An Overview of International Students at the University of Iowa

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Things We’ll Cover This Morning

• Statistics

• Review the various programs and services provided for international students on campus

• Discuss the primary ways academic advisors may be asked to provide input to ISSS
A Statistical Overview Of Our International Community
Enrollment of International Students 2000-2015

4578 Total International Students
- 4120 Enrolled
- 458 Students undertaking post-graduation practical training and employment after receiving a UI degree
- 1018 New undergrad, grad, and professional Fall 2014
- 433 J-1 visiting scholars

Our international student population is among the top 50 of all US colleges and universities.
The International Population Served by ISSS

CIC Institutions in 2013, Open Doors Report

- International students comprised almost **13% of the total UI student body** in Fall 2015 (same as Fall 2014 vs. 10.6% in Fall 2012)

- Compare this to **4% of the total U.S. higher ed. population**, according to Open Doors

**Total numbers include students on practical training employment**
Our Top Countries of International Student Enrollment

Increasing Populations:
- Iraq
- Saudi Arabia
- Iran
- Brazil

Fall 2014 saw students at the UI from over 114 countries

National Stats from 2014 Open Doors Report
North America: 1.3%  
Europe & Russia: 5.3%  
Sub-Saharan Africa: 1.6%  
Central & South Asia: 9.7%  
East & Southeast Asia: 74%  
Middle East: 4.5%  
Latin America & the Caribbean: 3.4%  
Oceania: 0.2%
### Most Common Majors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Graduate &amp; Professional</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Business/Pre-Business</td>
<td>• MBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Finance</td>
<td>• Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Economics</td>
<td>• Computer Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Math</td>
<td>• Pharmacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Psychology</td>
<td>• Psychological and Quantitative Foundations</td>
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Consistent with national trends, except Engineering is 2\textsuperscript{nd} highest nationally.
Financial Impact

Each year, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, estimates the economic impact of international students through a formula which takes into account tuition charges and typical living costs, as well as financial assistance that is provided by the institution. In 2013:

- National impact - nearly $27 billion
- State of Iowa - over $317 million
- Communities in our 2nd congressional district - over $137 million

Gender
Female: 47.4%
Male: 52.6%

Average Age
Undergraduate: 20
Graduate & Professional: 29

Primary Funding

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UG</th>
<th>Grad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal &amp; Family Funds</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Government</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart includes only those students attending the University in an educational (F-1 or J-1) immigration status.
2012 saw us switching to a paperless office, with some processes completely online and no longer requiring an in-person meeting with an advisor. These include Social Security letters, letters of invitation, Curricular Practical Training (CPT) authorization, and a dozen other things, which would add several hundred more if still required in-person visits.

The total of non-contact e-forms reviewed/processed was about **6500** for 2014-15.
University Impact

- **Training staff and revising how certain services are offered, adding new positions** – Writing and Speaking Centers, Rhetoric department
- **Increased number of ESL sections** and staff (15 before 2009, 110 for Fall 2015)
- **UI pre-enrolling** students in certain high demand classes to balance course makeup
- **Housing** has expanded opening dates and staying open over breaks
- **Academic Advising Center** uses some group advising during orientation
- ISSS, Career Center, College of Business, and College of Engineering **hire special staff** to focus on international student issues, retention, and internationalization efforts
- **High level of collaboration** among UI offices – ISSS, CLAS, Business, Engineering, University Counseling Services, Dean of Students, Threat Assessment Team, Academic Advising, Career Center, etc.
http://international.uiowa.edu

- “About Us”
- “Annual Reports”
Programs and Services for International Students and Scholars
Staff of ISSS

- **Lee Seedorff** – Senior Associate Director

**International Student Advisors** –
- **Michael Bortscheller** – Assistant Director
- **Robert Gutwein** – Assistant Director
- **Laura Holtkamp** – Senior Advisor
- **Brandon Paulson** – Senior Advisor
- **Rudia Kihura** – Advisor
- **Kevin Roiseland** – Advisor

**Student Assistants** –
- **Clarisse Chia** – Life in Iowa
- **Marcelo Miranda Melo** – Global Buddies

**Support Staff** –
- **Shuhui Lin** – Support and Retention Coordinator
- **Taivna Mills** – International Services Assistant
ISSS International Student and Scholar Services

• Provides pre-arrival info and orientation activities
• Immigration, adjustment, personal, financial advising/referral
• Intercultural programming
• Events for students
• Tax workshops
Pre-Arrival Information

Pre-Arrival Checklist

• Welcome
• Set up Hawk ID/email
• Visa application instructions
• Placement exams
• Housing information, including temporary housing upon arrival
• Travel information – to Eastern Iowa Airport, from airport to Iowa City area
• Orientation schedule

Incoming students and parents attend a pre-departure information session in Beijing in July 2014

Pre-Departure Sessions in Beijing and Shanghai

• Creating videos that can be viewed in other countries and other parts of China that we can’t visit in person
Nothing says “welcome to the U.S.” like a fire alarm! New visiting J-1 scholars and their daughter get to enjoy a break outside while a fire alarm interrupted their scholar check-in at ISSS. The couple are both joining the UI as exchange visitors this fall in Theatre Arts. Matteo Destro is from Italy and Alay Arceus Macazaga is originally from Spain, and their daughter June accompanied them to the US.

