**MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD**

To: Faculty Senate, Gary Insch, Linda Rouillard, Terry Bigioni, Risa Dickson, President Postel,

Colleen Palmer, Aliyah Kayed, Yash Shingan, Sammy Spann

From: Dr. Deborah Coulter-Harris and Faculty Senate Committee on Student Affairs

Date: 28 March, 2023

Subject: Issues and Solutions: International Student Association (ISA)

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After a review of detailed responses received on 13 September, 2022, from Student Government President Colleen Palmer, and Yash Shingan, Chair of ISA, the FSCSA subcommittee on Issues 3 and 4 (as stated in our original presentation to Faculty Senate in early fall, 2022) began to discuss the following: Lack of awareness/Education about ISA and Faculty/International student communications and relationships. We decided to pose a list of questions for members of ISA to think about, and then held an online Webex meeting on November 21, 2022, with Yash Shingan and Members of ISA.

**The following is a list of ISA’s twelve (12) main issues from FSCSA’s 21 November meeting; FSCSA met afterwards and came up with implementable solutions. If any member of Faculty Senate has further solutions to these stated issues, please email me,** [**Deborah.Coulter-Harris@utoledo.edu**](mailto:Deborah.Coulter-Harris@utoledo.edu)**. (Please note that the names of FSCSA members in red in this memorandum were responsible for the issues being discussed. The assignment to members presenting the PowerPoint may be different as some members cannot attend tonight’s FS meeting.)**

* 1. **Scholarship: (Karen Hoblet)**
     1. Issue: Difficulty finding donor scholarships due to FAFSA[[1]](#footnote-1) requirement. Applications ask if FAFSA has been completed yet, and if you answer no, it says to do that first. International students cannot apply for FAFSA so this stops their ability to apply.
* \*potential solution: create some scholarships that do not have a FAFSA requirement and make this searchable/available to international students for application to asking for FAFSA. No tool to filter out when searching.
  + Trying to contact the Director or Manager of Student Financial Aid to discuss aligned process: Applying for grants and scholarships. Have sent an email; no contact information or person noted on the website. Have sent a message to Rocket Solutions requesting contact email or phone number. No response noted as of 2/6/2023.
  + Anne Yeager, Director of Student Financial Aid Operations responded to the query via Rocket Solutions. Ms. Yeager shared that international students do not qualify for federal student aid, which is the area that she handles. If the questions are more geared towards scholarships, then Angela Roach, Director of Scholarships, and/or Victor Finch, Director of International Admissions, may be able to help. Both Angela and Victor were included on the email sent on 2/7/2023. No response received yet.
  1. **Campus Jobs: (Karen Green and Lucy Duhon)**
     1. Issue: Difficulty finding on campus jobs as they can only compete for work/study positions only. No way to filter for this in search. Need more international students as RA’s and diversity assistants.
* \*potential solution: International students should have proportional representation as RAs in dorms.
  1. **Language Barriers: (Samir Hefzy)**
     1. Issue: Various responses from faculty across campus to student concerns.
* \*potential solution: Need to provide resources for faculty to ensure appropriate response and aid for international students
  1. **Transportation: (Sarah Aldrich)**
     1. Issue: Most international students don't drive but use TARTA to get around the city. TARTA now charges $1.50 for every 2 hours to use the bus. This becomes expensive (could be an issue for domestic students as well). Previously, transportation was provided and paid for through the university drivers, but now TARTA is the only option.
* Potential Solution:
  + Students’ General fees could be allocated for TARTA.
  + Improve transportation for better dorm living situations. (*Retention and Recruitment issue)*
  1. **Campus Safety: [[2]](#footnote-2) (Deborah)**
     1. Issue: At our ISA meeting, Yash Shingan shared that 80% of students at a UT leadership conference reported feeling unsafe on campus (thieves, guns, robbery at Parks last spring 2022); multiple armed robberies have taken place near the dorms and near campus. Escort service to dorms/ night watch will only drop students off who live in campus dorms (will not go to Old Town on Westwood Avenue or VIVO on Secor Road).
* \*potential solution: emergency buttons on campus lights; previously had them but they were taken down in 2020 because of COVID budgetary issues.
  1. **Off Campus/Housing Safety (Deborah)**
     1. Issue: Robberies occur in the housing surrounding campus, but do not offer much security (only cameras in main leasing office).
* \*potential solution: consider mentorship program for international students to help find safe housing. Students do not want separate international student housing.
  1. **Focus on grades: (Samir Hefzy)**
     1. Issue: Many engineering students perceive grades to be the most important aspect of their careers (faculty add to this pressure in certain courses/programs with high expectations). Students would appreciate encouragement to join organizations and become more involved for overall professional development.
* potential solution: Dr. Samir Hefzy suggested getting involved in Engineering Societies; share common experiences; participate in service opportunities on campus.
  1. **Food: (Paulette Kilmer)**
     1. Issue: International students limited to on campus dining, restaurants and stores for food due to transportation issues. Dining halls close at 8 p.m., which is a challenge for many students.
     2. Most of us see bistros sprinkled across the main and medical campuses and do not realize that the specter of hunger haunts many UToledo international as well as undergraduate students. Lack of income drives food insecurity, but other factors compound this scourge for students from abroad. For example, the Lewer Mark Student Health Insurance Company recently updated its website information about the consequences of dietary changes for international students. They warn that the American college diet plans contain far more sugar and fat than is normal for many students from other nations. For example, in Asia, people depend on rice, chicken or fish, vegetables, brothy soups, and nuts. When they cannot acquire these staples, international students skip meals, eat fewer fruits and vegetables, and either gain or lose weight if they resort to consuming convenience and fast foods. Citing the *Journal of International Students*, LewerMark listed these factors that limit international and possibly other students from maintaining a healthy diet
* \*Potential solution: dining halls could work with international students to consult on foods that would be appreciated; work to get more international/varied restaurants on campus.
* \* Introduce international students to healthy U.S. foods.[[3]](#footnote-3)
* \* Convince the vendors to provide international students with more choices of familiar foods that Americans do not eat often.
* \* Create a merger of local farmers’ markets with campus food service providers.
* Set up a schedule giving nearby ethnic food stores a day of the week to provide goods or meals so that students could plan to enjoy these cuisines.
* Initiate a link among these ethnic food providers to encourage participation, share problems, and tell success stories.
* \* Give international students access to a kitchen in their dormitories.
* \* Add ethnic foods to the UToledo Student Pantry.
  1. **Orientation: (Karen Hoblet, Lucy Duhon, Karen Green)**
     1. Issue: Students felt their orientation was inadequate, so one student (Ashwini) made a 2-page flyer of essential things international students should know. There was no greeting packet, so student stated they had to learn by themselves.
* \*Potential solutions:
  + Need orientation packet: Orientation was not enough to face all of the practical and educational concerns of international students.
  + Need reports/brochures during orientation that cover visa, jobs on campus, and conduct a resource fair.
* \*potential solution: Add resource (book/handout) that explains campus resources, places to live, classrooms (guided tour), getting banking accounts, how to get around the city, etc. Student will send example pamphlet that she created to help other students.
* \*potential solution: Dr. Karen Hoblet suggested creating a resources list for faculty also to assist international students who have questions about campus resources. Create web page.
  1. **Any bias/racism against international students: (Sarah Aldrich)**
     1. Issue: ISA students reported examples of racism within student housing (Horton International House) including name calling from other students. Additionally, students reported that if something goes wrong, “international students are blamed first.”
        + \*potential solution: Sarah Aldrich reached out to ISA member, Yash, to discuss the issue in more detail and determine potential steps to improve and resolve this issue.

