Global Steering Committee (GSC) Minutes
December 6, 2018
1:30pm – 3pm

Members present: Gifty Ako-Adounvo, Nicole Asal, Jenny Audette, Laura Beauvais, Sigrid Berka, Tom Boving, Shaw Chen, Linda Foley-Vinay, Donna Gamache-Griffith, Bo Gillie, Haibo He, Norbert Hedderich, Tom Hospod, Kristin Johnson, Kathleen Maher, Cara Mitnick, Nancy Stricklin, Elin Torell

Members Not Present: Bill Gordon, Diane Martins, Princess Metuge, Rosaria Pisa, Karen Sherman, Nasser Zawia

Jenny Audette
The Committee recognized Jenny Audette’s last meeting. She is leaving URI at the end of the semester to begin a new position at the University of New England in Portland, Maine.

Chairs’ Forum presentation – Gifty Ako-Adounvo
Gifty shared her upcoming presentation (December 7th) for the Chairs’ Forum with the Committee. Below is the general description and questions that she had prepared. Her key areas of discussion:

• Wanting to have URI look at global differently, create a culture change, too often in silos
• URI is doing excellent work globally, but it is like 1000 points of light, need to bring together to focus into a “beam.”
• Find out what the priorities are from the Chairs. Engage in dialogue with them.

Creating the Global Commons at URI

The Global Commons is a space, a culture, a state of mind, a way of being and doing that is inclusive, encourages, facilitates, and supports the multi-dimensional facets of our global enterprise. What will success look like in this space? What other questions should we be asking? The Chairs’ forum on December 7 is an opportunity for dialogue around this big idea.

Questions for consideration:

What are our strategic priorities?
How do we decide where we invest our effort and resources?
How do we create funding streams for faculty and student international research?
How do we identify programs and partnerships that work?
How do we leverage our alumni resources at home and abroad?

University of Braunschwig Orchestra
Sigrid shared the request from T.U. Braunschwig for URI to host their 80 member wind orchestra, most of whom are current or former student or employees of TU Braunschwig, at URI September 25-26th. They would perform on campus and need some support with housing and meals. This university is one of URI’s oldest partners, actively exchanging students since 1999. The Global Steering Committee unanimously supported the idea of them coming to URI. Recommendation from the Committee was to find a hotel in Providence with reduced rate. Many details of this visit will need to be arranged. Sigrid will get a smaller group together to work on this.
Reflections on International Students’ experiences at URI – Linda Foley-Vinay

As Director of the Cambridge Education Group pathway program at URI, which will be closing its site in August 2019 due to low enrollment, Linda shared her insights after working closely with undergraduate international students on campus. Committee members gave feedback. Observations include:

- Students think facilities at URI are beautiful, campus is safe, STEM program selections very exciting for students.
- Harrington School provides excellent courses and experiences for students.
- Students feel welcome at URI. Most live in Barlow Hall. Residence life staff has been extremely helpful and accommodating.
- Welcome Week very helpful.
- Intramural athletics a significant way for students to connect. Good participation.

Some challenges have been:

- Brand recognition internationally for URI is weak. Lots of competition among top rated schools. Difficult to recruit enough students to sustain the program at URI. Discussion of how to improve URI’s ranking occurred, noting that many factors are not able to be controlled. Recommended to expose faculty to international partners when they travel abroad, so that there is an academic connection for prospective students.
- While Welcome Week was helpful, suggest keep doing a day trip more often (Walmart, Newport, Boston, etc.)
- Students not prepared to spend the amount needed for books and other course materials. Some think books are included in cost of tuition. STEM books very expensive. Can faculty put copy of text on reserve?
- Some students don’t all bring laptops and try to do papers on their phone. They need to be better prepared. (suggest peer-to-peer pre-arrival advising)
- Some faculty not prepared on how to teach/deal with international students in their classes. Suggest workshops for them, they need a toolkit on how to teach international students.
- Four-year cost of URI education is high. Some arrive and then immediately try to get a job on campus. (Example of one student who works in dining hall, was “adopted” by cafeteria women and had an excellent experience there.)
- Breaks at URI – while residence halls are open, there is no dining. During J-term there is a Grab’n Go, but not much selection, per the students. Campus can feel too empty. Even though URI is marketed as being close to Boston and New York City, some students feel too isolated in Kingston, both during the academic year and during breaks. (Rochester and UConn both built little “cities” on their campus to combat this same problem.)
- Students sometimes have mental health issues. While there has been support for students, there is a lack of Counseling Center appointments available for all students.
- Hours of some important offices are reduced (example of Counseling Center and International Center’s hours). This can cause difficulty for students because they are in class most of the day.
- Need more direct buses to Providence and Newport? RIPTA might be able to work with URI on this.

Spring Semester 2019 Planning

The first meeting of the spring semester will be a planning session, using the Academic Plan 2016-2021, Goal 3. Members will receive the plan with updates on progress prior to the first meeting, and prepare to identify next steps moving forward.