International Education Council

Meeting Minutes
September 5th, 2025
Blair Hall Conference Room 3108

Members present: Krishna Daravath, Miracle Langston, Catherine Polydore, Kristin Brown, Dave Viertel, Jessica Tindira

Members absent: Lisa Brooks, David Melton, Gopal Periyannan, Micheal Beck, Kiran Padmaraju

Ex-officio present: Angela Jacobs, Tanya Willard, Andy Kabasele

Ex-officio absent: Andrew Kerins

Visitors present: Heather Crank, Ellie Bush, Ben Reinbolt

I. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Kristin Brown called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM. Minutes were approved by a voice vote Dave Viertel and Jessica Tindira. The Board decided to wait on approving the minutes from May due to not receiving them until Friday morning. Waiting to approve the minutes will allow the board adequate time to review.

Dave Viertel self nominated as Vice Chair for the committee. The motion was seconded by Jessica Tindira, then the vote was approved unanimously.

Dr. Brown brought up a review of the bylaws. The discussion of who currently served on IEC was discussed. The board discussed that we did not have a formal ex-officio seat for Career Services. The question was brought up to the table if the board thought this would be beneficial to the committee. Kristin Brown motioned the addition of an ex-officio to Career Services and the motion was seconded by Dave Viertel which was approved by voice vote from the committee unanimously.

The committee outlined how voting works with discussions of changing the process in the future. Many committee members relayed that important voting voices may not be heard. In addition, there were some voting members absent for voting. A question was also brought up as to why ex-officio were not allowed to vote. The board is going to table this discussion to a later date but will continue to consider this option.

Each of the committees were divided. The Scholarship committee will consist of Lisa Brooks, Dave Viertel, Gopal Periyannan, and Michael Beck. This committee will review the applications for the international scholarships. The Study Abroad Committee will consist of Jessica Tindira, David Melton, and Kristin Brown. This committee will review applications for the study abroad scholarships and study abroad proposals.

II. Reports

1. International Students and Scholars: Mr. Mutombo Andy Kabasele

Mr. Andy Kabasele with International Students and Scholars presented the enrollment. Applications are currently at 2,007 graduate applications with 840 admitted and 2723 undergraduate applications with 1183 admitted. Currently, there are a total of 330 returning international students with 215 continuing students. However, Mr. Kabasele touched on how the visa denial rate is currently 69%. Gambia had the highest rate of visa denial closely followed by India. In addition, the current administration is discussing eliminating Optional Practical Training (OPT) for graduated students.

2. International Programs: Dr. Tanya Willard & Krishna Daravath

Dr. Tanya Willard discussed the successes and challenges of international orientation. For orientation, 45 international students attended, and they were assisted by 6 student ambassadors. In the future, they plan to get rid of the 2 day orientation as fewer students showed up the second day. In addition to shortening orientation, they plan to allow students in the future to pick sessions that are of interest to them.

On behalf of the Association of International Students (AIS), Mr. Krishna Daravath provided an update on orientation from the student perspective. Krishna reported that the orientation went well, and students had a great time. There was ice cream, food, bowling, and more, as well as support from local churches. In the future, Krishna requested that students be given the day off from responsibilities and classes so that everyone can attend the event.

3. Study Abroad: Heather Crank

Mrs. Heather Crank provided an update on faculty led programs, study abroad promotional activities, and study abroad scholarships. See the attached report for more information regarding these topics. Study abroad has many promotional activities coming up. The program received $7000 for scholarships and plans to divide this into 14 scholarships.

III. Dean's Report

Dean Angela Jacobs requests that scholarships be reviewed for the International Student Scholarship. In the future, the scholarship decisions will be moved to the spring semester, so the students have a better idea of what their financial aid looks like. Dean Jacobs is working with the foundation to allocate emergency funds for international students facing economic hardship.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 AM.

IEC Monthly Meeting – 09/05/2025

Faculty Led Programs Update

These are the finalized programs we have thus far.

