

MINUTES
International Students and Scholars Committee
27 November 2018

Present: Dr. Warren Johnson (Chair and Secretary), Dr. Robert Bradley, Ms. Anukrit Chapagain, Ms. Sharon McDaniel (proxy for Ms. Tracy Finch), Dr. Derek Jenkins, Mr. Atin Suri.

Absent: Ms. Nikki Adams, Dr. Lynita Cooksey, Dr. Maurice Gipson, Dr. Gauri Guha, Dr. Mihir, Mr. Samuel Noi, Dr. Thillainatarajan Sivakumaran, Dr. Evelyn Taylor, Ms. Shannon Wess, Dr. Karen Wheeler, Ms. Victoria Williams, Ms. Qianqian Yu.

Visitors: Ms. Mallory Yarbrough and Ms. Akuri Lingenfelter (International Student Services)

Dr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm and gave the floor to Ms. Chapagain and Mr. Suri so that they might make a presentation about the International Student Association (ISA). Ms. Chapagain is current president of the ISA and Mr. Suri a past president of the organization.

Ms. Chapagain noted that her position has allowed her to learn more about the concerns of international students. She has assisted a number of them in matters of accommodation, insurance, and other areas, pointing the students toward the persons who could resolve their issues if she could not. She has attended a number of events to allow the university community to be more aware of international students, and in her work has put a focus on increasing cultural awareness.

She showed a PowerPoint presentation (distributed with these minutes) to highlight the work of the ISA. The organization was reconstituted in 2014 and has been quite active since. [Dr. Johnson noted that the suggestion to revive the ISA came from this committee some years ago and was implemented through the work of one of the student members at the time.] It sponsors a number of activities to help bring together international and domestic students, such as Game Night, the main event of Spring 2018, and the Autumn Gala (Prom) this semester. The latter event, held like many at the A-State Pavilion, proved especially popular among international students. The ISA regularly staffs information tables around campus that allow international students to bring up questions or concerns. The organization also cooperates with International Student Services in some of its activities. While most of the leadership of the organization is naturally composed of international students, the governing board includes participation by domestic students as well.

Mr. Suri stated that during his involvement with the organization, he has tried to make it purpose-driven, not just a host of events. He emphasized that the ISA is a team, and that its members need to work together and with other groups, such as the Student Government Association (SGA). To this end, the organization has a vibrant social media presence.

Ms. Chapagain outlined a number of ways that this committee can help the ISA:

- Help promote cultural awareness and acceptance.
- Engage students in activities that involve international students and local students to work together.
- Encourage students to attend international events.
- Attend international events so that everyone is motivated to do so.
- Help select the right persons for the ISA board for the year 2019.

Dr. Bradley asked how many different cultures are represented within the ISA. Ms. Yarbrough said the university has students from 64 different countries, and even more distinct cultures. He asked if Ms. Chapagain was suggesting that faculty are not sufficiently accepting of international students. She replied that this was not her intent, but to point out the need to engage international and domestic students to interact more. Mr. Suri noted that some international students may be hesitate to initiate such encounters. Dr. Bradley asked if these fears were justified. Ms. Yarbrough said that indeed it is sometimes difficult to get international students to accept moving outside their national or ethnic group, and that success in this area depends to an extent on the openness of the international students to these new experiences. Dr. Bradley asked about the appropriateness of the prom-style Autumn Gala, given the conservative views in some of the students' home counties regarding the relations between men and women. Mr. Suri replied that the ISA is sensitive to those issues, and for this reason structures the event mainly around games and performances, not dancing. Ms. Yarbrough noted that some students will come to the event in traditional dress to encourage cultural exchange. Mr. Suri said there is also a separate Global Culture Night where students will dress up and share their cultures. Dr. Bradley expressed his view that he is in favor of getting more American students involved in these events. In this regard, Ms. Yarbrough mentioned the work of Ms. Lingenfelter, Student Engagement Specialist with ISS (present at the meeting), who organizes events as well. Ms. McDaniel encouraged engagement with international alumni still in the area.


The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 pm.

Appendix

PowerPoint presentation by Ms. Chapagain and Mr. Suri

**A-STATE
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT
ASSOCIATION**

Presented by: Anukrit Chapagain
&
Atin Suri



**INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT
ASSOCIATION**

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
ASSOCIATION AT A GLANCE**

- ISA aims to serve as the central group at A-State which embodies all international students, and assists, advises, and represents international students in matters of common welfare and concern. (A-State International Student Association webpage)
- Hosts different events to promote cultural awareness as well as to give a platform for students to showcase culture and traditions, build friendships, as well as provide them with volunteer opportunities.
- ISA board is made up of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Three Members-at-large.

HISTORY OF ISA

- ISA was established in 2014 by a group of students and has been led by student leaders since then.
- Some events that were organized by past board members that were note-worthy and that we give continuity to are: Prom, flash mob and fundraising.
- Recipient of Alpha Wolf Award this year, an award given to an organization that is committed to providing support for A-State through different activities.

ISA AT A GLANCE

ISA 1990



ISA 2018



ISA GENERAL MEETING

SPRING 2018





FALL 2018



**CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE PLANTING
CEREMONY 2018**

- Hosted by the Office of Global Initiatives, the ISA was the official promoter of the Crowdfunding campaign.
- 20 Cherry Blossom Trees Planted
- ISA board with the Chancellor at the ceremony





GAME NIGHT SPRING 2018

Video has been removed due to being too large to fit in the email. Please find attached the link to the video on our Facebook page.
<https://www.facebook.com/astateisa/videos/1907202036191019/>

Thank you!



AUTUMN GALA FALL 2018

INFORMATIONAL TABLES

- o Let students know about ISA and our presence on campus
- o Inform and answer their questions related to our events
- o Take their concerns into consideration and reach out to respective authority for answers.



VOLUNTEER FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS AND GLOBAL INITIATIVES' EVENTS

- o Volunteer for events hosted by International Programs and Global Initiatives
- o Help promote events
- o Encourage students to participate at the events



MY TERM AS A PRESIDENT

- o Tried to make ISA purpose driven
- o Experienced successful transformation from close-knit community to a recognized organization
- o Efforts to make ISA more systematic in terms of work ethics and accountability.
- o Representation on different organizations
- o Representation on different events
- o Potential collaboration with different organizations in the future
- o Great social media presence

HOW THIS COMMITTEE CAN HELP ISA?

- o Help promote cultural awareness and acceptance
- o Engage students in activities that involve international students and local students to work together
- o Encourage students to attend international events
- o Attend international events so that everyone is motivated to do so
- o Help us select the right persons for the ISA board for the year 2019

