

International Student Support and Integration 2008-2019

The mission of the International Student Committee is to review and make recommendations regarding the recruitment, admission, advising, orientation, retention, programming, and support services for international students and campus internationalization.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES

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Member Offices



- Academic Advising Center
- Academic Support and Retention
- Admissions
- English as a Second Language
- Center for Diversity and Enrichment
- Center for Student Involvement and Leadership
- Center for Teaching
- College of Engineering
- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- International Programs
- International Student Advisory Board
- International Student and Scholar Services
- Office of the Dean of Students
- Office of the Provost
- Orientation Services
- Pomerantz Career Center
- Student Health and Wellness
- Threat Assessment Team
- Tippie College of Business
- University College
- University Counseling Services
- University Housing/Residence Education
- University of Iowa Libraries

Admission

Goal: Admit students who can succeed.

- Reviewed TOEFL requirements.
- Raised minimum TOEFL from 71 to 80. Set minimum individual sub-scores to 17.

Academic, Social, and Cultural Support

Goal: Ensure international students receive support necessary to transition to the university and persist to graduation.

- Increased number of English as a Second Language sections to meet demand, revised curriculum and created policies that ensure students enroll in and successfully complete requisite course-work.
- Increased staffing for Writing and Speaking Centers.
- Implemented cultural programming (International Student and Scholar Services) and career services aimed at international students (Pomerantz Career Center).
- Provided individualized academic advising for first-year students, specifically focused on needs of international students (Academic Advising Center, College of Business, College of Engineering).

Faculty and Staff Support

Goal: Provide resources and support to assist instructors and staff in working effectively with an increasingly internationally diverse student population.

- Incorporated training on working with international students into Rhetoric TA training and Residence Advisor (RA) training.
- Provided consultation for instructors teaching Rhetoric and General Education Literature (Speaking and Writing Center).
- Conducted specialized workshops for instructors (Center for Teaching workshops).
- Offered in-house and campus-wide training for academic advisors (Academic Advising Center).

The committee was established to ensure that campus infrastructure was in place to accommodate the surge in undergraduate international students. The committee conducted an audit of existing programming and processes for the recruitment, admission, orientation, advising, and registration of entering first-year and transfer international students. It then made recommendations on how to improve processes and create an improved experience for entering international students and staff. While many of the initial goals were met, many other new goals have been added and expanded.

Committee Goals and Related Initiatives

2008-2009

Policies, Processes, Procedures

Goal: Revise and establish policies, processes and procedures that ensure a positive, seamless entry and transitional experience for international students.

- Streamlined, enhanced, and improved orientation, advising, and registration.
- Reduced duplication between Orientation Services and ISSS orientation programming.
- Pre-enrolled first-year international students in critical courses prior to arrival (e.g. math, science, statistics, and economics).
- Changed University Housing assignments and move-in processes and procedures for international students.

2009-2010

- Increased number of English as a Second Language sections from 15 to 26 for fall semester 2009.
- Developed system for projecting number of seats needed for English as a Second Language that incorporated incoming classes and backlog.
- Phase One implementation of recommendations, including changes in orientation and advising assignments, housing move-in, and a new session on the General Education Program in the Orientation program.
- Academic Advising Center begins professional development program to increase international student advisor effectiveness.



- Increased number of English as a Second Language sections from 26 to 40 fall semester 2010.
- Subcommittee recommends raising minimum TOEFL scores for the online exam from 71 to 80, with minimum scores of 17 on test sub-scores.
- English as a Second Language and Rhetoric examine student readiness for Rhetoric for those students not held for the English Proficiency Exam (students who achieve 100 or higher on TOEFL).
- English as a Second Language and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences establish new policies regarding how students will demonstrate successful completion of English as a Second Language coursework.
- University Housing incorporates cross-cultural training into RA training.
- Career Center hires staff member to focus on programming for international students and begins offering workshops designed for international students.
- Evaluation & Exam Services begins development of web-based portal to provide real-time access to testing and placement exams and explores how it could be used to streamline English Proficiency Exam testing.
- Engineering creates World Flags Project in Seamans Center as part of initiative to promote a more welcoming physical environment.
- ISSS adds peer advisors for entering international students.

