standpoint).
3. The Internationalizing the Campus grant proposals are due Friday, November 9th.
4. The faculty development seminar applications are due on January 4th, 2008. (Adebayo added that two of the four councils offer faculty development seminars each year. This year, the Europe Council will offer a Spain & Morocco seminar and the Africa Council will offer a Nigeria seminar. Next year the Asia Council will offer a seminar to Thailand. Grants to support faculty participation on these seminars are available through the Chancellor’s Award, which are expected to be matched dollar-for-dollar by the institution.)
5. Last month the BOR hosted an International Education Summit for USG presidents, heads of International Offices, Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, and Vice Presidents for Student Affairs at the Carter Center. At this summit five principles were drafted, which will be used to form the USG principles to internationalize the campuses and curricula. Currently, a website about the summit is being created with information on how other USG institutions are internationalizing the campus and curricula <http://www.usg.edu/oie/summit/>; this website should be functioning within one week. A new website detailing the international curricula plan will also be created. http://www.usg.edu/oie/facstaff/development/global_competencies/
6. A free summit on citizen diplomacy, sponsored by the Georgia Council for International Visitors will be held on November 16, 2007. More information and registration forms can be found at www.gciv.org.

Agenda Item # 5 Sub-Committee Reports:

A) International Student Admissions Subcommittee- Jean Myers

Julio España researched USG institutions in regards to their international transfer credit policies. The information was difficult to find and a recommendation was made that the information be more readily accessible. The conclusion from the research is that BOR only has policies in place for the USG core curriculum and that each institution should have the ability to make policies regarding transfer credits from universities from outside of the United States.

This reasoning came in part from a BOR policy stating that each institution would have the ability to accept credits at their own discretion from non-USG schools (out of state schools), especially outside of the core. If this is true, each institution should be able to make international transfers at their own discretion as well.

In addition to discussion on international transfer credits, the Regents' Test was discussed. The question raised is whether we want the USG system to have a standardized policy regarding the Regents' test for internationals, or if we want each institution to develop their own policies. Some schools can waive a portion of the Regents' test with the GSTEP (Georgia State Test of English Language Proficiency), some give extra time, and others give additional considerations for non-native speakers who will be taking the test. Some suggested that this committee leave this issue alone.

An intra-USG transfer credit system was also mentioned. An electronic system that will automatically transfer credits from one USG campus to another is in the works, although it has been discussed for years. USG institution transcripts and manual transfer will be done away with. Jean Myers stated that it has been promised and will be implemented soon.

B) Insurance Subcommittee (and preparations for Second Annual SHIP conference in Florence) – Dwight Call

Dwight Call stated the background on the insurance dilemma for those new to the committee. Until about two years ago, the Office of International Education had worked with insurers who wanted to provide group rates to internationals. When the then-current plan was up for renewal, the Department of Administrative Services delayed the release of the request for proposals for insurance providers to bid on a plan for international students, while allowing the release of the Board of Regents request for proposals which meshed all USG graduate students and all USG international students into one plan. By centralizing a health care plan for these two populations under one policy, the costs for graduate students decreased and the cost for international students increased considerably.

Recently, a new insurance steering committee was appointed to find an equitable solution to the decision made at the BOR level. The committee consists of USG two- and four- year institutions as well as the research institutions. Representatives from several USG institutions and constituencies (allied health professions majors, athletics) in addition to two international students and one domestic graduate student form this committee.

This committee met at the BOR office on Tuesday to discuss the plan. Two things stood out to the committee:

- 1) It was less divisive than anticipated.

- 2) Data from last year regarding claims and premiums were not provided by the insurer. For this reason, there was little way to evaluate this new “lump” plan that had been implemented by the BOR.
- 3) The information that was presented indicated that two USG institutions had a very high loss ratio: MCG and UGA.

Four decisions were made by the committee at the end of the meeting:

- 1) By the second Friday in November (Nov. 9th), the committee should receive data regarding claims and premiums from Pearce and Pearce for evaluation.
- 2) The committee should also receive a list of student email addresses (students who are insured through this company) so that a student satisfaction survey can be administered.
- 3) By the first week in December, the committee would like to have the rates from Pearce and Pearce on the existing plans for the 2008-2009 year.
- 4) The committee will meet the second week in December to discuss the data and the plan.

Doug Podoll added that he was surprised by the company’s continuing denial that the committee had been given data on claims and premiums collected in the past because at the last meeting, they provided the data for each institution. After some prodding, some data came by fax literally during the last hour of that meeting. An international graduate student representative from GA Tech asked for more data (for each client), but the committee doubts that he will receive the requested data because of privacy issues.

Sue Watson added that the student survey should be for all students regardless of whether they have used the insurance; otherwise, only dissatisfied students will respond and the information will be skewed. Dwight Call and Doug Podoll added that all committee members should encourage their students to complete the survey and that all students on the plan should make sure that they have registered online so that their email addresses are available.

Jean Myers later questioned whether we could survey students who have applied for an insurance waiver and whether or not they had received it. Sheila Schulte commented that we could add that question to the student satisfaction survey in an open-ended “What was the process like?” form if the student indicates that he or she had applied for a waiver.

Dwight Call added that when the Chancellor visited the USG institutions last year, the international students were present and vocal on insurance issues. This way, the dissatisfaction with the BOR implementation of the policy was heard at the Chancellor level.

C) Workshops and Training Subcommittee – Sheila Schulte

Sheila Schulte began by distributing a survey on residency issues. The survey was completed by committee members and collected at the meeting. The three issues included in the survey were:

- 1) Residency Issues; 2) Support Services; and 3) Marketing.

Agenda Item # 6: More on Residency Classifications –Sue Watson

Two types of residency waivers were discussed briefly. The Economic Advantage Waiver and the Nonresident Student Waiver were mentioned. Sue indicated that international students *may* be able to qualify for more than one type of waiver, not just the International and Superior Out-of-State Students waiver. Information on these waivers can be found at: <http://www.usg.edu/regents/policymanual/700.phtml#n704.041>. Doug Podoll and Sue Watson also stressed that Registrars are not always trained on matters regarding waivers for internationals, so staff dealing with internationals will find this information valuable. It was also mentioned that a workshop on Residency Classification will be held in the spring and more information will be sent about this workshop.

Agenda Item # 7: Other Matters

Sheila Schulte – Advocacy Day[s] will be March 11th & 12th in Washington D.C. Contact Sheila if more information is needed. She also mentioned that GAIE will hold a conference on Jeckyll Island from February 21st – February 22nd. She also thanked committee members for their help with this year's NAFSA conference that was held in Atlanta.

Libby Davis – The Georgia International Leadership Conference (GILC) will be held January 11th-13th. Registration is currently open. Contact Libby for more information.

Doug Podoll – There will be no VITA tax workshops regarding internationals at GAIE but he will offer one soon. The VITA workshops will be free, but participants must pay for transport, parking, etc.

He also mentioned that he will be conducting campus compliance workshops for institution offices that deal with payroll, etc., in regards to internationals. These workshops will be held for free at the institutions as long as Doug is reimbursed for lodging, transportation, etc.

Agenda Item #8: Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on February 8th, 2008 from 10 a.m. -12 p.m. at Macon State College. The exact location will be given on a later date.

Meeting Adjourned at approximately 12 p.m.

Minutes Submitted by Jason Wynn