

Committee on International Students and Scholars (CISS)
September 20th, 2019 Minutes
Middle Georgia State University, Macon, GA. | 12:30pm, PSC Rm. 212

Chair: Brett Reichert- University of West Georgia

Vice Chair: Jason Wynn, Georgia College and State University

Member at Large: Veronique Barnes, Georgia State University - Perimeter College

Member at Large: Janet Crane, Columbus State University

In attendance: 22

Albany State - Ronald Cetuute, Nora Nneka Osakwe

College of Coastal Georgia - Carla Bluhm

Columbus State University - Janet Crane

Dalton State College - Ray Smith

Fort Valley State University - George Norton

Georgia College & State University - Susie Ramage

Georgia Gwinnett College - Alexa Lee, Cheryl Park

Georgia Institute of Technology - Tina Rousselot de Saint Ceran

Georgia Southern University - Tanya Brakhage, Audrey Faulkner

Georgia Southwestern State University - John Fox

Georgia State University - Veronique Barnes

Kennesaw State University- Lyonka Straun-Valez, Kathryn Gaylords Miles, Aleksandra Ninova-Parris

University of Georgia - Robin Catmur

University of North Georgia - Sheila Shulte

University of West Georgia – Brett Reichert

Valdosta State University - Danielle Bacud

University System of Georgia – Tammy Rosner

CALL TO ORDER, 12:35 PM – Brett Reichert

- Brett confirmed quorum with 13 institutions represented beyond those on the Executive committee, allowing to move forward with proceedings
- Brett announced the completion of his and Veronique’s 3-year term today w voting on replacements to occur later in the meeting.
- Attendees introduced themselves
- Brett noted correction to the agenda sent out: meeting starts at 12:30 and Item number 7 references Insurance waiver across the USG, not UWG.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

- Brett called for a motion to approve the minutes. There was a motion and the motion was seconded. The minutes were approved.

New Business

1. USG Update, Tammy Rosner, Director

- a. Sprintax will be renewed. Provide any feedback about Sprintax to Tammy. Tammy will email schools in the next few weeks requesting code amounts. For questions, email Neil Duffy.

- b. Sections 4.2.1.2 and 4.2.1.6. of the BOR Policy are new sections that cover international Freshmen and Transfers with information about how admission for these categories should work.

BOR started but stopped collecting information using Fi and Ti codes because the BOR policy was going to change. Academic and Student Affairs Handbook provides guidance on how to implement the policy. Legal has removed the guidance, so the policy is now only policy with no guidance or interpretation. Academic and Student Affairs Handbook is next. Sections 3.1.1.2 and 3.1.1.6 are still the same but will need some adjusting based on the new policy. Tammy will communicate with the committee that worked on this previously to further define how the Fi and Ti codes will be used and standardized.

- c. SHIP is no longer under Student Affairs and Cori Loftis. It is with HR now. All schools are using the same vendor but different plans. PGH fate unknown, but PGH needed for small campuses.
 - Tina – issues with SHIP allowing scholars to enroll in the plan. Concern that PGH is not ACA compliant and scholars would have to pay tax penalty. Advocacy needed when selecting insurance plan for USG schools to consider the needs of international students. Can recommendations about insurance go forth from the CISS committee? Tammy confirmed that 2 reps in the room were on the RFE committee. Domestic graduate students seems to have priority with HR. Tammy is limited in ability to advocate because insurance is no longer in her area. Agreed advocacy is needed and small schools must speak up about need for PGH.
 - KSU also had challenges with insurance waivers; lack of support from HR.
 - John Fox – GSW – lack of support on campus and he helps students with insurance beyond his job requirement. They use PGH Global for students and scholars. Student Accounts assistance was good. They’ve had good experience with PGH Global.
 - Tammy - USG schools must be prepared to advocate on our own.
 - GA College - Jason and Suzie help students. Students are confused about the enrollment and re-enrollment process each semester. Repeat enrollment process is not user friendly.
 - Danielle Bacud prepares students for the high cost and difference between US insurance and home insurance. Tells them about high cost of medical care if something happens. Sends reminders every semester to enroll.
- d. English Language program reviews conducted every two years and will be conducted in 2020, likely fall. If a program has changed, there is a form on USG website to report changes.
 - Reminder about English Language Proficiency Test Scores - Schools can only accept the paper version of TOEFL test which started phasing out in October 2017 to October 2019. The new scores do not concord to the TOEFL IBT. Do not accept TOEFL paper-based score that say “revised paper delivered test” at the top. There are a few countries that must use the paper test; Contact Tammy if you have such a case.
 - All USG approved campus based ESL programs are on the USG website. If students get a certificate of completion, all USG schools except UGA and Ga Tech, accept that as proof of English proficiency. Remind admissions offices to enter the English proficiency method in Banner that went into effect summer 2017. Tammy will pull data to see which tests are being used, score ranges, to determine if scores need to be adjusted lower or higher.
 - Cheryl – Some students have a double code and are asked if both codes can be entered.