Other Information on ISSS Website

- Health and insurance information
- **Make Connections** – Campus and community organizations such as FIS, OASIS, Friends Without Borders
- **Guide to Living in Iowa City** – Updating what used to be an old printed manual: housing and housing rights, banking issues, driver’s license, communications services, weather, transportation, information for students or scholars with spouses or children, safety, academic resources, cultural adjustment information, non-immigration laws
When?

• In fall, undergrad orientation is the week before classes begin; grad students two weeks before because such large numbers. In spring and summer both groups are combined in the week before classes start. Required of all students.

Content?

• Welcome session, cultural adjustment, overview of general education, academic advising and registration, social event with domestic students, community organizations session, special sessions on health and health insurance, mental health, university billing, immigration regulations, non-immigration laws, English testing

• Fall semesters international students also participate in OnIowa, which puts them in close contact with new domestic students.
More Orientation

OnIowa!

• Immersion event for all new undergrad students in the days before fall semester
• Opportunities to meet other new students, learn about student organizations and activities, develop “Hawkeye” identity, activities such as game and movie nights, college open houses, small group activities, academic success sessions and “sample” classes, set goals, and form the big “I” in Kinnick Stadium
• International attendance has not always been great, we really push advertisement and participation, recruiting student organizations to get the message out to new students that this is worthwhile (and parts required)
• Students say they want to meet American students – this is the perfect opportunity to begin
Even MORE Orientation???

International@Iowa
- 1 s.h. online class **required of all new international undergrads**, taken in **first 8 weeks** of semester
- Expands on the **topics first encountered at orientation**: immigration and other laws, adjustment and diversity issues, mental health issues and services, academic success strategies and resources, academic expectations, including expansive section on plagiarism and other forms of misconduct
- **Fall 2016** – rolling into Success at Iowa with special module just for international students

Global@Iowa
- Optional course bringing together **international students and current domestic students** to focus on exploring self-identities, building cross-cultural relationships, and understanding diversity and cultural difference.
- Good way for new international students to **formally connect with domestic students** and help with the adjustment process and learning “the ropes” while domestic students learn multiple perspectives and experiences of the international students.

*Training for spring orientation small group leaders.*
Life in Iowa

- Ongoing “orientation” throughout the year
- **Practical topics**: resume writing, job interviewing skills, employment visas, how to “network” in business, stress management, study skills, body image, volunteerism, academic success, considering grad school
- **Social Events**: Wii/game nights, holiday celebrations like pumpkin carving for Halloween, decorating cookies
- **Excursions**: Iowa tourist sites such as Amana Colonies and Effigy Mounds, bus trip to Chicago
Special Programs Across Campus

**ISSS Programs**
- Orientation
- Life in Iowa
- Global Buddies
- Friends Without Borders
- Bridging Domestic and Global Diversity Program
- Building Our Global Community
- International@Iowa
- Global@Iowa
- Live Stream Graduation
- Programs for J-1 Scholars

**Other UI/Community Programs**
- Iowa Intensive English Program/ESL Classes
- University Housing
- University Counseling Services
- Tippie College of Business and College of Engineering
- Friends of International Students
- International Women’s Club
- Student Government & Orgs
  (International Student Advisory Board, Organization for the Support of International Students, nationality groups)

See Handouts for more details and programs. Programs in green promote interaction with Americans as primary purpose.
https://www.facebook.com/uiowaISSS
Let’s Talk About Language Skills

Let’s look at two statements:

• Most international students do not have sufficient English skills, and struggle to communicate when they arrive.
• Most international students do have sufficient English skills, otherwise they can’t be admitted.

• Both are statements we hear all the time from students, faculty, and staff. How can both be true?
• “This student’s English sounds just fine to me!”
• “I don’t think this student is understanding anything in my lecture.”
• “We can have some good conversations, but she seems to really struggle with her reading assignments.”
• “Why doesn’t the university do more to help improve their language skills?”
• “Why doesn’t the university provide everything in translation?”
• “This is stupid, why do I have to take these classes?!?!”
Qualifying for Admission

• The ability to keep up with lectures, readings, and discussions at the college level requires a very different set of skills and proficiency than simple conversation.

• There are English language proficiency requirements to be admitted for students for whom English is not the primary language. Various tests, with the TOEFL being the most common, are acceptable proof of proficiency.

• Students who fall within a lower range of test scores are required to take our in-house English Proficiency Exam during orientation week.
  • Determines areas needing extra work, such as oral skills, pronunciation, grammar, reading, writing, and listening.
  • ESL courses will be required depending on testing results; in some cases students are assigned to full-time intensive English study for first semester or two.
  • About 95% of new international students require at least one ESL class.
  • Some graduate programs require the English Proficiency Exam during orientation regardless of TOEFL score.
ESL Courses

• ESL Programs/Iowa Intensive English Program provides the instruction.

