**Member Attendees:**

Laura Kanney (Ashland), Angela Shirley (Auburn), Tara Standerfer (EIU), Sherie Klee (Director, GVSU), Marty Lash (KSU), Tiffany Dellard (MTSU), Joetta Browning (NKU), Anna Hiers (UGA), Sharon Brennan (UKY), Donielle Stephens (USM), Kelsey McLean (UWRF), Leslie Rush (UWYO), Dianne Thompson (UWYO), Elizabeth McMahan (UWYO), Anna Abramenka (Program Coordinator, COST)

**Absent:** University of Alabama, Ohio University, University of Nevada – Reno

**Receiving Site Attendees:**

Denis Courtney (Ireland), Maria Elena Ruiz (Quito, Ecuador), Ashley Mogollon (Quito, Ecuador), Hans Campman (Netherlands), Sonja van Harten (Netherlands), Lorraine Connell (Australia), Evelin Wright (Cologne, Germany), Justine DeFrancesco (Berlin, Germany), Claudia Chapa (Merida, Mexico)

**Welcome & Introductions**

This was the first COST meeting and conference for seven (7) individuals.

Marty Lash (Kent State University) and Hans Campman (Netherlands) were recognized for their years of service and participation in COST. Both were presented with small retirement/ appreciation gifts and an open invitation to all future meetings.

**Approval of 2022 Minutes**

All submitted edits were updated. Find past meeting minutes on the Coordinator Portal.

The 2022 Minutes were unanimously approved.

**Director’s Report**

Business is back to normal (as much as possible) post-pandemic.

**Budget Report**

Three main revenue streams are annual membership fees ($1,300 per institution), application fees ($200 per application), and student membership fees ($150 per student placed). Since July 1, 2022 we had 66 applicants and 62 placements. Our balance and proposed budget remain in the black even though we are currently placing 2/3 what we were placing in 2018/2019/2020.

Budget Proposal 2023-2024 was unanimously accepted.

**Placement Fee Increase Proposal**

The current placement fee structure was last set in 2012. Currently 6-10 weeks ($900), 11 weeks ($1000), 12 weeks ($1100), 13+ ($1200). Most placements are now 6-10 weeks long. Discussion to increase placement fee by $100 at each tier and revisit at next meeting if future increases are needed.

Proposal to increase placement fees beginning with **Fall 2024** placements to the following:

6-10 weeks ($1000), 11 weeks ($1100), 12 weeks ($1200), 13+ ($1300)

Unanimously approved.

Sherie will update the withdrawal policy to reflect the increased fees.

**Placement Statistics & Evaluations**

19 fall 2022 placements and 43 spring 2023 placements with 10 withdrawals

**Membership Updates**

*Youngstown State University* has withdrawn from the Consortium, bringing us to 15 members.

Our bylaws state that our membership is capped at 16 institutions. We keep a waitlist with names and contact information of interested institutions. We will invite contacts on our waitlist to submit an application to join, a subcommittee will be formed to review applications and propose a new member, and an electronic vote will be taken from the current membership before inviting the new member.

*China* is technically open, but still not ready to receive placements. Coordinator should refrain from authorizing China on a student’s application at this time.

*Bahamas* was put on hold for the 2022-2023 placement cycle. Communication has remained unsatisfactory. Decision made to remove Bahamas from list of possible receiving sites.

*Switzerland* was not able to commit after COVID. No longer an option.

**22-23 Side Visits**

Members are encouraged to visit existing sites or form new relationships while traveling for other purposes. If traveling and want to do a side visit for COST, contact Sherie to request up to $500.

Sherie visited Denis in Ireland, Evelin in Cologne, and Justine Berlin during her Fall 2022 travels.

**New Site Proposal**

*Presented by Sherie Klee (made connection while living in Yerevan for 4 months)*

AYB School, Yerevan, Armenia

Armenia has a Level 2 Travel Advisory (Small strip of conflict at boarder with Azerbaijan is not close to this site). Yerevan is one of the oldest cities in the world. It is a modern metropolitan city where English is spoken in most places. The location itself is well-suited for arts or history majors. May hold appeal for students with heritage in the region.

The AYB Schools is a private school established in 2006. Tuition is $7,500 per year. Adhering to Project Based Learning (PBL) in grades K-12 it has 500 students and 220 staff. AYB is Baccalaureate Certified, similar to IB with English language instruction at all levels in all core subjects. It is a dual immersion school requiring students to learn 2 languages aside from their home language (English, + one more). With a modern infrastructure the school has partnerships with MIT robotics and engineering as part of the Fab Lab project. Host families would be with one of the members of the board of trustees at $200/ week.

