Global Steering Committee (GSC) Minutes  
September 24, 2020  
1:30pm – 3pm


Members Not Present: Nicole Asal, Bill Gordon, Rosaria Pisa

Gifty opened meeting with general thanks to faculty and staff for the extraordinary work being done during this challenging semester due to COVID-19 pandemic.

**Agenda Item #1**  
**COVID-19 and International Student Enrollment – fall 2020**

Bo Gillie gave an overview of undergraduate fall 2020 enrollment numbers of international students, which are better than expected given the pandemic. URI did not take a big dip in numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admits</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matriculated</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Matric</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
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Graduate application and enrollment numbers are also positive. There are 32 new international graduate students enrolled at URI and 13 enrolled but taking online classes from their home country. There was a question about numbers of admitted graduate international students vs number enrolled. Cara Mitnick from the Graduate School will look into this and provide for GSC at future meeting. It was recommended that URI try to keep admitted students, who were not able to enroll because of pandemic, engaged with the university so that they might enroll in the future.

Bo Gillie taking part in a new initiative with the Graduate School to provide expanded international recruitment. Dean DeBoef, new interim Dean of Graduate School, wants to be more innovative with graduate school recruitment. Bo will assist and participate in some new strategies for international recruitment.

Recognition was given to the International Center for their comprehensive advising and support for new international students, particularly the German dual-degree students, in terms of arrival and pick-up, housing and quarantine issues and visa issues.
**Agenda Item #2**  
**International Travel Review Committee (ITRC)/Policy on International Travel**

The ITRC is a new committee, chaired by Gifty, and has met twice so far. This committee is charged with making recommendations on policy and decisions related to international university-related travel for students, faculty and staff. Currently, the restrictions on university-related business travel for faculty/staff are extended until the end of 2020. This will be re-evaluated for spring 2021 after January 1st. The ITRC recommends remote/virtual contact at this time, with health and safety most important. However, the ITRC developed a petition for faculty/staff who want to travel before then. The petition can be completed by the faculty/staff who want to travel and is reviewed by the members of the ITRC. A decision on whether to approve travel is based upon many factors including university risk level tolerance, CDC recommendations, State Department recommendations and advisories, and the individual situation of the faculty/staff member. Thus far, one faculty member has petitioned and it was approved.

An updated copy of URI’s Policy on International Travel was emailed to members of the Global Steering Committee before this meeting. After years of ad hoc decision-making, URI now has a solid policy to follow. Staff at the URI Coastal Research Center travel internationally often on USAID grants. USAID does not make policy for the institution, therefore URI’s new travel policy and the creation of the ITRC is most helpful as they make decisions on travel.

URI had five Fulbright’s this year, which are supported by the US Department of State. Two students were cleared to travel to Belgium and the UK. There has been an increase in the number of graduate students applying for Fulbright. The question was brought up on whether a student would be able to travel internationally if approved by the Dept. of State, but was not supported by a current URI policy. It would be a decision for the ITRC.

**Agenda Item #3**  
**Study Abroad Planning for 2021-2022**

Tom Hospod gave a recap of the events from January to March on study abroad. There were 200 students abroad in spring 2020 and, when the pandemic hit, all except for 5 students returned to the US. (3 stayed in Australia and had to sign a waiver.) URI did not have an institutional policy at the time regarding this type of situation. Out of the 200, all except for 9 earned credit, mostly full credit for the semester. The courses switched to online when they returned to the US. Most got some sort of refund for expenses such as meal plans, housing, etc.

Study Abroad programs are cancelled for fall 2020 and for J-term 2021. Many overseas providers have cancelled, some closing businesses. Australia and New Zealand already announced they will not allow students to study abroad there in spring 2021.

Passport agencies are still backlogged (1 million passports). Visa offices slowly opening but still slow.

There is diminished optimism for study abroad for spring 2021. URI is trying to pivot to some online study abroad programs. Does not seem to be much interest in these, except for Chinese Flagship Program.
URI will have to look at best practices and guidelines to make decision about future study abroad for students in spring 2021. The ITRC is devising a checklist to help make this decision.

The IEP (International Engineering Program) and the ISD (International Studies and Diplomacy Program) need to advise their students on academic plans moving forward. Both programs require study abroad. The following dates were suggested for making a decision on study abroad:

- October 1 Deadline for decision about spring 2021 study abroad
- February 1 Deadline for decision about summer 2021 study abroad
- May 1 Deadline for decision about fall 2021 study abroad

The members of the Global Steering Committee voted to approve these dates. Each date gives students time to change plans (do an internship, graduate in a different semester, etc.) It is important to advise students to register for courses and sign up for housing on campus as a contingency plan, if study abroad plans do not materialize.

Many programs are trying to be as flexible as possible, with full-refund options. There are now insurance policies where a student can “cancel for any reason” and get a refund. However, they can be costly.

URI Housing already getting inquiries about spring availability. Some of the off-campus (hotel) options for fall will not be available for spring. Therefore, there will be reduced availability of on-campus housing in spring 2021 and maybe next fall. International students in on-campus housing may not be able to leave at Thanksgiving as is being encouraged, so questions on housing and quarantine, if they leave for a short period of time, are being discussed.

**Agenda Item #4**

**Global Mobility Travel Grants for 2021**

Gifty oversees the review and distribution of these grants. Because of COVID-19, the funds that were allocated for 2020 were not used and were returned. The Provost has approved a new round of grant funding for 2021. All funds will need to be used by July 1, 2021. Because of international travel restrictions, the proposals from faculty may include global engagement that is virtual. It was suggested that the new application have a question that asks if the faculty member did receive a grant for 2020 and was unable to use it. Funds are only for faculty use, not for student use. The call for proposals should go out soon.

**Agenda Item #5**

**Technical University Braunschweig/Technical University Darmstadt Matching Funds Application Cycle**

Because of COVID-19, travel was suspended and collaborations between TUBS and TUDA were postponed. Question of whether URI still has the matching funds was asked. These are Carnegie funds, so the deadline should be more flexible. URI needs to get in touch with partners to inquire on how they would like to proceed.