- Tammy will ask the data governance Committee at the System office for guidance, but it's okay to enter multiple codes if allowed as it allows reporting to show students need coding in multiple ways. There is a GA Best Practices Manual on how to enter English Proficiency at admission. Tammy will forward it to whomever needs it.
- e. Demographics conversation happening at the USG –For the next 5-6 years USG is sustaining its demographics of 18 year olds and our numbers are not dropping as fast as nationwide. Overall college admissions will go down and colleges will be competing for the same students. Beef up international student recruitment efforts now to help deal with downturn in US high school student numbers/demographic drop so we'll be ready to capitalize on it. USG is focusing on adult learners, but Tammy encourages pushing for international student recruitment.
- f. Let Tammy know if we have any workshop requests. MGSU Facilities available.
 - Cheryl - international student recruitment sessions offered over the summer were helpful especially since Study GA not active. Tammy will consider refreshing that workshop.
 - There was a request for VOLP workshop. Tammy shared that VOLP audits are being done. Scenarios presented to Tammy are very specific and because of the complexities she can only answer in very broad terms. Need someone at the System Office with immigration knowledge to respond to VOLP related matters. Tammy will check into VOLP training if really needed but uncertain it can be done.
 - Robin – UGA getting through audits very well, but they are raising uncomfortable questions by auditors about re-verifying student status. Tammy stated that the FAQ's are clear that VOLP is only needed at admission or again if student is re-admitted.
 - Tammy did an Immigration 101 presentation at System HR meeting last year and, at the request of some schools, she and Sarah plan to recreate that session for Tuition Classification officers.
 - Tina - talked with Tech administrators about possibility of signing on [Washtech Lawsuit](#) and would need USG approval. Tammy said it goes higher than USG – legal affairs is completely briefed and to date no institutions have contacted Tammy or the USG about wanting to sign on. If an institution is interested in signing on their legal affairs office and their president will need to contact Tammy and Chris McGraw at the system office. Chris will need to present that to the Attorney General of the state of Georgia because we are a state entity. The Attorney General would have to sign-off on that so it may be difficult to do, but let Tammy know.

2. J-1 English Language Assessment, Requirements & Practices in the USG- submitted item

Brett - J-1 programs require English Language assessment but with little guidance on execution.

- g. Robin Catmur – UGA implemented a new process 2 years ago, because for primarily unfunded J-1 scholars they were getting statements from departments that the scholar speaks English but they were discovering that the scholars had poor understanding. New process requires an interview with a TESOL certified instructor to prove they meet minimum requirements referenced in the regs. UGA's College of Education's Language and Literacy Department providing the service and charge \$70 per interview and they obtain a certificate. Regulations allow a statement or letter from academic institution that certifies English ability. UGA only

takes a letter if the person graduated from an ESL program at that school or from an institution where they worked or studied in English.

- h. Tina – GA Tech doing similar screening on campus through English Department. They charge approx. \$90, department not allowed to screen.
- i. Brett – A service provider did a presentation at a previous SCIE meeting. Tammy – Provider is Great Scholars, but no interest from schools to use them. Great Scholars could benefit schools that don't have in-house options.
- j. Robin – UGA is keeping screening in house to keep cost lower and works. Scholars can also get 1-2 tutoring sessions from the same TESOL certified instructors.
- k. Janet - Columbus State was letting departments do it but since the regulations were updated they are working with ELI to do the screening at no charge.
- l. Brett – Graduate students in language education / ESOL / Linguistics may be an option, would not need to get paid, and there is no regulation about who does the screening.
- m. KSU – Someone with TESOL training in office currently doing screening, but looking at options.
- n. Brett – Can be a project for the next chair to gather data from System, from schools with the resources, and professional resources to create a landing space with information about this service for a fee for USG schools to use.