2010-2011

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COMMITTEE



International Programs

- Increased number of English as a Second Language sections from 40 to 76. Achieved goal of providing sufficient English as a Second Language for students to complete all required classes in two semesters (to be Rhetoric-ready in two semesters).
- English as a Second Language implements revised curricular offerings and more rigorous grading rubrics and standardized exams across all sections of a course.
- Effective spring semester 2012, students held to newly revised minimum TOEFL score for admission to the university.
- Piloted a pre-enrollment initiative. Enrolled students in critical, high-demand classes prior to August arrival (math, economics, statistics, and chemistry).
- Rhetoric integrates training on working with internationally diverse classrooms into new instructor training program for Rhetoric.
- Writing Center pilots the use of Writing Fellows for one-on-one assistance to international students.
- Speaking Center creates consultant program for instructors in Rhetoric and General Education Literature and pilots the use of undergraduate peers to assist international students in Rhetoric classes.
- University Housing reserves rooms for international students in residence halls that are open through winter break.
- Academic Advising Center pilots group advising for entering international students.
- University Housing accommodates early arrival of international students.
- New web-based testing and placement portal and revised EPE grading procedures implemented. Advisors have real-time access to EPE scores.
- ISSS pilots use of bar code for check-in and tracking students through orientation, advising, and registration processes.
- Pomerantz Career Center hires Amanda Wilson for international program development and international career advising.

2011-2012



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COMMITTEE



ISSS and International Programs

- Expanded advising staff to accommodate increased numbers and advising needs of international students; now 6 FTE advisors + 1 Senior Associate Director.
- Received Student Success grant to develop online orientation course for new international undergraduate students, “International at Iowa.”
- Improved pre-arrival communication and services via the new database program iHawk and the Pre-Arrival Checklist, where incoming students receive detailed instructions regarding orientation, placement exams, travel to the U.S., housing, etc. Also streamlined international student orientation to provide more balanced and less stressful schedules.
- Increased collaboration with the Threat Assessment Team, University Counseling Services, and Office of the Dean of Students in response to increased cases of mental health and behavioral issues.
- Center for Diversity and Enrichment, in collaboration with ISSS, began a new “Friends and Neighbors” pen-pal program connecting incoming international undergrads with veteran domestic students before arrival, culminating in an event to “meet” in person after the start of classes.
- Engaged with Iowa City government to improve communication and relationships with Chinese community.
- Collaborated with University Counseling Services and other offices on campus-wide SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) grant for suicide prevention. ISSS is specifically working to address issues pertaining to international students, including collaborating with Crisis Center of Johnson County to create online crisis chat programs in foreign languages. First group focused on Mandarin; 15 students went through 70+ hours of training.

Tippie College of Business

- Created new Frank Center Assistant Director position with required English as a Second Language experience.
- Instituted new Business Communication and Protocol team project grading protocol in response to growing number of international students enrolled.
- Hired Assistant Director, Global Community Engagement, Undergraduate Program Office.
- Hired Chinese Frank Center tutors.
- Workshops for staff and faculty, including Chinese pronunciation workshops.
- Initiated numerous student programs to facilitate international and domestic interaction.
- Formed International Student Task Force. Membership includes Tippie College of Business faculty, staff, and students.
- EPICS-English Pronunciation in Conversation Series (weekly February 2013-May 2013).

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

- Received Student Success grant to create a pilot for international students to ease the transition from English as a Second Language into Rhetoric.

College of Engineering

- College of Engineering and Peking University Global Exchange.
- Engineering Professional Development Lunch and Learn seminars on international student employment.

