Western Connecticut State University International Center (W.I.C.)

2015-2016 Annual Report

Prepared by

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Name:
The name of the organization shall be the Western Connecticut State University International Center (W.I.C.).

Purpose:
1. The W.I.C. shall seek in various ways to increase the awareness of student, faculty, staff, secondary school instructors and pupils, and the community in international affairs, international culture, and international problems.
   By international affairs is meant contemporary interests and difficulties among nations, by international culture is meant why people act and think differently from our own culture, their religious beliefs, philosophy of life, arts (e.g., music, dance, painting, sculpture, etc.), education, manner of conducting business, etc.; by international problems is meant global concerns not easily fitting into the previous two categories (e.g., acid rain, food distribution, desertification, energy, etc.)
2. The W.I.C. shall assist in making the University community more aware of opportunities afforded by grants, student and faculty international exchanges, foreign travel with and without academic credit, international education and such other opportunities which may be of benefit and aid in fostering international understanding.

The 2015-2016 Academic Year’s Activities

As in the 2014-2015 academic year, the 2015-2016 academic year was highly productive and successful in the Western International Center (WIC), in light of transitional leadership. With well-experienced committee members, we initiated new campus programs and events, recruited in several new committee members for the WIC.

The WIC has 12 committee members representing all academic units and administrative offices. In addition, the WIC Committee also includes a student representative. The committee members are responsible for everything regarding promoting international education and awareness on our WCSU campuses. The 2015-2016 WIC Committee members are (in alphabetical order):

Ann Atkinson, Galina Bakhtiarova, Susan Burger, Majorie Callaghan, Daryle Dennis, Ree Gunter, Xiaoji Han, Renate Ludanyi, A. Ben Oumlil (Chair), Zouhong Pan, Divya Sharma, Sal Trapani, and Anthony Asmar (Student Representative).
As educators and administrators, we continue our effort to promote the internationalization and intercultural experiences for WCSU students and professional colleagues and supporting the WCSU vision of responsible engagement with the local, national and global communities.

The WCSU students on ISEP numbers keep growing. Based on the information received from the WIC International Services Office, In Fall 2015, there were 11 students studying in the countries of Belgium, Bulgaria, China, Costa Rica, Italy, Scotland, South Africa, and United Kingdom (UK). Additionally, there were 6 ISEP Exchange Students studying at WCSU representing the countries of Austria, China, England, Finland, Spain, and Uruguay. For Spring 2016, 9 there are 13 WCSU students on ISEP studying in the countries of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, China, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, England, Italy, Northern Ireland, and Japan. There are ISEP Exchange Students studying at WCSU from the countries of Austria, Bulgaria, China, England, South Korea, Spain, and United Kingdom (UK).

Furthermore, the international students’ population keeps also growing. In Fall 2015, there were 16 International Students on F-1 Visa representing the countries of: Albania, Brazil, Chile, China, Dominican Republic, Egypt, England, Germany, India, Jamaica, Kenya, and Pakistan. For Spring 2015, there are 13 International Students on F-1 Visa from the countries of Brazil, China, Chile, Dominican Republic, Egypt, England, India, Jamaica, Kenya, and Pakistan.

The International Services staff continues to develop partnerships with schools overseas and recruit more students from abroad.

I. The International Education Week 2015 (October 26 – 29, 2015)

International Education Week (IEW) is a university-wide celebration of international education endeavors organized by the WIC Committee. The main aim of IEW is to promote and celebrate international programs and to encourage participation in them.

Students, faculty, and staff at the University engage in a variety of activities across our two campuses. All of these activities result in an international and cross-cultural knowledge exchange that enriches the WCSU community.

The 2015 IEW showcased international activities at the University through a series of events throughout the week of October 26th.

All events were well attended and successful. A part of the 2015 IEW, the events included students who discussed their cultural experiences abroad. Additionally, a student musical group performed a true variety of music from many parts of the world. This students’ focus session is titled “Living and Study Abroad, Cultural Experiences and Music: Students’ Perspective”. This event was the first of its kind that was included during the IEW dedicated to students as a showcase of their international cultural experiences and musical talents from a global perspective.
A big thank you to all of our sponsors: International Services Office, Office of the Provost for Academic Affairs, Dean of Arts and Sciences Division, WCSU Bookstore, and Food Services.

