

International Student Success in Creative Arts

Proposal for February 14, 2017, Faculty Senate

Submitted by Jen Bracy, Art Department, Creative Arts Division

Creative Arts is concerned about the success of international students in our courses. We have seen a dramatic increase in 2+2 and 3+1 international students in our Visual Communication Design Program. (*Just as an example, this term I teach a 300 level Graphic Design course with 12 Chinese students and 5 domestic students.*) Most—not all—do not have appropriate English language skills to understand the course materials. They also have been taught fundamentals that are either different from what we consider to be essential, and/or using significantly different approaches; these differences are significant barriers to their success.

We have worked with the existing resources—the International Student Support Center and the English Tutoring Center—and our Office of International Education & Development has provided support through expanded English tutoring help and in the way of funding for a work study student to help with translation, but it is not enough. We greatly appreciate the efforts put forth by Rob Troyer, Neng Yang, and Steve Scheck to address these issues.

Creative Arts embraces WOU's new Strategic Plan in prioritizing Student Success and Academic Excellence and sees these challenges as impediments to fulfilling our mission.

A letter of concern from WOUFT to President Weiss in 2012 requested immediate attention to issues related to increased international student enrollment. It proffered several suggestions for the administration to consider:

- Use TOEFL rather than IELTS as the standard language comprehension test for international student admissions.
- Raise the minimum score for admission.
- Expand recruitment in countries other than Saudi Arabia and China. Revitalize WOU's historic sister-school partnership with Saitama University.
- Encourage use of the Campus Judicial Affairs process and enforcement of the Student Code of Responsibility as it relates to Academic Dishonesty.
- Require students in 2+2 programs to take courses in Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Academic Vocabulary at WOU as a component of their academic work.
- Rehire former IEP instructors in order of seniority to teach remedial credit-bearing classes through DEP (akin to Math 70 & 99).
- Create a process by which faculty members can refer a student to remedial instruction in order to increase their likelihood of success in a course.
- Survey faculty members about their perceptions of barriers to international student success to identify other areas of attention/need besides those that have been brought to the attention of the faculty union.

Based on progress since that time, Creative Arts requests the following actions from that list, and one new action:

- Use TOEFL rather than IELTS as the standard language comprehension test for international student admissions.
- Raise the minimum score for admission.
- Create a process by which faculty members can refer a student to remedial instruction in order to increase their likelihood of success in a course.
- *Implement a system of regular reevaluation of 2+2 and 3+1 agreements, including assessment of the sister schools' success in meeting WOU curriculum expectations. Restructuring these programs to allow International Students more time at WOU for preparation before their upper division courses might be one valuable outcome.*

Creative Arts requests that the Faculty Senate endorse these recommendations.