

CISS Meeting – September 24, 2021

Participants: Alexandrite Lee, Stacie Barrett, Brett Reichert, Charlene Graham, Cheryl Park, Davd [Family Name Unknown], Ivan Nikolov, Jason Wynn, Jody Pritt, Justine Jernigan, Joline Keevy, Kathleen Kirk, Kathryn Gaylord-Miles, LD Newman, Nneka Osakwe, Ralitsa Akins, Robin Catmur-Smith, Tina Rousselot de Saint Ceran, Ryan Packard, Scott Bleiweis, Tammy Rosner

USG updates – Tammy Rosner noted that there is a committee reviewing English proficiency options for admission, especially some of the new online options. The review of intensive English programs that is done every three years will start in November after it was postponed last year. Tammy also reminded everyone to send her Sprintax code numbers by October 1.

Committee business – [January meeting minutes](#) were approved.

Open Discussion - Attendees were asked to share initial impressions of fall trends and concerns that they were seeing on campus.

- Enrollment – Several institutions noted that they are seeing international student enrollment bounce back and in some cases, have increased enrollment over Fall 2019. Scholar numbers are still down in some cases.
- Staffing – Many institutions are hiring for ISSS positions currently, more positions available in the field than in a long time. However, several institutions noted that ISSS staffing positions or positions with campus partners that support international populations have been cut or replaced with lower-level staffing positions. General concerns noted about the availability of support services for international populations in light of these cuts.
- Programming – Several offices reported operating with hybrid schedules and programming options. Jody Pritt from GSU reported very high interest in in-person programming. Kate Kirk from GT commented on high institutional demand for outdoor spaces & some occasional issues when events are moved indoors due to weather or other concerns.
- Mental health – Lots discussion of how to support students and scholars. Several examples were given, including bringing in graduate assistants from social work or counseling programs, establishing regular outreach to certain populations (like check-in calls for scholars) and collaborating more extensively with campus partners to facilitate services and leverage their expertise.
- CARE Act funds – Robin Catmur-Smith from UGA noted that there was misinformation circulating on campus about international students and eligibility for the CARE Act funds. They are not considered public charge benefits.
- NIEs & visas – Mixed reports on scholars getting NIEs. Some issues noted with NIEs for unfunded positions. Also some concern about denials for Chinese nationals, especially those with funding from the Chinese Scholarship Council. Ryan Packard from Clayton mentioned a meeting he recently attended with Homeland Security Investigations that talked about some of the security concerns DHS perceives are related to Chinese nationals and offered to share the slides with anyone interested.
- Online courses – Concerns about courses being moved online & potential impact of compliance for international students. Tina Rousselot de Saint Ceran from GT reminded everyone of the

[letter sent to NAFSA on May 14 with potential flexibilities with online enrollment](#). Robin Catmur-Smith from UGA noted that there are differing levels of institutional comfort with relying on that letter and weighing possible risks to students if an institution has declared itself to be “back to normal.”

Announcements

- Kathryn Gaylord-Miles asked about interest in a stand-alone presentation or collegial conversation on DSO liability. There was interest, Kathryn will work to organize.
- Professional development opportunities coming up with NAFSA, including all-regional summit next month & opportunity to submit poster proposals to the annual conference.
- Scott Bleiweis from Georgia Southern indicated that GAIE is looking for volunteers, especially to help organize its conference. Contact gaie.contact@gmail.com if interested.