Proposed to add Armenia and the AYB School to our list of possible placement sites beginning as early as Spring 2024.

11 voted to approve.

Sherie will seek official MOA from AYB School. Anna will add Armenia to the Program options on the website and application available for Spring 2024 applicants.

**Prospective New Sites**Will resume official site visits again this year to assess potential new sites.

Thailand – recommended by UWRF as former COST student currently teaching in Bangkok contacted them with interest in being a placement site.

Ghana – Recommended by Kent State University from connection with interested school.

Membership majority voted in favor of exploring placement possibilities in Thailand this year 2023-2024. University of Georgia (Anna Hiers) is next up on the site visit schedule. Anna H. will work with Sherie to plan and coordinate site visit if pre-vetting process proves the site will be a good fit for COST.

**Revisit COVID Policies and Protocols**

Discussion on whether or not to keep current COVID protocols in place. Overall suggestion to keep them in place for host families/sites that may still have vaccination requirements/preferences.

**Revisit COST Student Code of Conduct & Housing Policy**

Post-COVID there has been an uptick of students who are asking to leave early without any medical/personal emergencies. Coordinators are tasked with communicating to students the commitments they make when signing the COST Code of Conduct, which includes finishing the placement as agreed upon, staying in COST defined housing, and abiding by rules and laws of country, school, and homestays. Also noted were rules about visitors. COST participants may not have anyone (significant other, parent, friend, etc.) visiting or accompanying them during their placement. Friends and family may visit during school holidays or after placements are completed.

**Institutional Policies, Procedures, Communication for Early Returns**

Due to recent incident, all sending sites need a protocol and process in place for early *removal* of students. This may include giving authority to the COST Coordinator and sending site reinforcing that decision. Receiving site coordinators are reminded to direct any/ all concerns that would warrant institutional intervention (breaking of student code of conduct) to sending coordinators to come to joint decision on any given student’s placement.

If it is decided that a student is being removed from the program, immediately notify the COST Director of the date that the student is ending their participation in COST.

**Application Deadlines**

Due to online nature of applications, quicker turn around from receiving coordinators to confirm placements, and in increase in late application requests, beginning with Spring 2024 applications, COST national deadlines will be as follows:

Spring participation – **September 15**

Fall participation – **March 15**

Still recommended to set internal deadlines earlier to allow time to review applications and work with students to make edits.

**The COST Application Process**

Application process demonstrated.

Coordinators must give interested students following link to create a profile and being an application: <https://www.gvsu.edu/cost/apply-login.htm> This link is not publicly available.

Student creates log-in, creates profile, and begins application.

***Important Notes to Coordinators*:**

* Make sure each application states the number of weeks a student is seeking for placement. Ensure the dates provided are at least that long to accommodate the weeks required. Use the Coordinator Notes section to communicate if beginning and end dates are of greater importance than number of weeks in school, if number of weeks stated account for any school breaks or are in addition to any breaks, etc. Do not approve applications missing dates and/or number of weeks.
* New expectation is that all essays and letters of recommendation will be in PDF format, please check this as you review and ask students to convert all Word docs to PDF format before uploading.
* COST is removing the requirement for a personal/ character letter of recommendation. We’re now only requiring two letters of recommendation (one from a university faculty member and one from an individual who has seen the applicant working with children).
* Make sure to keep signed hard copies of all required forms on file until students return from placement.
* Students can continue editing their application even after they have submitted and paid the application fee. Applications are editable up until the moment a coordinator “approves” the application.
* If an application requires edits, contact student to make the edits and leave application in “unapproved” state until all edits are made. Do NOT deny the application for editing purposes.
* Once a student receives their placement letter, sending coordinators should have students reach out directly to the receiving coordinator to introduce themselves, and sending coordinators should also send a note to the receiving coordinator to open the door for communication about requirements and placement expectations early on.

**Placements in Non-English-Speaking Schools**

We have a few sites that are eager to place students in national or public schools where most, if not all, of the core subjects are taught in a language other than English. While COST student teachers would still be conducting their lessons in English, they may not be able to cover all of the core subjects every day of the week. Furthermore, these schools usually are not able to place students with a single mentor teacher. Students will work with a number of teachers, with one person identified as the lead mentor for contact and observation purposes. If sending institutions have any requirements for single cooperating teachers or teaching core subject areas during the COST student teaching placement, please make that clear in the Coordinator Notes section of the application.

**Promoting Globally Competent Teaching through COST Participation:**

**An Update on the University of Kentucky’s Approach**

Sharon Brennan and Ellie Holliday, University of Kentucky presented background and resources related to their journey in developing and implementing a global competency certification course that is required for UKY COST participants.