For information on the WIC International Education Week 2015, see International Education Week Schedule of Events listed in Appendix A.

II. The International Film Festival 2016 (April 6-9)

As in the past, the International Film Festival 2016 was organized by the WIC Committee. This year, this event was during the week of April 6-9, 2016. The film showings were well-received and attended. For example, the film showing of *Casablanca* was attended by over 25 attendees representing various constituents from WCSU community. The movie showing of *A World Without Thieves* was attended by around 20 people.

As stated in the WIC 2015 Annual Report, the International Film Festival has its beginning in showing films with an African-American perspective. However, as in 2015, the WIC Committee’s decision was to expand the 2016 International Film Festival’s focus on a more international and cross-cultural perspectives. This shift is more in line with the WIC mission and in support of the University effort to promote internationalization on our campus. In other words, the purpose of the International Film Festival is to bridge cultural understanding and encourage artistic development and excellence by provoking thought through film. By bringing the best of world cinema to WCSU and Danbury, the Festival presents the city and the film industry with a singular platform that fosters creative and technical talent from an international and cross-cultural perspective.

The Festival has shown a diverse group of well-known and classic international films including:

- *Casablanca*. Moderator: Ben Oumlil, Marketing Department
- *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*. Moderator: Divya Sharma, JLA
- *Good Bye Lenin*. Moderator: Renate Ludanyi, German Center
- *A World Without Thieves*. Moderator: Zuohong Pan, Economics

For information, see the 2016 International Film Festival Calendar listed in Appendix B.

III. The 2016 International Day. (April 19 and 20, 2016).

The 2016 International Day event was organized for the first time at WCSU. The idea was introduced by Ben Oumlil (WIC Coordinator) during the WIC Committee meeting on April 19, 2016. The idea was well received by the committee members and the vote was unanimous to include this new event in the WIC program of events during the 2016 Spring Semester. Ben Oumlil has also asked for an ad hoc committee to be created. Moreover, the ad hoc committee members to have a table for ISEP information engage international students, and American students that have studied abroad. During the two-day event, light refreshments, snacks and
international deserts were served at the 2016 International Day. The 2016 International Day was hosted on both campuses. Specifically, the International Day was organized on Tuesday, April 19 at the West Side Campus Center from 11 – 1 p.m. and Wednesday, April 20 at the Midtown Student Center from 11 – 1 p.m. The event was organized in conjunction with the 2016 WIC International Films Festival. The 2016 International Day’s ad hoc committee members are: Susan Burger (Chair), Nursing Department; Ree Gunter, Counseling Center; Donna Warner, International Services Office, and Anthony Asmar, Student Representative.

VI. The 2016 WIC Get-Together with the WCSU ISEP and International Students Event.

The 2015 WIC Get-Together with ISEP Students event was the first such event organized on our campus by the WIC. During the WIC April 8th meeting, Ben Oumlil (WIC Coordinator) introduced the idea to extend this event to include both the WCSU ISEP and International Students. Additionally, Ben Oumlil introduced the idea to include the University Officials (i.e., Dr. Clark, WCSU President; Dr. Gates, the Provost; the Deans representing various academic units/schools, and Donna Warner, International Student Advisor). This exciting event is organized by our WIC Committee to celebrate the End-of-Academic Year with our ISEP and International Students and our invited guests (i.e., the University Officials). The aim is also to have an opportunity to acknowledge our ISEP and International Students and the achievements of our WIC Committee during the 2015-2016 Academic Year. Moreover, the WIC hosted this “end of the year get-together lunch” with WCSU ISEP and International students on April 29 at 12:15 on the West Side Campus. This luncheon was served as the last WIC meeting of the semester. This event was well-attended. Dr. Clack, WCSU President, was among the attendees in this important event. The consensus by the attendees, including the WIC Committee members, is to make this Get-Together with the WCSU ISEP and International Students Event an annual event.

