

**Committee on Advising and Student Life (CASL) Meeting#12 Minutes**

**April 16, 2025**

**11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.**

**Zoom Meeting**

**Attendees:** Jim Doyle (Chair), Rudra Kafle (Secretary), Shawn Gilles, Natalie Bouffard, Emily Perlow, Colleen Callahan-Panday (Guest Speaker)

**Call to Order:** 11:04 A.M.

1. The chair welcomed the guest speaker Colleen Callahan-Panday, the Director of the International Students and Scholars Office.
2. Colleen informed the CASL about the activities of the International Students and Scholars Office related to the well-being of international students. Although the office works with various kinds of international students in terms of their immigration status, most of them are F1 and J1 visa holders. This number at WPI is about 1050. The majority of them are in F1 status.
3. Colleen mentioned that the office helps students with a variety of things including maintaining legal immigration status, finding on and off-campus jobs in the Optional Practical Training (OPT) and Curricular Practical Training (CPT) programs, assisting with cultural adjustment, and offering general counseling and advice. The office also supports international students in the tax filing process by providing relevant information. The office monitors the [Student and Exchange Visitor Information System \(SEVIS\)](#) record which is maintained by the USCIS. She also informed that F1 and J1 students must take courses in-person, and they are allowed to take only one online course (per semester) to maintain their status properly.
4. In the Q & A session, Colleen mentioned that international students are being informed regularly about the current situation and the importance of maintaining their international student status as required by the federal policies. The office holds information sessions regularly in person and in Zoom and instructs students to keep essential documents with them all the time (paper copies around Worcester, originals if traveling outside of Worcester/Massachusetts). Students are advised to make a plan and to prepare for the worst-case scenario. It is recommended that international students avoid nonessential international travel for the next few months and that they conduct a risk assessment if they are thinking of travel, considering items such as: 1) do they need to renew their visa while abroad, 2) have they ever had interactions with US law enforcement (not including campus police) such as speeding tickets, etc, 3) what is the nature of their digital hygiene, 4) is their country on one of the draft travel ban lists, 5) is their research considered sensitive/could it trigger security background checks, 6) have they ever had trouble maintaining their visa status previously due to academic credits, work authorization, etc.
5. Colleen also mentioned that the office has started checking students' Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) records every day to make sure that students' status is properly maintained; these records cannot be accessed by the students themselves. Students have also been asked to update their emergency contact information on Workday.
6. Concerns were expressed for the four WPI international students whose visas had been revoked. It was noted that the revocation did not appear to be speech related.
7. To the question asked by the CASL chair about how the faculty could best help international students right now, Colleen said that as the students are worried about the uncertainties under new federal policies, faculty could ask them how they are doing and whether they need any help and point students to the WPI resources that support the international students. Anxiety among international students is high and flexibility on the part of the faculty could be helpful.

8. The chair thanked Colleen for providing the information to the CASL about the activities that are being done for international students to support their safety and well-being, and the Committee expressed its support for the work of the International Students and Scholars Office.

**Adjournment:** 12:01 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rudra Kafle (Secretary)