Update/Overview of URI Global by Gifty Ako-Adounvo

Since her arrival five week ago, the new Vice Provost for Global Initiatives and Chair of the Global Steering Committee, Gifty Ako-Adounvo, has been on a self-described “listening tour”, getting to hear from staff, faculty, students, deans, and administrators. She is developing a proposal of her vision of URI Global and will present to the Provost’s team in a few weeks. It will have a focus on a few key areas:

1) Administrative Structure – may include some re-organization.
   a. Concept of shared positions between Deans and Provost being explored, which allows for better communication and relationship building.
   b. International Center should be at the heart of what URI is doing. Geographically located on edge of campus can create siloes. Considering other locations. Funding sources would be needed.

2) Global Dimensions of Curriculum
   a. Looking at how study abroad is infused into the curriculum.
   b. Recommending revisiting the list of courses with global themes that was put together about 6 years ago.
   c. Explore how faculty can incorporate global themes into their courses, even if it does not include study abroad options.

3) Global website
   a. Gifty has a scheduled meeting soon with John Pennypacker, who oversees the upgrades to URI’s website. She will bring her experience and objective viewpoint to the renovated site. The web is URI’s “front door to the world”. It should look nice, make sense, be intuitive and have a few clicks as possible to get the information needed. Important to drive people to the website to avoid repeating same information in person too many times. More efficient.

4) Support Systems - Need to take a good look at the systems that support international education and programs.
   a. Look at Enrollment Services queries.
   b. Transfer credit from international institutions – can it be built into our existing system, what does our system currently allow us to do.

Overall, Gifty expressed strong belief in building a platform. If the foundation is good, it can be built upon. Think Big!
International Education Week (IEW)
November 11-17th is IEW at URI. There are over 14 events being planned that week, which include a kick-off opening celebration in the Memorial Union from 11:30-2:00 on Tuesday, November 13th. International foods will be served. Gifty will give opening remarks. If any college or department or office has an event to add, contact person in the International Center is Shelly O’Connor. She is going to handle advertising and marketing of events on URI calendars. Suggestions were made of including information on social media, as well as sending a more formal institutional message from Gifty.

Cambridge Education Group (On-Campus RI)
URI’s pathway partner, CEG, has informed the university that they are closing their site on campus. The last enrollment of pathway students will be January 2019 and they will complete the program and close in August 2019. CEG is also closing other sites in the United States. They are based in the UK and have been successful there for many years. Their move into the United States over 5 years ago has not been financially feasible for them to maintain.

International Student Enrollment – Challenges at Undergraduate and Graduate levels
URI has seen a decline in the number of applications from international students at both the undergraduate and graduate level in the past year. Reasons for this include but are not limited to:

- Current political situation in the US.
- Visa delays causing students to avoid trying to go to the US.
- Visa denials are on the increase. (almost 100% denial rate in Iran)
- Travel ban had a negative message.
- International students come to US and then fear leaving because they might not be allowed to re-enter, so they cannot go home to visit.
- Current US administration looking at removing the “duration of status”, so a student would have to reapply annually for renewal of their student visa.
- Competition growing. China is heavily funding international students to study there. New Zealand, Australia and the Netherlands reaching out and providing funding, support and many opportunities for international students.
- URI has a branding problem internationally. Many do not know where we are located, often confused with “Long Island” in New York.

What can URI do to increase international student enrollment?

- Make clear to international students that URI has an embracing and positive attitude and environment.
- Target areas of the world with perceived new growth and interest, such as Latin America and Africa.
- Build infrastructure at URI for international students. Improve transportation options. Suggestion to do a brief Needs Assessment Survey with international students to determine areas of needed improved services. If current international students have a positive experience, they share with friends and family and word spreads that URI is a welcoming and supportive place to study. This word of mouth helps tremendously with recruitment.
- Utilize current URI students studying abroad to help with recruitment. Example given of a URI student helping out at a college fair in London last fall.
• Expand number of 2+2 type programs, such as the program with ZUEL in China. This model has been successful for 5 years. These students do 2 years in China and then transfer to URI for last 2 years. This provides steady and sustainable stream of approximately 25 students per year into the College of Business Finance Program.

