

# International Student Advisory Board (ISAB) 2020-21 First Meeting

Monday, April 6, 2020, 3:00pm-5:00pm, via WebEx

Members attended: 9/9

Facilitators: Sharece Bunn & Dong Chen

## Introductions

Members introduced themselves and identified as to what seat they were selected for the ISAB 2020-21:

<u>Name</u>	<u>ISAB Seat</u>
Dingyi Zhou	Undergraduate representatives
Kinzang Wangmo	Undergraduate representatives
Rung Shih	Undergraduate representatives
Hiya Jain	Undergraduate representatives
Anuj Modi	Graduate Student Representative
Ambar Carvallo	Graduate Student Representative
Adati Tarfa	Equity and Inclusion Representative
Sean Yan	Affiliated Student Organization Member
Ruisu Zhang	Transfer Student Representative

Sharece: Introduced history, mission, purpose, and goal of the ISAB. She also explained roles of ISAB members.

- ISAB is a new initiative to build a bridge between international students and International Student Services at UW-Madison. By bringing international student voices to the table, ISAB serves as an advisory committee to advocate for the unique needs of international students as we work to create a more inclusive and globally engaged environment
- ISAB is for those who care about international students at UW-Madison and hope to help make a change. Members of ISAB are encouraged to share their own as well as their fellow international students' voices and concerns to the table in an open and honest manner.
  - Topics can be varied, and we will need to prioritize importance.
  - Members need to be strategic and realistic on what you want to address, not possible to cover everything.
  - Recommendations can then help inform changes to the international student experiences.
- The responsibilities of ISAB members: Attend ISAB Meetings; Meet with the ISS ISAB Staff Members to check in; Complete the check-in form when requested; Reach out to international student peers to hear about their experience; Learn about ISS resources and outreach for international students and share this with peers; Present "Board Report" to full ISS Staff each semester

## **Discussion 1: The COVID-19 Crisis and International Students**

Dong facilitated and lead the group discussion.

- Dong: Before the discussion, Sharece and I would like to take a moment to give a big shout out to Ambar and Dingyi, who attended the Virtual meeting hosted by ISS last Friday, and joined ISS discussing the topics and conversations that were covered in the Division of Student Life's town hall addressing bias that occurred on Thursday, March 26th. Also, we would like to thank you everyone for submitting the check-in form, we appreciate the great suggestion, insights, and authenticity you all shared with us. According to the feedbacks that we have received in the ISAB check-in forms and check-in meetings, we have found out that the COVID-19 crisis's impact to international students' lives is the most talked-about topic. And within it, below are the main categories of your questions and concerns:
  - Immigration Prospect
  - Academic Prospect
  - Career Prospect
  - Discrimination & Racism Towards Internal Student
  - Quarantine Life in Madison & Work from home life in the home country

Now, I will stop talking and have you all share your thoughts and change the ideas within the group.

- Dingyi - Internships – What to do for students who have spring/summer internships and they're not able to keep them because of COVID-19?
- Adati – Globalization – universities' deferring admissions – will people be more united, or will countries be more isolated in the future?
  - How not to read too much into anything
  - Good message to hear
- Kinzang - People's mental health under COVID-19—especially international students – someone who had a cross-cultural stance
  - Hard decision for international students -- Returning home for summer or not
  - King-Morgridge scholar; Scholarship Coordinators – not sure if their students can return back to the U.S.
- Anuj – There is only so much we can do as ISAB. For example, India banning international flights; Jeopardize things for some people
- Adati –Can we have a campus-wide temporary support system?
  - Comparing situations for people – best or worst
  - Another person isn't
  - Burden isn't for others – identify and help people who are most in need of the support
- Rung – Mental health Services
  - Isn't just because of isolation and the information – we're receiving too much
  - Too much information from different campus departments in a short time
  - Is there a better way for international students to be more aware of the mental health services available for them? – Shared personal experience of working with a great multilingual mental health counselor in UHS.

- Can ISS website gather all the campus-wide COVID-19 updates and become the information hub for international students during special time?
- Sean
  - Too much information from the university in the COVID-19 crisis
  - Growing concerns and insecurity among international students, especially Asian students due to the racism against Asian and Asian-Americans on campus as the coronavirus spreads
- Hiya – On-line Courses – Appreciate pre-recorded lectures
  - Students across different time zones can take the pre-recorded lectures in the time slots that work best for their local time
- Anuj – Rising discrimination and racism along with the COVID-19 outbreak in the U.S.
  - As many people blame China for the COVID-19, more and more bias incidents on or near campus and online have targeted Asian students and employees, particularly those from or perceived to be from China and East Asia
  - Ruisu – Greeting messages from native American students are comforting
  - Rung – people yelling at her when she was waiting for the bus.
    - Everyone seemed to be avoiding her when she was wearing the mask
    - Feels like she doesn't belong there
  - Dong – very difficult for Asian students, especially Chinese students
    - Dong's family have many doctors. She started to be concerned about their safety and wellbeing since the COVID-19 outbreak in China
    - Never been peaceful mentally since January. Process has been extremely long for her
    - Before Chalking – a random white homeless guy yelled "Corona Virus "at her and her Malaysian Chinese roommate on State Street
    - After Chalking - The Town Hall and the campus messages have been comforting.
  - Kinzang – vibe – As an Asian international student, you can feel the stares from people
    - Getting called out for wearing masks
    - Suggested university could have staff/volunteers to go out and get essentials for international students who are concerned about the potential danger & discriminations they may experience by going shopping outside
  - Adati – smaller scale – Morgridge Center has sent emails about opportunities for people to volunteer to help get food and deliveries
  - Hiya – incident to share – One of her international student peers, whose apartment is close to university, has been receiving threat calls from unknow people
- Dingyi – Resources – Too much work for international students to actually look up all available campus resources
- Ambar Carvallo – graduate students – how are their (academic) projects going to continue – especially those who are under specific grants and funding