2012-2013

Committee

- Created new Mental Health and Conduct Subcommittee to review a large increase in mental health issues, discuss offices challenges, and improve communication and case management protocols for some types of cases.
- Created new Campus Climate Subcommittee to examine the climate for international students and determine what support is already in place, what is being planned, and develop suggestions for what may still need to be addressed.



ISSS and International Programs

- Hired new Global External Relations Coordinator to work on strategic communication and information dissemination, particularly with Chinese students, and social media, as well as alumni relations.
- Second year of summer Pre-Departure sessions in Shanghai and Beijing for incoming Chinese undergrads and their parents.
- Piloted Phase 2 of the International@Iowa/Global@Iowa course in Spring 2014 with Ambassador Ronald McMullen as instructor.
- Created new position, International Support and Retention Coordinator: conduct needs assessments of students and departments, analyze MAP-Works data and engage in outreach with at-risk students, and assist with Global@Iowa course administration.
- Revised vacant position to create International Services Assistant; handles J-1 scholar applications and provides additional support to international student programs.
- Created new Friends Without Borders friendship matching program for new international undergrads and current domestic undergrads; program will include a menu system of activities for pairs to engage in together in order to earn points toward reward incentives. Begins fall 2014.
 - Participate in a new international steering committee created by the Iowa City Area Development Group.
 - Collaborating with Iowa City/Coralville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Iowa City Downtown Association to provide translation services for informational guides and signs in key languages.
- Partnered with student Star Shen and UI Video Services to become the first university to provide an international live-streamed graduation ceremony with Chinese narration. The Tippie College of Business ceremony was streamed in China over Fengyun.

2013-2014

College of Engineering

- New position hired, Director of Global Experiences, Amy Brewster, to focus on internationalization efforts within the college.
- Increased welcome and orientation efforts including programs for Brazilian Scientific Mobility Program and welcome signs in multiple language.
- Workshop for staff and faculty on Chinese name pronunciation.

UISG/GPSG

- Passed resolution to create new international student issues advisory board to consist of both international and domestic students along with key university staff, to be in Fall 2014.

Committee

- New Campus Climate Subcommittee issued report in November 2014 assessing current programs and support and making campus-wide recommendations.

ISSS and International Programs

- Third year of summer Pre-Departure sessions in Shanghai and Beijing for incoming Chinese undergrads and their parents.
- Revised Global@Iowa to make it an optional, stand-alone inter-cultural skills and awareness class for new international undergrads and current domestic students, taught by Brandon Paulson and Shuhui Lin.
- Shuhui Lin, International Support and Retention Coordinator, used Mapworks to reach out to at-risk international students, and also connected students on academic probation with campus resources. She is using Mapworks and other data to modify existing programs and create new ones. Her work with Mapworks, in conjunction with Ben Walizer from Academic Support and Retention, led to the University of Iowa being recognized by the Skyfactor company for a 2015 Mapworks Excellence Award.
- Mapworks Fall 2014 transition survey identified top 5 issues identified by students: (1) struggling in at least 2 classes, (2) homesick, (3) plan to study 5 hours or less/week, (4) test anxiety, and (5) low communication skills.
- Hosted two workshops for community leaders to better acquaint them with international student demographics and programs.
- Expanded translation of graduation ceremonies in December 2014 and May 2015, providing Mandarin and Korean versions.
- Partnered with Native American Council and Chief Diversity Office to screen film examining the impact of westernized education on native populations around the world.

2014-2015

VP for Student Life



- Updated the Get to Know Me video, used in all summer orientation sessions and connected to the Stretch component of the IOWA Challenge: <https://youtu.be/zPE00JQhD7Y>

Tippie College of Business

- More focus on training students on cross-cultural communication and competency (Citizen Diplomacy training, Global Leaders Retreat, Business and Culture in China course, expanded Tippie Buddies participants).

Chief Diversity Office

- Collaborated with ISSS to update the content for International@Iowa and orientation to cover diversity, identity, and inclusion issues for new students. Also helped create and present a section for Global@Iowa on being a change agent on campus.
- Expanded the Culturally Intelligent Leadership Course to create culturally competent student leaders; focused on engineering in spring 2015 and will focus on business this coming year.

