

## CISS Agenda

September 30, 2022 | 11:00am

**Chair:** Kathryn Gaylord-Miles, Kennesaw State University

**Vice Chair:** Allie Seay, Georgia State University

**Member at Large:** Dr. Ray Smith, Dalton State College

**Member at Large:** Kathleen Kirk, Georgia Tech

**Participants (21):** Alexa Lee, Cheryl Park, Bethany Ramos, Beverly Tarver, Ivan Nikolov, Scott Lingrell, Sheila Schulte, Tiffany Takahashi, Cassie Danekes, Ryan Packard, Kathleen Kirk, Brennan Gonzalez, Tina Rousselot de Saint Ceran, Kathryn Gaylord-Miles, Jody Pritt, Katie McClure, LD Newman, David Huffman, Christine Shaw, Paul Sargent, Robin Catmur-Smith, Nneka Osakwe, Alexa Lee, Tammy Rosner, Allie Seay

**Call to Order & Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes** – Kathryn Gaylord-Miles

[January 28, 2022](#), meeting minutes are approved without objection.

**USG OIE Updates** – Tammy Rosner

- Introduction and welcome of Dr. Scott Lingrell, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management & Student Affairs.
- Reminder that campus Sprintax orders are due to Tammy by Monday (10/3).
- ACT/SAT is optional for admission to all USG schools - except the University of Georgia (UGA) and Georgia Institute of Technology (GA Tech). This action is a temporary waiver, not a permanent change to admission rules. Many institutions use the SAT to waive the English proficiency requirement. This waiver may place more pressure on English proficiency tests in the coming year. If there are any questions regarding acceptable English proficiency tests and requirements, please refer to the Student Academic Affairs Handbook and at [usg.edu/international\\_education](http://usg.edu/international_education). All institutions are expected to accept all USG approved English proficiency tests.
- A Lawful Presence Guidance document is drafted. A few schools were asked to review and provide feedback. Tammy and her team have started their review of the document. Once the guidance document is complete, training sessions will be offered to institutions.
- All are encouraged to review the State of the Field survey. Most institutions indicate the international student and international scholar fields need more support. Tammy welcomes all institutions to let her know what they (at the system office can do) to provide more support.

**J-1 STEM Initiative** – Robin Catmur-Smith

J-1 early career STEM initiative is a new program, heavily promoted by Exchange Visitor Program. The initiative allows institutions who currently have J-1 programs to sponsor research scholars for employment at U.S. companies who operate in STEM fields. UGA is moving forward with implementing this new program but limiting employment to companies who are affiliated with UGA and their faculty.

Why do it? (1) The outreach component is tremendous. It facilitates building strong connections with companies in Georgia and institutionally affiliated companies, as well increased support of faculty who

have funds to create start-up companies. For UGA, it could be an (2) additional revenue stream. (3) This initiative supports the desire of the State Department to promote retention and employment of STEM scholars in the U.S.

Getting permission up the chain to offer sponsorship of outside companies and deemed export compliance can be an obstacle to surmount for implementation. Robin is happy to speak with anyone interested in implementing this initiative.

## **Fall 2022 Updates**

### Share-out on admission & enrollment trends for fall 2022:

Kennesaw State University (KSU) experienced an increase in their F-1 student population. Their College of Computing and Software Engineering partnered with recruiting agencies in India, and this created a spike in enrollment. A demographic flip has also occurred – KSU is now a majority graduate population. These changes prompted their ISSS office to rethink services provided.

KSU's update sparked a question regarding USG policy on recruitment agents: Can schools use agents at will or is there a policy which prohibits or limits their use? The group noted that no USG policy currently exists which restricts the use of agents; however, it was mentioned that institutions may have their own policies on their use.

Columbus State University experienced growth in their international student population, especially in the exchange student group. International admission and international student services are being handled by one office. It is surmised this update in responsibility created opportunities for personal connections and contact with international students before arrival and is considered an attributing factor to their growth.