**Receiving Site Presentations & Updates**

**Darwin & Melbourne, Australia**

*Lorraine Connell*

Placing primarily in Darwin for the time being. Will try to get contacts in Melbourne back up and working again. Housing is the main issue for Melbourne. Homestays are $300 AUD per week.

**Cologne, Germany**

*Evelin Wright*

Been with COST since 2005! Places at KLS, secondary English Lang. Arts and History. German is official language of instruction. Elementary placements in BiLingo, a bilingual school, and Cologne International School can basically cover all subjects in English (5 years old and up). Housing is typically apartments that run about 650 Euro a month. Food and transportation are not included. Can take 2 placements a semester or up to 5 a year.

**Berlin, Germany**

*Justine DeFrancesco*

Places at Berlin Cosmopolitan School. Early years placements 8 months-5 years, elementary/middle 5-13 years. Can place mild-moderate special education, PE, ELL, Dance, Music. Homestay is 200 euro per week. Includes food and board.

**The Netherlands**

*Sonja van Harten*

Places in multiple schools where language of instruction is Dutch. But at 10 years old, students begin some lessons in English. Can also place foreign language placements (Spanish, French, German), PE, Arts, Music. Can also explore 16 bilingual schools in the Netherlands to see their interest in placing COST student teachers. Note: It is pretty universally expected that COST students will bike to work/ school.

**Ireland**

*Denis Courtney*

Places in multiple (12) schools in Kerry/ Cork area. Ireland schools are all pretty much set on the traditional Catholic system. However, participation in religious activities of the school is not a requirement of all students or staff. Many are still boys’ or girls’ schools, some are becoming co-ed. Can place special education. A Irish police vetting form is required and sent to students ahead of time to complete at no charge. Homestay is 220 euro per week. Includes full board and transportation to school. Note: Mentor teacher might not be the Cooperating Teacher.

**Ourense, Spain**

*Alberto Veiga*

Places in multiple national/public schools in Ourense. Official language of instruction is Spanish, but student teachers have the opportunity to plan lessons around varied subjects and work with children in English. COST student teachers receive an extensive handbook and housing questionnaire very soon after official confirmation letters are sent. Homestays specifics are communicated closer to arrival date, but $215 per week includes everything. Students pay for housing ahead of time.

**Quito, Ecuador**

*Maria Elena Ruiz & Ashley Mollogon*

Placements at American School of Quito which has a National section (bilingual) and a smaller International section (English with Spanish as a special class). Can place early childhood from 3 years old to secondary 18 years old. Placements in fine arts, PE, Spanish literature. Many foreign hires and a great place to learn Spanish. Working on designing and building a new campus! Homestays are $200 USD per week. Note: Ecuador uses the US dollar, so not exchanges necessary.

**Merida, Mexico**

*Claudia Chapa*

Been with COST since 1997! Places at multiple schools in Merida including Spanish speaking schools and private bilingual schools. If fluent in Spanish, can place in special ed. Homestays are abundant and very excited to host COST students. $175 per week includes everything.

**Placement School Certificates**

This is a priority project for the summer. Placement sites/ receiving coordinators, please contact Anna with the name(s) of schools that you would like to receive a letter of appreciation and certificate of participation in hosting COST student teachers.

**Upcoming Conferences**

2024 – University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY | May 15-17, 2024

2025 –University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY (tentative)

**Subcommittees**

The following subcommittees were formed:

***Post-COST Experiences***

Tasked with curating information on teaching abroad opportunities after COST participation.

Members: \*Tiffany Dellard, Justine DeFrancesco, Alberto Veiga, Dianne Thompson

***Marketing***

Tasked with developing generic marketing resources that can be used by any sending site to market COST.

Members: \*Joetta Browning, Leslie Rush, Laura Kanney, Maria Elena Ruiz

***Homestay Guidance***

Tasked with developing universal housing rules and guidance for COST Coordinators and participants.

Members: \*Claudia Chapa, Anna Hiers, Denis Courtney, Lorraine Connell, Evelin Wright, Kelsey McLean, Sonja van Harten, Tara Standerfer

***New Member Search Committee***

Tasked with soliciting and reviewing applications for new member institution.

Members: \*Sherie Klee, Donielle Stephens, Elizabeth McMahan, Angela Shirley, Ashley Mogollon

A big **THANK YOU** to Alberto Veiga for all the work he did to coordinate and keep things moving forward for the conference!

**Meeting adjourned** at 2:45 pm