Housing and Dining

- Translated documents into Mandarin to assist students with move-in and immediate arrival needs, including a map, laundry instructions, etc. Will also be providing a food gift basket on Saturday as dining will not open until Sunday.
- Associated Residence Halls took over the ice cream social event previously organized by Joelle Brown.
- New RA outreach procedures to help students become more familiar with them and the role they play.

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

- CLAS Master Class—New class beginning in second half of semester with different instructor/topic each week, focusing on themed content but also incorporating academic skill development such as note-taking methods, which will greatly benefit international students. Collaborating with ESL programs to involve students in higher level courses.

College of Engineering

- Developed trial program for communication mentoring for multilingual students through Hanson Center for Technical Communication.
- Created 2015/16 Diversity Plan, which includes international student issues.

UISG/ECGPS

- First year of International Student Advisory Board (ISAB)

UI Libraries

- Task force report on library services for international students, including recommendations on how UI Libraries can improve services to international students.
- Collaborated with ISSS to add segment on UI Libraries to the undergrad orientation course International@Iowa.
- Joined International Student Committee.

University Counseling Services

- Now able to offer counseling services in Mandarin.
- Chaired suicide prevention federal grant from SAMHSA, which ended in August 2015 and included special attention to international student mental health issues.

Student Health & Wellness

- Added more translations of key health care documents and forms.

Student Legal Services

- Began presenting non-immigration law information during international student orientations.
- Presented series on landlord-tenant law in conjunction with ISAB.

Center for Student Involvement and Leadership

- Bijou/Film Scene created Bijou Horizons to offer more programming of world cinema to promote broader understanding of diverse cultures through film and discussion.

2014-2015
continued

2015-2016

Chief Diversity Office

- Chief Diversity Office begins a new certificate series in Fall 2015, BUILD, to help staff and faculty improve the climate on campus for diversity and inclusion issues.
- ISSS will consider proposal to collaborate in future with our own BGC certificate program and possibly find ways to give “cross credit” for certain workshops.

ISSS/International Programs

- Expanding services for international parents—created special blog for parents, second year of International Parent Award, working with Parents Association to be more inclusive of international parents.
- Created new listserv for faculty, staff, and advisors to help track international student issues and deadlines.
- Expanded graduation ceremony translations to include Mandarin, Arabic, Spanish, and Korean.

Multiple Offices

- Developing 3-prong approach to increase awareness and competency of domestic students:
 - **Orientation Services**—Plans to incorporate brief module, possibly using video, to introduce international student issues during domestic student summer orientations. Also looking at orientation materials to ensure more inclusive and give better sense of the international diversity on campus.
 - **University College**—Adding a new diversity and inclusion module (modeled on existing section of International@Iowa course developed in collaboration with Chief Diversity Office) to the Success at Iowa course, which is taken by all new degree-seeking undergrads, which will further help increase awareness and skills of all students. Also, International@Iowa will be shut down and all new international undergrads will enroll in Success at Iowa starting Fall 2016.
 - **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**—Effective Fall 2017, new General Education track, “Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice,” that focuses on more experiential and personal learning regarding diversity, inclusion, multiculturalism; will require all students in college to take 3 s.h. in this track. Will be in addition to existing GE tracks.

University College

- Considering ways to increase international student enrollment in First Year Seminars, including possibly extending offerings to spring semester.

ESL Programs

- After successful pilot of “courses in common” last year, where 50% fewer students ended up on academic probation, continued program in Fall 2015.
- Continued offering 1 s.h. courses for with enrollment split about evenly for international and domestic students focusing on special topics such as American culture, the civil rights movement, US dialects.

Rhetoric

- Partnering with ESL Programs and students from Department of English to create Conversation Center where students proficient in English language will help work on conversation skills.