GA Tech welcomed around 1600 new international to campus, bringing their international student total to 5674. One of the biggest surprises for fall was the significant decline in the number of Chinese students. Administrative processing for visa issuance is up – but visa denials are not up, significantly. Student communications indicate a concern regarding applying for and being denied the visa.

UGA saw a decline in Chinese students as well but experienced a substantial increase in their Indian student population. Overall, about a 6% increase from fall 2021, largely driven at the graduate level. Recruitment heavily focused at the graduate level.

Clayton State University noted their Chinese students are experiencing trouble getting money out of China.

GSU experienced the same trend in a decreased Chinese student population and increased Indian student population. Reported concerns from the Chinese student population were repeated - visa issuance uncertainty and access to funding. There wasn't a great increase in fall applicants; however, lean processing in document issuance and shrinking the wait time from admission to I-20 issuance was attributed to low melt.

Georgia Gwinnett College noted their admitted student population doubled from fall 2021. A significant jump in Nigerian applications. They are also experiencing steady growth of applicants to their English language program.

### Potential NIL issues:

No new guidance has been released. Robin discussed how her office (UGA) is managing these scenarios as they arise. Just under 10% of athletes at UGA are international. Companies are sending contacts on a team basis, and this is causing international students to be pulled out of these contracts. Some contracts are citing “passive income” as reason for the F-1 student’s eligibility; however, there is no qualification within immigration regulation which states passive income is not employment. UGA developed policy which directs the athlete/team to consult with an outside immigration council and to be sure those impacted are aware of any future immigration or benefit consequence.

Georgia State University (GSU) experienced companies reaching directly to athletes, not so much a team and are taking the same approach as UGA – the athlete should consider long-term impacts and seek council of an immigration attorney.

### Training & onboarding with an ISSS focus:

Tina mentioned an emerging trend she experienced at GA Tech – a minimal number of applicants with previous DSO experience in candidate pools. This presented the opportunity to possibly reclass positions to be entry level in nature, and to redesign robust onboarding which builds a solid foundation in DSO/ARO responsibilities. Tina is interested to hear if others are experiencing this issue at their campus and how this impacts position responsibilities, recruitment, and onboarding of DSOs and AROs.

In response, the University of North Georgia (UNG) experienced trouble recruiting applicants with previous immigration experience. They have turned to hiring recent UNG grads from international affairs or those with strong faculty references. They found success in this approach. Alum hires love the school, understand the community, and it works well. The onboarding focus moved to mostly DSO training – because alum hires already know the campus, culture, and student/office systems.

Speaking to rethinking positions and hiring practices due to lack of previous experience in pools - GSU also experienced recent hiring pools compiled of candidates who lack previous DSO experience and are rethinking what it means to be an advisor in ISSS. Most IE professionals are in the field because they had an experience which led them to it. Maybe now we need to start seeking hires that are trained in systems and project management – not just those with a personal connection to international exchange. Our populations are growing which correlates to growth in volume of work and services offered, so maybe the traditional advisor model needs to be rethought.

More on rethinking office structure – Tina noted that immigration advisors are compliance experts, specialist in a particular policy area. GA Tech is looking into re-classes for advisors. Learning if there are other titles in classification that support recruitment and retention by providing title and compensation that correctly reflects the position’s expertise. This work is in-progress and Tina will share any learned path forward.

### **Announcements**

NAFSA Regional Conference in Charlotte, NC (Early Bird Registration closing soon) – November 6-9

- Robin mentioned her session w/David Ware and Julie Wilbers on the concept of work with regards to immigration regulations and time will be spent speaking to NIL and the complexities involved with that.

UGA is seeking a F-1/J-1 Student & Scholar advisor. Please share with those who may be interested in applying.

Next SCIE meeting – January 2023. Watch for updates.

**Meeting Adjourned at Noon**