V. Support for International Activities

The Western International Center (WIC) is committed to support of activities organized by WCSU faculty members/departments/organizations. During the academic year 2015-16, the WIC Committee allocated funds to fully/partially support these efforts. A summary is listed below.

1. Stage Presentation of Los Valientes:
   Financial assistance was provided by the WIC to support this event. The event was hosted by Galina Bakhatiarova, Foreign Language Department, on October 19, 2015. It explores the lives of iconic Latin American personalities, Diego Rivera, Cardinal Romero, and Joaquin Murrieta.

2. Information Session for ISEP 2015-2016:
The WIC provided financial support for catering services during the Information Session for Study Abroad Program during the 2015 Fall Semester and the 2016 Spring Semester. The sessions took place on October 26 – 29, 2015, and April 19 and 20, 2016. The Fall semester event was in conjunction with the 2015 International Education Week (IEW) event. The Spring Semester event was in conjunction with the 2016 WIC International Films Festival event. The aim of the ISEP information sessions is to engage international students, and American students that have studied abroad.

3. **Founding Board Director of the United Nation's Working Group:**
   The WIC sponsored a presentation by Ms. Beth Adamson, Founding Board Director of the United Nation's Working Group on Girls, and Ameesha, Girl Advocate. The presentation’s aim was to make our campus community and our local community ‘aware of the many opportunities the United Nations provides for aiding global issues: human rights, social justice, environmental needs, etc. 86 member The Organizations who sit with ECOSOC status and support the rights, needs, and protection of girls. The presentation also included WGG Girl Advocate – an area high school girl who will speak about what SHE has learned re: human rights, particularly as they relate to the girl child. A video was shown to give a flavor of Girl Delegates experiences from around the Globe.’ The event date was on Tuesday, October 27, 2015 (i.e., a part of the 2015 WIC International Education Week [IEW])

4. **A Practicing Immigration Perspective on Current Immigration Issues and Laws.**
   Renee Redman, Immigration Attorney, addressed an important and timely topic dealing with immigration issues and laws. This presentation was on Tuesday, October 27, 2015 2015 (i.e., a part of the 2015 WIC International Education Week [IEW]). The session’s attendees were from our WCSU community and the Danbury community. It was well received.

5. **International Business And Culture.**
   Dawn Reshen-Doty, President of of Benay Enterprises, addressed the critical role that culture(s) plays in international business. The presentation was on Wednesday, October 28, 2015 2015 (i.e., a part of the 2015 WIC International Education Week [IEW]). The session was well-attended and the attendees were students and faculty members from various academic units/schools.

6. **International Student Exchange Program (ISEP) Reception 2015**
   In an effort to welcome international students and to integrate them, the WIC committee organized a reception for them. Refreshments and cookies/snacks were provided by the WIC. Students shared their experience at WCSU and in the U.S. WCSU international students will also continue to be invited to WIC meetings.
VI. Budget

The 2015-16 WIC’s operative budget is $2500. The WIC FY16 Budget was submitted in February 2015. The committee used the funds in various ways to increase the awareness of student, faculty, staff, secondary school instructors and pupils, and the community in international affairs, international culture, and international problems.

VII. Challenges

1. Budgetary Challenge:

The core fiscal challenge for the WIC is budgetary pressures created by the fiscal challenge to fulfill all received financial requests. As stated, the WIC FY17 Budget was submitted in April 2016. The received feedback is that this is the first time a formal budget was formally prepared and submitted. This was done for better planning for the Academic Year 2016-17 and to establish a more formal accounting/budgetary system to manage the WIC fiscal affairs.

Additionally, there is a need to curb spending and/or for the WIC to encourage its committee members to consider/to seek outside funding sources to fully/partially funds to support current and future international oriented activities. In other words, the ‘W.I.C. shall assist in making the University community more aware of opportunities afforded by grants, student and faculty international exchanges, foreign travel with and without academic credit, international education and such other opportunities which may be of benefit and aid in fostering international understanding.’ These efforts are in line with our mission and organizational goals. Furthermore, these efforts need to be coordinated with The Office of Sponsored Research and Administrative Services at our institution.