### Takeaway

- Sean – Campus and ISAB can acknowledge the situation to international students
  - It helps when we (international students) feel that the campus is on our side when the chalk message incident happened.

- Should ISAB write a statement to respond to the racism against Asian and Asian-Americans on campus as the coronavirus spreads?
- Hiya – Not everyone was aware of what happened on campus
  - Would be helpful to have someone to go to.
- Rung – Improve communication between domestic and international students
  - Educate international students regarding what they should do after experiencing the bias incident, for example, from which office and how they can get help?
  - Domestic student responded right away
- Ambar – Mental Health check-in sessions
  - Can we potentially have some virtual mental health check-in sessions for international students who are encountering struggles and hoping to talk to other people?
  - Should the check-in sessions with only international students, or available to everyone?
- Kinzang – how do you reach out to other people?
  - Have an ear for speaking
  - ISS Virtual Engagement Meetings

## **Discussion 2: ISAB Blueprint for Academic Year 2020-21** **(Brainstorming Session)**

Dong facilitated and lead the group discussion.

- Dong: Besides the COVID-19, what else do you want ISAB to discuss and together work on making a difference for academic year 2020-2021?
  - Sharece – As we already have many good resources and practices across the campus, we don't recreate the wheel. Instead, we should strive to making an improvement based on what we have.
  - Adati –
    - University talking about Minority Populations, but not for international audiences – went through issues on campuses
    - School of Pharmacy – has their Diversity and Inclusion Representative(S); not sure about other schools' practice
    - We should see what international students are doing, and how we can best support them.
    - Encourage students to share their experiences with ISS/campus in an anonymous way - Further question: Who would moderate or check emails?
  - Dingyi –
    - Engagement – first year experience in CFYE – 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the students should be involved with it on their first semester
    - For new international students -- provide ISO event in the small group setting
    - Step by step events
      - Events for sharing Asian culture
      - Global things
      - Mix people up or unite them together
      - Cultural exchange things

- Sean –
  - Cultural exchange to promote interaction – how it could work in fall term
  - Organizations from China / east Asia, etc. Collaborate to have events
  - Can ISS provide some information for international students regarding what to do in the coming summer break, with a focus on on/off campus student employment?
    - What’s available?
    - What type of work authorization do students need?
- Rung –
  - Shared her previous experience of attending the Global Café event hold by the ISS – maybe further improve the way that ISS advertise the event to the international students, in this way more students would be able to know the events and get engaged
  - Hold events for undergraduate students specifically
  - Mental health services on campus
    - Bilingual counselors on campus
    - Met a counselor from Taiwan
    - Hard to make a mental health appointment with UHS
- Ambar –
  - Chat with students about housing and other issues that they need help with – some international graduate students mentioned that if the school could share some off-campus housing information, it will be helpful
  - Suggested academic departments to think about ways to better engage their international graduate students
  - Department issues – research
    - Way to evaluate what international students bring
- Anuj –
  - ISAB wanting to write a response to the racism going on
  - The idea of having a voice is important
  - Is there an organized international students’ voice for campus?
  - ISS is more about administration, currently there is no forum for international students to have a voice
  - ASM – Associated Students of Madison advocates for UW-Madison students, has international representatives, and has their student government. They usually have a quick response to the events happening on the campus
  - There are things that ISAB can look at ASM’s successful practice and learn from them
- Kinzang –
  - Wanted to help out with ASM
  - The only international student on the ASM intern board

## **Upcoming Opportunities and Events**

- Complete the 2nd Check-in Form (Due: 4/10)
- Attend ISAB 2nd Meeting
- Check-in Meeting with the ISAB Staff Members (Optional)
- Virtual Engagement Meetings @ ISS
- Dong –
  - Sharece and I take notes during each ISAB meeting. These will be shared with ISAB members and then posted on the ISS website
  - As our group members are currently located in different time zones, we will do our best to schedule meetings so that everyone can attend. We want as many members to be involved as possible
  - After meeting, I will send out the ISAB check-in form, the Doodle Poll for the ISAB 2nd Meeting time, and meeting notes to all members of ISAB
  - Please filled out the ISAB check-in form and the Doodle Poll for the ISAB 2nd Meeting time at your earliest convenience, so that we can finalize the time and agenda for the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting and keep all of you updated
  - After meeting, please feel free keep this group conversation in the “ISAB Team” via Microsoft Teams

## **Next Meeting**

- Tuesday, April 21 from 10:00am -12:00 pm (TBD), Central Standard Time
- Via Webex