**11. Expectations from faculty, advisors, Chairs, Administrators? (Sarah Aldrich)**

i. Issue: Do not want to be treated differently want the "American" experience.

* \*potential solution: Committee could consider working with ISA and International offices on campus to raise awareness and offer support for faculty, advisors, chairs, and administrators for international student engagement and to improve the international student experience.

**12.** **Pre-Med International Students/ Other Internships: (Karen Hoblet, Sarah Aldrich)**

i. Issue: Pre-health advising center (new office): UTMC does not accept or have enough resources for pre-med international students; however, international students need clinical experiences on campus. Immigration office set up meeting with Dean Mark but no resolution yet.

* Community Care Clinics (CCC solution)? Asked if can volunteer off campus? cannot do anything except observing (illegal employment because it’s off campus)
* \*potential solution: Will research special Penn pre-med program that helped offer access to clinical experience to international students. Student will email name of connection at Penn
  + 1. Issue: Internships/gaining experience: every department should have more internship opportunities on campus.
* \*Potential solution: more internship courses that students can take multiple times

**Deborah**

**Thank you for listening. We will now take questions.**

**CC: Samir Hefzy, Berhane Teclehaimanot, Sarah Aldrich, Karen Hoblet, Karen Green, Lucy Duhon, Sally Harmych, Eric Chaffee, Paulette Kilmer, Shery Milz, Paul Schaefer, Alexandra DeRosa**

1. Free Application for Federal Student Aid [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. International students vehemently stated they do not want to all live in the same dorm. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Information for this food report originated in “7 Ways Universities Can Offer Familiar Food Choices to International Students,” <https://www.lewermark.com/blog/7-ways-universities-can-offer-familiar-food-options-international-students/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)