



MINUTES

International Relations Committee

Wednesday, April 12, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Annette Sweeney, Chairperson
Senator Kevin Alons
Senator Nate Boulton
Senator William Dotzler
Senator Carrie Koelker

Representative Eddie Andrews, Vice Chair
Representative Ako Abdul-Samad
Representative Elinor Levin

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I. Procedural Business

Background and Charge. The International Relations Committee was created by the Legislative Council in 1992. The committee's charge is as follows: develop goals and procedures that will facilitate international communication between the Iowa General Assembly and foreign governments on several different levels, including but not limited to interpersonal interaction between state legislators and legislative staff and foreign visitors, instruction about state and local democratic institutions, and the development of trade in foreign markets.

Call to Order and Adjournment. The meeting of the International Relations Committee was called to order by Chairperson Sweeney at 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, April 12, 2023, in the Founders Room of the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates. The committee approved the minutes from the March 7, 2023, meeting by email and the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

II. University of Northern Iowa — International Educational Opportunities

Ms. Carolina Coronado-Park, Director of International Engagement and Culture, Ms. Kristi Marchesani, Director of International Admissions and Recruitment Office, and Ms. Stephani Rojas, Director of the Study Abroad Program, discussed international educational opportunities available at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI). The countries with the largest student populations at UNI are from China, India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, and Brazil. The trends impacting international student recruitment include competition from other countries, fear, financial instability, social media, and connections. UNI has made great strides overcoming recent trends to increase its international student population. UNI schedules intercultural activities with the domestic student population and community by scheduling weekly coffee hours, class exchanges, volunteering, and conversation mentoring programs. International students contribute to diversity and cultural perspectives on campus, create a significant financial benefit to UNI, and represent UNI around the world. The presenters emphasized international students on campus help build international and intercultural competence and established educational and research relationships and collaborators with international partners.

III. Discussion

Representative Andrews asked about and discussed ways the Legislature can help promote the international student program. Senator Dotzler commented that the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates was funded, in part, through historic preservation tax credits and that food production is a great way for the state to make connections throughout the world. Senator Sweeney commented about the study abroad program at UNI.