

Virtual Meeting of International Studies Advisory Committee, May 2, 2022

Minutes:

Present:

Advisory Committee Members — Michael Maxey, Dr. Jigar V Shah, John C. Law, Dr. Daniel Villanueva

Absent: Advisory Committee Members Former Ambassador John O'Keefe, Candice Helton

BSC Faculty: Drs. Dharshana Arachchi, Debjani Chakrabarti, Rodney Montague, and Bonnie Reese; Professors Vincent Mateescu, Jack Sheffler, Elizabeth Walters, and Darrel Malamisura

Invited Guests (but could not attend): Provost and VP for Academic and Student Affairs Dr. Ted A. Lewis; Dean of School of Education, Humanities, and Social Sciences Dr. Tammy Ferguson; Institutional Effectiveness Director Dr. Sarita A Rhonemus

Program Adviser Dr. Sudhakar R Jamkhandi recognized attendees and requested them to introduce themselves since this was the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Committee for International Studies and BSC faculty who teach courses within this newly approved degree program by the WV Higher Education Policy Commission and the HLC.

### **Marketing the BA in International Studies and Recruitment:**

After attendees introduced themselves, they took turns to address how to market the BA in International Studies to encourage enrollment.

Dr. Daniel Villanueva asked where our students are from. Elizabeth Walters indicated that BSC students are from southern West Virginia and southwest Virginia and that the College also has international students, primarily student athletes from 29 countries totaling 45 students in 2022-2023.

Dr. Bonnie Reese said she would share information about the new degree with dual enrolled high school students.

All BSC faculty in attendance indicated their willingness to participate in visits to area high schools and on-campus new student orientations to broadcast the new degree.

Dr. Rodney Montague, who teaches WV History, indicated he shares with his students how involved WV is in international affairs. Hopefully, this will stir interest in the new degree program, especially if internships are made available by WV and southwest Virginia companies engaged in international trade.

[The OII will organize internships at the federal level, a result of relations cultivated through the OII Director's role of BSC Liaison for the White House HBCU Initiatives group. Upon receiving written permission from members of this WH HBCU Initiatives group, their internship opportunities have been listed here:

<https://bluefieldstate.edu/resources/international-initiatives/resources.>]

Marketing activities undertaken to date: BSC students' world views have already been broadened through Soliya, a virtual platform that allows for real-time conversations with students in different countries. This activity, ensconced into BSC's curriculum for credit by the late Dr. Colin Cavell, has played a major role in encouraging students to enroll in the new degree program.

In fall 2021 and in spring 2022, the Office of International Initiatives engaged BSC students in monthly informal "Conversations" with students of partner institutions in El Salvador and Greece. This activity will be continued in AY 2022-2023 by an International Student Ambassador, a position funded by the WV HEPC, to serve as moderator henceforth.

Jammy indicated that ONLY students enrolled in the International Studies degree program will be given free passports.

Attendees were encouraged to share marketing strategies via email. They are included here as part of the Minutes.

Michael Maxey:

1. BSC could reach out to the USAID HBCU Office and explain what we are doing and ask how we can better coordinate with USAID. The goal would be to provide diversity in international development.

See <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/sep-15-2021-usaid-hosts-inaugural-historically-black-colleges-and-universities>. Also -- <https://www.rtachesn.org/resources/usaaid-engagement-with-hbcus/>.

2. BSC could coordinate with Steven Spence and the WV Investment Promotion Office to explain how WV is exporting goods and services -- to which countries. You could also reach out to WV companies that are exporting and ask what types of skills they need for their employees and how BSC could provide those skills through the International Studies degree program.

3. Create your own Peace Corps recruiting office using volunteers to promote service in PC as an option and explain the process for applying. Establishing this voluntary program could be a foot in the door to working more closely with the Peace Corps.

Stephen Spence:

One thought I had on spreading the word about the International Studies degree is that we can include mention of the program in our newsletter, *Trade Talk*.... [H]ere's a sample issue:

[https://news.westvirginia.gov/-temporary-slug-cd4ed8d8-3016-48fd-bda6-a6748634a8d8?hs\\_preview=QUtWXgSw-68597842480](https://news.westvirginia.gov/-temporary-slug-cd4ed8d8-3016-48fd-bda6-a6748634a8d8?hs_preview=QUtWXgSw-68597842480) This goes to exporters in the state, local economic development officials and others interested in international business.

Our staff is preparing the next issue. If you think it may be helpful, we can add a short story about BSC's International Studies program. If so, can we use information from this message or do you have a press release that announced the program?

<https://bluefieldstate.edu/community/news-and-events/bsc-invites-applications-ba-international-studies>

FYI. Steve's request to share information has been met.

### **Study abroad:**

Jack Sheffler, Elizabeth Walters, Dr Chakrabarti, Dr. Bonnie Reese, Vincent Mateescu, James Quesenberry (absent but shared desired study abroad destination with Jammy) indicated their interest in leading study abroad programs starting in summer 2023. Destinations include Mexico, Costa Rica, Israel, Russia (after current unsettling events subside), Slovakia and Canada. Jammy indicated that the OII Budget Request included a line item to support faculty-led study abroad and when it is approved, he will convey the news to this Committee and faculty who teach courses in the International Studies program.

BSC and the University of Applied Sciences Wurzburg-Schweinfurt have submitted a mobility grant application to support a 3-year exchange for study abroad and internships for Engineering students. If approved, BSC students and an engineering faculty member will travel to German in summer 2023-2025.

BSC, West Virginia State University, and WV Higher Education Policy Commission are developing a grant proposal to strengthen their International Studies and Foreign Language offerings with study abroad and international internships in Canada and Mexico. This grant application will be submitted to the US Department of Education on May 20, 2022.

### **Foreign Languages:**

Attendees were apprised that in addition to the online introductory Spanish courses, in person Arabic and Russian courses will be available in AY 2022-2023. Flyers about these language courses' availability have been posted campus wide.

**Incorporating area studies into International Studies curriculum:**

Dr. Villanueva asked whether any discussion about infusing area studies into the existing curriculum had been discussed. Faculty attendees indicated these will be introduced initially as “topics” courses and if student demand persists, a new (area studies) course proposal will be submitted for institutional ratification.

**Relevance of BSC’s BA in International Studies/Career Opportunities:**

Though absent, Advisory Committee Member Candice Helton who works at the US Department of State, shared via email a career opportunity for US citizens with the United Nations (accompanying pdf).

With no further business to discuss, the virtual meeting was adjourned at 11:15am.

Respectfully submitted,

Sudhakar R. Jamkhandi (Jammy)

May 6, 2022