2. Increase Participations/Engaged in WIC Activities:

a. The committee discussed additional strategies to create more awareness of this event on campus. The consensus was to implement these strategies (e.g., to be a part of course’s assignment, co-sponsoring/partnerships with other committee[s] on campus [e.g. the Center for the Study of Culture and Values committee], etc.) to encourage more attendance/engagement by our students.
b. The committee also discussed strategies to encourage more participation and meeting attendance by some committee members.

Appendix A

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK
Organized by Western International Center (WIC)
Monday October 26 – Thursday October 29, 2015

Schedule of Events

➢ **Monday, October 26, 2015**

- **Event Title:** *Students Trivia Contest*
  *Time:* 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
  *Facilitators:* Sal Trapani And Zuohong Pan
  *Location:* Campus Center (CC), Food Court (Dining Area), Westside Campus

➢ **Tuesday, October 27, 2015**

- **Event Title:** *A Practicing Immigration Attorney's Perspective on Current Immigration Issues And Laws*
Speaker: Renee Redman, Immigration Attorney  
Time: 11:50 am - 2:00 pm  
Facilitator: Marjorie Callaghan  
Location: CC Ballroom N (Conference/Meeting Room), Westside Campus

- Event Title: The United Nations (UN) Working Group on Girls  
  Speaker: Beth Adamson, Director of the Working Group on Girls  
  Time: 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm  
  Facilitator: Marjorie Callaghan  
  Location: CC Ballroom N (Conference/Meeting Room), Westside Campus

- Wednesday, October 28, 2015
  - Event Title: International Business And Culture  
    Time: 11:30 am - 1:15 pm  
    Speaker: Dawn Reshen-Doty, President, Benay Enterprises, Inc.  
    Facilitator: Ben Oumlil  
    Location: CC Ballroom N (Conference/Meeting Room), Westside Campus

  - Event Title: International Student Exchange Program (ISEP) Information Table  
    Time: 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm  
    Facilitators: Donna Warner And Anthony Asmar  
    Location: Campus Center (CC) L Lob 1 (Lobby Area), Westside Campus

  - Event Title: Get Your Name in Chinese and Hindi!  
    Time: 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm  
    Facilitators: Zuohong Pan, Divya Sharma, And Xiaoqi Han  
    Location: Campus Center (CC) L Lob 2 (Lobby Area), Westside Campus

- Thursday, October 29th, 2015
• **Event Title:** International Student Exchange Program (ISEP) Information Table  
  **Time:** 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm  
  **Facilitator:** Donna Warner  
  **Location:** Student Center (SC) SC Lob 2 (Lobby Area), Midtown Campus

• **Event Title:** Living And Study Abroad, Cultural Experiences & Music: Students' Perspective  
  **Participating Students:** Sebastian Angel, Clint Cave, Danielle Core, Geordy Hernandez, And Iryna Sanchez  
  **Time:** 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm  
  **Facilitators:** Marjorie Callaghan And Ben Oumlil  
  **Location:** CC Ballroom S (Conference/Meeting Room), Westside Campus
Appendix B

CHANGE YOUR LATITUDE

International Films Festival 2016

April 18 – 21

Come Enjoy Great Movies & Free Refreshments!

- Monday, April 18th, 5:00 pm – 8:00pm,
  Movie: Casablanca.  Moderator: Ben Oumlil
  Location: Ballroom North, Westside Campus (CC Ballroom N, theater on Westside Campus)

- Tuesday, April 19th, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm,
  Movie: The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel.  Moderator: Divya Sharma
Location: Ballroom North, Westside Campus (CC Ballroom N, theater on Westside Campus)

· Wednesday, April 20th, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm,
Movie: *Good Bye Lenin*. Moderator: Renate Ludanyi
Location: SC Theater, Midtown Campus (theater on Midtown Campus)

· Thursday, April 21st, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm,
Movie: *A World Without Thieves*. Moderator: Zuohong Pan
Location: SC Theater, Midtown Campus (theater on Midtown Campus)

All events are free and open to the campus community and sponsored by the Western International Center and support the academic mission and educational purpose of the center.