Minutes of the International Graduate Student Advisory Board

IGSAB Mentorship Program Collaboration Meeting with I-House

Attendees:

Brooke Noonan: Director, UChicagoGRAD
Denise Jorgens: Director, International House
Nick Seamons: Director, Office of International Affairs
Hannah Barton: Assistant Director, Programs and Communication International House
Nikita Mehta: Co-Chair, Graduate Council
Weija Wang: Leadership Team, IGSAB
Christina Flippaki: Member, IGSAB
Jelena Scepanovic: Member, IGSAB
Bishwa Pandey: Parliamentarian, Graduate Council

Minutes:

Background of the program

- Nikita introduces the members of the meeting group.
- She provides some context that led to the conception of this mentorship program. The idea started in February 2020, when some BSD students expressed their desire for mentorship to Nikita, who was then a GC member. She worked to conceptualize the model based on DAB’s Maroon Mates program and had received funding for the program. However, Covid-19 caused the program to go on hold.
- In 2021 Brooke helped conceive the IGSAB that catered to all international students and the mentorship program was revived.
- In November of 2021 Nikita had a meeting with DAB to get a sense of how to build on their program and potentially improve it.

Overview of the program

- Weija gives an overview of how the program will be rolled out.
• The goal is to have a small ratio of mentor to mentees. This will be accomplished through a matching program, which will be done through a questionnaire. To motivate active participation there is going to be a stipend for the mentors.
• The proposed mentor to mentee ratio is expected to be 1:1 or 1:2.
• The questionnaire will have 21 questions.
  o The questions will ask mentors and mentees what they look for in their counterpart, including age, division, gender, and sexual orientation.
  o The second section will ask more detailed questions.
  o The third question will focus on mentors and understand why they will be successful mentors and what topics they will be comfortable with.
• The stipend per quarter is set at $100/group. The group anticipates 30 groups in the pilot program so it will be $3000/quarter.
• The goal is to have the groups meet two to three times a quarter.
• The overall goals of this program are similar to the Global Mentorship Network provided by International House.
• Weija says there will be a virtual kick off meeting, which will have two parts: One where everyone meets and then breakout rooms for the breakout rooms.
• There will be a Google drive for photos, slack channel for communication and feedback forums to help improve the program.
• Nikita says the high ratio is the main priority.
• There will be two application cycles, one in the winter and then in the fall for the new international students.

Questions and clarifications

• Denise raised a concern that since there is a large overlap with the Global Mentorship Network would introducing this program mean the I-House program would be scrapped mid-year, because that would be a problem for the existing groups that are part of the program. She also stated there were some planned changes.
• Nick suggested that the two programs should be run concurrently and evaluated over the summer to see how we should proceed, whether we need to replace one with the other or retain both.
• Nikita stated the plan was not to terminate GMN immediately, but in a phased manner and the IGSAB mentorship program is a pilot.
• Hannah stated that most of the I-House cohort chose the group dynamic for the mentorship program because they felt the 1:1 ratio was intimidating.
• She also stated that the group always had multiple mentors because one would invariably get burdened by work and have to miss some meetings.
• Denise seconds this thought stating that students invariably put academics first, which is why we are here. She does say there will be a lot of support from I-House for this program and I-House is willing to support the program including hosting events in I-House.