• Faculty hold advanced degrees in English as a Second Language.

• Students typically required to take classes for one, two, or three semesters depending on proficiency coming in.

• Curriculum incorporates cultural education as part of the language learning process: examining American customs and values, adjustment issues, current events, campus life, functioning day to day in Iowa.

• Students who take ESL classes here actually receive much more “practical” information and training than students who do not have to take them. They also state that they feel greater confidence in their language skills than students at other large research institutions (SERU survey 2014).
Language Challenges

• Students still need to practice once they complete the ESL requirements. It is **EASY to lose** language skills!
• Applying the skills learned can be **intimidating** for some students.
• Others simply spend most time outside class with other students from home, so **do not practice** what they have learned.
• Functioning in a second language can be **stressful, scary, and exhausting**, at least at first.
• But students who do not have the needed level of proficiency either when they arrive or after passing their ESL courses will **likely not succeed**.
• Have to carefully consider **how language can contribute to segregation** (ex. courses or study material in a foreign language, students in ESL courses “isolated,” whose language gets something translated and whose does not).
Student Immigration Regulations

Topics Frequently Encountered by Advisors
Immigration Basis for Advising

• ISSS must monitor and report several things to the U.S. government. We also approve requests by students for certain special authorizations, and must make sure international students are in full compliance with federal laws. In some cases we need input from academic advisors.

• Note that your input is only that; it does not legally bind you in any way, and is never the “final word” for or against anything. All final decisions are with ISSS as well as the responsibility for those decisions.

• It is fine if you disagree with the request a student is making – we want to know!
Things You May Be Asked to Comment On

• Program Extension (extending the immigration document)

• Enrollment Less Than Full-Time

• Employment Authorization Requests

• Requests to Issue an Immigration Document After Absence
“Normal Progress”

- Full-time enrollment of at least 12 s.h. each fall/spring
- Goal of being able to complete within original time frame of the immigration document – 4 years for an undergrad (5 years not unusual)
- Not hindered by ongoing poor academic performance
  - Bad grades are not a problem alone, although will be if leads to academic dismissal
  - While no specific limits to second-grade options or withdrawn classes, this is something we look at should a student make special requests to extend in future
  - If a student has numerous drops/withdrawals/second grade only marks, we may not grant them extensions of stay
Program Extension

• Immigration document (usually I-20) is generally issued for 4 years for undergrad degree.

• Sometimes a student cannot graduate in time, so may need to extend.

• ISSS needs to know there is a legitimate academic reason for the request.
  • Making “normal progress”
  • Changes of major
  • Double/triple major
  • No unusual delay
  • Cannot accept minors or certificate programs as reasons to extend, only degree programs

• Need estimate from academic advisor on new expected graduation date.

• Yes, you can decline to recommend! That is still input, and we may or may not end up granting the extension, but giving a negative recommendation is perfectly fine.
Part-Time Authorization

• Federal law requires undergrads to take 12 s.h. each fall/spring – summers do not matter unless first semester of enrollment or returning after an absence.

• Students may drop below full-time in specific situations, with ISSS approval:
  • Academic reasons
    • First year of study: English difficulty, unfamiliar with American teaching methods, difficulty with readings
    • Any time during program: Improper course level
  • Final semester
  • Medical issues
Drops, Adds, and Withdrawals

• Adds – no ISSS signature needed!

• Drops – need ISSS advisor signature
  • Problem – students dropping below 12 s.h. on their own during start of semester or before late-starting classes begin; we will get alert the next day and must contact the student to “add back” what they dropped or something else, at which point it may be too late.

• Withdrawals – special e-form for students to fill out. If during semester, must leave the U.S. within 15 days.

• Retroactive Drops/Withdrawals – not permitted.
Caution re: Online Courses!

• Immigration regulations restrict online/distance courses.

• Only 1 such course can count toward full-time each semester.
  • Students may take more than one, but only one will be included in the full-time count.

• It is currently not possible for ISSS to catch these, and nothing gives us any indication when this happens. We must rely on students to remember this and hope academic advisors might catch it as well.
Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

• For employment off-campus while still a student.

• Must be an internship type of situation, directly related to the degree program (certificates and minors do not count).
  • Examples that do not work: selling books as traveling sales person; working at Bread Garden as cashier.

• Students must receive ISSS authorization before starting any such work.

• They register the internship with the Career Center (Pomerantz).
ISSSS Website for Advisors

http://international.uiowa.edu/isss/departments

• Academic Advising and International Students
• Employment and International Students
• Plus Cultural Training Opportunities for Staff/Faculty
Cultural Training and Programs for Departments

- Building Our Global Community (BGC) certificate program for staff and faculty
  - Campus internationalization
  - Enhancing intercultural insight
  - Chinese, Korean, and Indian academic systems
  - Name pronunciation

- Presentations to departments
  - Demographics
  - Student immigration rules
  - J-1 scholar process/issues
  - Programming for students (UG and Grad)
  - Intercultural skill building
  - Tailored on request
Questions?

Thank you for participating!