3. Enrollment Trends – submitted item

- Fall 2019 vs. Fall 2018 or prior
- o. Brett – F-1 enrollment increased slightly, J-1 down significantly. Overall down slightly. Two visa denials were from Pakistan.
- p. Sheryl – GA Gwinnett – up 50% due to more knowledge of programs, more visa denials from Vietnam.
- q. Tina – Visa denials up from China but not impacting overall enrollment.
- r. Ronald – Albany State - enrollment up due to better understanding of international admissions process. Fixing process resulted in 94% increase in international student enrollment. Lost students due to consolidation with Darton State. Visa denials from Nigeria up.
- s. Dr. Osakwe - Albany State – Since last year 12-14 visa denials from Nigeria. A grant allowed her to do a presentation at the Embassy for students interested studying in the States, many applied, but almost all denied.
- t. Brett – It's a challenge when departments offer graduate assistantships and do not communicate with the international office. Advised that we educate administrators, faculty, departments, etc. about the long process for international students to get here to help mitigate some problems. Continue to advocate for bringing students to our campuses. This will help offset the inevitable drop on domestic students Tammy referenced.
- u. Dr. Osakwe – lesson learned from talking with consular officers – Schools need to have more one on one with students we admit and make them aware of questions they may be asked. Examples: Why did you choose this school as opposed to X? Why did you apply to only one school? If you applied to 3 schools, what is the reason for choosing this one? Consular officers are very specific and thorough. Direct students to research the website to know the school and their program. They may just get one question and they must be prepared to answer with knowledge and confidence in a way that clearly demonstrates non-immigrant intent.
- v. Brett – resources are available on the internet regarding what to expect and how to prepare for the visa interview.

4. International Education Week discussion: ideas, costs, collaborations – submitted item
 - Brett - IEW is an initiative of the US Department of State and US Department of Education. It can be done in alternate weeks as long as we do something. Official IEW week is same time as NAFSA Region VII this year. Tammy collects info on what schools are doing across the system and has a collection of past program ideas.
 - Linnea Tighe at UGA has a website to help with collaborations. Robin is varying events the week before and after NAFSA.
 - GGC – Observe IEW in October due to Study Abroad deadlines.
 - Passport application workshops and cross campus collaboration
 - KSU - First time celebrating IEW. Out of the International office with cross campus collaboration.
 - Albany State – African Union Ambassador coming to campus for IEW as part of internationalization project, and they want to make it a community event.
 - Brett – working with student gov. is an untapped treasure at West GA. Try to get an advocate in your SGA.
 - GA College – SGA president studied abroad and is a member of int'l club and international club is in charge of IEW. Student outreach resulted in great collaboration between faculty and staff.
 - Brett - Send bullet points of events to Tammy to highlight activities when she requests it, include posters, etc.

5. WashTech Lawsuit & USG Institutions. <https://www.nafsa.org/professional-resources/browse-by-interest/stem-opt-washtech-litigation> – submitted item

Washtech Lawsuit - a union of tech workers in the state of Washington suing the federal government, specifically Homeland Security, over work authorization for student on F-1 visas. Opens the opportunity for any institution that hosts F-1 students to sign on to the brief. Tina added the original case just looked at STEM extensions, but now this looks at USCIS jurisdiction of 12 month OPT. If there is a negative finding it could impact students' ability to engage in OPT. Tech will try to sign on.

6. Presidential Waivers, Admin and Procedures across the USG – submitted

Brett – can the topic of administration and procedures for presidential waivers, insurance waivers, out of state waivers be packaged together for a workshop for schools with experience, interest, and needs to determine what needs attention?

Tammy - Presidential Exception and Tuition Waiver fall under Sarah Wenham. Sarah may already be on campuses doing this kind of presentation with admissions offices. Administrative waivers for insurance are done somewhat differently at every campus, some international offices have administrative abilities with insurance waivers.

7. Insurance Waivers, Admin and Procedures across the USG – submitted
 - KSU - Insurance Waivers go through the international office. Approx. 2/3 waive out of SHIP due to cost. They can use PGH Global. Students use lots of different waivers. Staff currently review all waivers. Tammy – the way the waiver is set up students go in to the system and answer questions about their alternate policy. Institution is required to audit 5- 10% of the waivers every year. No need to check every waiver. If during audit you discover students with inadequate coverage, put them on SHIP and whatever other measures for your campus.