• Create activities and programs for international students on campus that include domestic students. (Example given of a faculty member leading a trip to Nashville at Ohio State. Group of students was half international students and half US. Learning was deliberate but fun. Students did many exercises together to get to know each other. This was free for all participants.)

• Funding needed for building capacity. Possible extra fee for students for international activities being explored.

• Summer Institutes for international students already exist. Expand? Potential for revenue stream.

• URI now has an official office in the Philippines. Grand opening in November. Dr. Dooley will attend ceremony. Perhaps take advantage of this for recruitment activities.

**Academic Strategic Plan 2017-2021**

The Committee briefly reviewed the prioritized Strategies that had been selected by the members in spring 2018. Updates of progress were discussed. Further discussion on how to continue progress will take place at future meetings.

Below are the top three Strategies and Actions that had been selected with an update on progress:

**Strategy 1 - Articulate and prioritize internationalization in institution-wide strategic plans and faculty hires**

- Establish global committees and/or task forces within each college and division to monitor and assess progress of internationalization plans, including benchmarking with similar units at other institutions.

  *(Nancy gave overview to committee on why this was included in the proposed actions. Important for each college to articulate their global engagements/initiatives. Example of Global Committee in the College of Business was used. Gifty shared that many of the Deans were integrating global now into their strategic plans.)*

**Strategy 5 – Expand support structures and efforts to increase numbers of domestic students engaging in an international education experience and the successful recruitment, enrollment and retention of international students**

- Provide comprehensive support and inclusion for enrolled international graduate and undergraduate students (e.g., advising, peer support and organizations at the University and College levels, Peer Ambassador program, expanded housing options)

  *(Gifty emphasized importance of this and shared that this is a key issue for her moving forward. If students have a positive experience at URI,)*
the word of mouth will help to encourage more students to come to URI. Example of progress here includes the new full-time position posted this week for a Coordinator of International Student Services in the International Center. The Global Steering Committee had drafted a job description and had formally requested to the Provost to add this position to the Center last spring. There will need to be an operating budget for this position. Gifty explained that many universities use a model of charging a special fee to international students for programming. Others use a fee across the board. This is being looked at by administration.

- Effectively integrate study abroad into the curriculum by engaging advisors to communicate opportunities to students as well as providing effective preparation for students’ global learning (e.g., introducing cross-cultural course options delivered prior, during and/or after the students’ study abroad experiences)

(It was reviewed that the Committee had invited Linda Moffat, Assistant Dean, University College for Academic Success and Kim White, Director of Academic Advising, University College for Academic Success to the last spring 2018 meeting to begin the discussion.)

Results and updates of this meeting (taken from April 2018 minutes) are as follows:

1) Add question to Pink Sheet (an advising profile sheet that is filled out by students on first day of orientation) about whether they are interested in studying abroad. This pink sheet is used by the advisor on day two of orientation to help select classes. **(Already done since meeting.)**

2) Present a workshop/training for professional advisors on what they need to know to advise students with questions. Include information about J-term, summer programs, spring break programs, international internships, international volunteer experiences. Staff from Office of International Education can work with Kim White to schedule accordingly. Advisors have weekly staff meetings on Thursdays. In fall 2018, all 120 sections of URI 101 will be visited or taught by a professional advisor. Good opportunity to spread the word about URI’s opportunities for international educational experiences. *(Staff at OIE has been visiting many of the URI 101 classes to give information about study abroad opportunities.)*

3) Impress on students that if they are considering an international experience, it is recommended that they start studying a language in freshman year. Sometimes sophomore year is too late to begin study and get to a preferred level of proficiency. Suggestion that someone from languages attend a weekly professional advisors meeting to explain in more detail. *(Norbert Hedderich followed up and attended a professional advisors’ staff meeting with other language faculty to emphasize importance of starting language in freshmen year.)*