- Exploration of Italian Business, Technology, History, and Culture – Jay Grabiec and Nic Robinson
- Art in Florence and Rome – Dr. Eskilson and Jenny Chi
- CDS Therapy Abroad in Jamaica – Dr. Throneburg

Tentative Programs – waiting for information (gave a 9/15 deadline to submit proposal)

- Sport Industry in the United Kingdom – Dr. James Barkley

Other Study Abroad Programs and Study Abroad Scholarships on Academicworks

Deadlines for J-Term, Spring Break, Spring Semester: - October 28th

Summer 2025, Faculty Leds – February 11th, 2026

Fall and Academic Year 2025-2026 – March 4th, 2026

Fall 2025 Enrollment

We have 7 Students going abroad this fall.

2 South Korea, Costa Rica, Ireland, Spain, Australia, Germany

AY 2025-2026 Applications (as of 09/05/2025)

1 Student has committed.

Total = 1 Application

Spring 2026 Enrollment (as of 09/05/2025)

5 Students have started their applications for Spring 2026

Total = 5 Applications

J-Term 2026 Enrollment (as of 09/05/2025)

Total = 0 Students

Summer 2026 (as of 09/05/2025)

3 students have started an application

Total = 3 Applications

Faculty Led 2026 (as of 09/05/2025)

Applications for Exploration of Italian Business, Technology, History, and Culture

- 0 Applications

Application for the Art in Florence and Rome Program

- 0 Applications

Applications for the CDS Therapy Abroad in Jamaica program

Fall 2026 Applications (as of 09/05/2025)

1 student has started an application

Total = 1 applications

- 0 Applications

Total = 0 applications

Academic Year 2026-2027 Applications (as of 09/05/2025)

Total = 0 Applications

Total Applications 25-26 as of 09/05/2025 – 17 applications

Study Abroad Promotional Activities – Past

8/22 – Panther Quest - 2-4pm Library
This event was a success. I was able to interact with almost 200 students and give them information on study abroad opportunities.

8/23 – Pantherpalooza
This event was successful! I was able to interact with almost 200 students and give them information on study abroad opportunities. I even got to speak with 6 study abroad alumni as well!

8/27 – Study Abroad Drop-In Hours (Station myself somewhere around campus after office hours)
This was the first in a series of monthly drop ins I will be doing. We had one student stop by at the very end to collect information and schedule an appointment.

9/2 – International Chocolate Tasting
Our Chocolate Tasting was a success! Despite not being able to order as much chocolate as usual, we still had approximately 50 students come and join us for free chocolates and information on study abroad opportunities!

9/3 – Aboriginal Dot Painting
It is possible it was the timing of the event, but no one attended this one. Will try again later in the semester.

Study Abroad Promotional Activities – Future

9/10 – STUDY ABROAD FAIR!! 10am-3pm Library Quad (Rain Location UBR)
Free Hotdogs and Learn About Study Abroad Opportunities! (put Flyer here, attach in email as well)

9/11 – SSA Education Abroad Campus Visit

9/13 – Open House

9/15 – Latino Heritage Month Kickoff – Table at it

9/17 – Study Abroad Drop-In Hours 4pm to 6pm Stevenson Lobby

TENT: 9/19 or 9/26 – Study Abroad for Graduate Students (11am to 1pm) – Waiting for confirmation with GSAC

9/24 – Bio Presentation

9/27 – TRIO Retreat – Tabling and Presentation (anticipated 80 students)

10/1 – Political Science Presentation

10/13 – Open House

10/15 – Study Abroad Drop In Hours (5-7pm Taylor Lobby)

10/21 – USAC Campus Visit

10/21 – Honors Students Information Session 430-530 Taylor Lobby

10/22 – Study Abroad Drop-In Hours 4-6pm Taylor Lobby

10/23 – Harlaxton College Campus Visit

November/ December Tentative Events

11/11 – Open House

12/12 – Admitted Student Day

International Education Week

Photo Contest

Global Food Night

Where are they Now: Study Abroad Alumni Panel

Christmas Event?