- West GA does not review insurance policies.
- GA College reviews insurance policies
- GA Gwinnett also reviews insurance policies. They help student with the process because it is complex. Process slowly being taken out of International office and controlled by Student Accounts. Students being told they must waive out prior to arriving for the purpose of reconciling accounts by the payment deadline. Tammy suggested requesting to have F-1 students on a “no drop list”. Suggested talking with Lynn Miller GGC’s Technology Enrollment person.
- Brett – at current and previous institution new F and J students are placed on a “no drop list” for the first payment deadline. They focus a lot on educating what that means because students will continue to get the automated notices about the deadline and being dropped. Requires good communication for students to understand they are not impacted. This gives students more time to complete waiver process if needed.
- Danielle – Valdosta – Institutional policy is if balance on the account is the insurance premium then they don’t get dropped, but they must pay tuition and fees.
- John Fox - GSW – Waiver process is tough for ESL and new F and J students to understand.
- Sheila – Students should be prepared to pay for insurance as that expense is reflected on the I-20. Liability to help students with waivers. Best to let students do their own waivers and have the SHIP representative review policies.
- Tammy - SHIP@USG.edu for more explanation of how the waiver works. Each campus has a SHIP representative. To know who your SHIP representative is, email Tammy.rosner@usg.edu.
- Brett – if your school does not have a non-drop agreement, request it, and schools that have a non-drop agreement can be a resources for any school interested in implementing it. It’s a confusing topic so share this process before the student arrives. Explain the requirements, process, and timeline well to new students.
- John – PR in ELI without insurance. The Exchange was recommended.

8. Flex Time for Exempt Staff – submitted

- Brett - What are schools doing to manage staff flex time needs? Comp time and flex time are different. Compensatory time is time one must be paid for and flex time swaps time for time so it balances out. Not suggesting creating a policy.
- UGA – have a flex time policy in line with what UGA allows. Flex time policy has to be on file and approved by associate provost and HR an approved modified schedule.
- Tina- referenced a NY Times article addresses how generation Z coming into the workforce is challenging us to think about how to get work done. Tina suggested that if you allow staff to do remote work, think of office coverage, request that they tell you what they will work on from home, and have paperwork in the office to back that up. Would have to be in line with university policy and cleared by HR.
- Sheila– UNG – has allowed flex time for staff – this must be discussed in advanced, scheduled and completed in the same month and not time built up, and it is an equal swap of hours. With small staff anyone out has an impact so important to consider how to best serve students.

9. CISS Elections: Chair and Member-at-Large

- o Chair nominees:

1. Katheryn Gaylord Miles
2. Drew Webster - GSU
3. Kate Kirk– GA Tech

Elections were conducted with a quorum by ballot vote for chair after nominee introductions. Drew Webster and Kate Kirk were not present but their bios were provided. Tina presented a brief bio of Kate Kirk. Katheryn Gaylord Miles was voted in as chair.

- Member at Large nominee: Dr. Ray Smith, Dalton - Selected by motion as only candidate.

10. Upcoming Conferences

- NAFSA Region VII, Orlando, FL, Nov. 17-20 nafsa.org/conferences/regional/2019-region-vii-conference
- GAIE, Winter Conference 2020, Feb. 6-7, Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, GA. Registration \$135 includes 4 meals. Lodging extra cost. Early Registration ends: Dec. 15, 2019, gaie.org/winter-conference-2020.html
- NAFSA Advocacy Day, Washington, D.C. , March 18 - 19, 2020
- GILC – Feb 21-23, 2020, in Covington, GA. <https://gilc.weebly.com/> There will be an Advisor Track
- Lessons from Abroad Conference, West GA, Oct.13
- International Student Retention Micro grant, available March 2020.

11. Other issues / job announcements / Next Meeting

- Tina- students have been turned away at POE nationwide and have had visas revoked. GA Tech had a case. Be sure to communicate in pre-arrival information about the mobile device and laptop searches being conducted at POEs. If phones wiped prior to process can cause problems at POE. NAFSA Advisor Manual has information about mobile device and laptop search.

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 PM