Aboriginal Dot Painting

New Scholarship/ New Scholarship Rubric – Can be reviewed by IEC

I am happy to announce that we had a new donor, Carolyn Cooper, started a new scholarship with our office to provide 14 $500 study abroad scholarships! The new scholarship is now on Academicworks for Spring 2026 for students to apply for. It will also be open for Summer and Fall 2026 as well.

I will also be attaching a Study Abroad Scholarship Rubric that members of the Study Abroad Scholarship Committee can use to assist in scholarship review if needed. I am also happy to receive feedback on the rubric as well.

Study Abroad Scholarships Scoring Rubric

When an application is reviewed, all scholarships will have the same 5 questions on Academicworks.

1. Please rate this applicant's financial need. **Please indicate 0 if there is no financial need consideration for this award. **
2. Please rate this applicant's potential for future success based on the application essay, recommendation letters, resume, etc. ** Please indicate 0 if essays, resumes, or recommendation letters were not required. **
3. Please give an overall score of the applicant.
4. Does this applicant meet all the requirements for the scholarship?
5. (Optional) Leave any comments that are relevant to the student's scholarship application.

While these items below are not required for rating scholarships, it may assist you in the overall scoring of the application. We have a system broken down here for optional use.

*Financial Need

a. For a student to demonstrate Financial Need regarding studying abroad, one or more of these criteria need to be met. (Information is obtained from the Forum on Education Abroad)
    i. Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) is 20,000 or less
    ii. In their essays, students state they receive Pell and/or MAP Grants in their FAFSA
    iii. In their essays, students state they are relying on Student Loans and/or Scholarships to pay for their education. (They would not be able to attend college if it were not for the scholarships/loans they have).
    iv. Preferred (not required) In their essays, students state they are a first-generation student (none of the legal guardian(s) that claim the student on their taxes has a bachelor's degree.)

* Essays – Optional to use but could help.
Scholarship essays are scored from 1 to 15 points. We have chosen 5 content items that we believe reflect a quality essay (see table below). Each content item is worth up to 3 points; 1 being the lowest, 3 being the highest. A perfect score is a 15. A "perfect" essay will include each of these topics, and the reviewer will have a good understanding of the student's accomplishments and intentions for study abroad.

Content	**1 point**	**2 points**	**3 points**	
Professional/Academic Gain				
Personal Gain				
How program fits their goals				
Financial Need				
Grammar / Spelling / Structure				
			Total	

* Recommendation letters: Optional to use but could help. Some of our scholarships do not require a letter. If that is the case, then put 0 for the score.

Students are required to submit 1-2 letters of recommendation. Most of our scholarships only require one letter, but a couple require 2 letters. In the case of 2 letters, each letter is scored separately, on a scale of 1 to 15 points and we take the average score. We have been scoring 5, 10, and 15 points as detailed in the paragraph below.

Poor (5 points) Recommender does not appear to know student, or background on why they are applying to study abroad. The length of time they've been acquainted is unclear. The letter does not improve the student's application.

Average (10 points) Recommender has had multiple contacts with student, in class / at work / in the community. Letter improves the student's application by explaining their motives, and their character.

Excellent (15 points) Recommender has a strong relationship to student. Student has impressed the recommender in class / at work / in the community. Letter greatly improves the student's application.

* Resumes: Optional but can help
Students can receive up to 5 points for their resume. We look at:

- current extracurricular activities,
- jobs (on and off campus) and
- campus involvement (including leadership roles).

An example of a "5" would be a student who is President of a club, involved in a sport, holds a work-study position and volunteers on the weekends.

A "3" is a student who is enrolled in several clubs but does not exhibit leadership roles OR someone who is working off campus.

A "1" reflects a poorly structured resume, and no activities outside of EIU.

*Other Notes:

Our scholarships do have a GPA requirement of 2.5, however, I do want to emphasize that students who possess a 2.5 GPA should be review with the same objectivity as a student with a 3.0 or higher. What matters is the student's potential for their success in their study abroad journey.