Office of Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator

- Collaborated with ISSS and several other campus and community programs to create a workshop on health relationships geared toward international students.
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Campus-Wide

- Recipient of 2017 Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization, recognizing institution-wide efforts to raise the bar in our global engagement efforts.

University Counseling Services

- Provided counseling services in Mandarin and Spanish, worked closely with international student groups such as the Heart Workshop on the “Fresh Check Day,” Iowa’s first mental health fair, and created a system for 30-minute same-day appointments to appeal more to international students who may not be completely, initially comfortable with the idea of counseling.

Academic Support and Retention

- Offered a new training session for the Tutor Certification Program titled, “Overcoming Language Barriers” to better prepare tutors to work with international students.

Student Health and Wellness

- Second year running a clinical outreach office in the IMU during orientations for international student vaccinations and consultations; added a Chinese student to the Student Health Advisory Committee.

2016-2017

Student Legal Services

- Provided increased services to international students regarding travel executive orders; added assistance with family-based adjustment of status (green card) petitions.

Academic Advising Center

- Refined a list of courses appropriate for students to take while completing ESL requirements; new first-year seminar winter course taught by AAC advisor Ben Landsee, “International Connections: Building Community in Iowa City” for domestic as well as international students who remain in Iowa City over the winter break.

Pomerantz Career Center

- Partnered with International Program to include new options on the international alumni update form to help connect alumni interested in hiring new graduates for internships, full-time employment, or mentoring.

Committee

- Created new subcommittee dedicated to tracking, assessing, and coordinating programming across campus for international undergrads. Includes staff from ISSS, Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Engineering, Education, and Business; University Counseling Services, Center for Student Involvement and Leadership, ESL Programs, etc.





Recreational Services

- Created a new program, “Passport to Fitness,” to introduce new international students to the Campus Recreation and Wellness Center (CRWC) facility, equipment use, and fitness programming. The Outdoor Recreation division hosted a welcome day for new international students at Macbride Nature Recreation Area, with activities including hiking, tours of the Raptor Center, pontoon boat rides, and group games like capture the flag. The division has collaborated with a new student organization, the International Student Outdoor Recreation Association, to help get more international students involved in more outdoor activities, including trips to Effigy mounds hiking, Maquoketa

caves exploring, Pictured Rocks for rock climbing and canoeing trips, and multiple events at the CRWC climbing wall.

ISSS/International Programs

- Expanded translations of graduation ceremonies to now include Farsi as well as Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, Arabic.
- Collaborated with Information Technology Services to create online name pronunciation program available to all instructors.
- Implementing new series of webinars to complement and expand our pre-departure sessions conducted in China each summer; content will reach students from other countries and areas.
- ISSS joined by two new international student and scholar advising staff in fall 2016.
- ISSS taking over issuance of initial immigration documents for newly admitted students.

Residence Education

- Conducted assessments of first-year international students on experiences moving in as well as housing/dining amenities. Created series of international student experience videos providing information about living on campus.

Tippie College of Business

- Developed more inclusive programming to include holidays such as Lunar New Year and Día de los Muertos. Added Spanish and Mandarin translations to virtual building tours of Pappajohn Business Building. Created new exchange program with Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and new global internship site in Cape Town, South Africa.

Dance Marathon

- Expanded recruitment videos to include Mandarin and Spanish translations.

2016-2017
continued

ISSS and International Programs

- Collaborated with Hawks Ridge Apartments to offer “3-Day Stay” option for newly arrived international students who come before residence halls or apartments are open.
- Responded to several Executive Orders impacting travel for 80+ students and scholars; collaborated with President Harrelld to arrange meetings with the affected students.
- Began new intercultural professional development series for graduate and professional students, Engaging Across Cultures.
- Collaborated with CSIL to have Shuhui Lin provide 50%-time effort with each office to increase focus on internationalization of student organizations and leadership.
- Lee Seedorff along with Amanda McFadden from Pomerantz Career Center co-authored an article on international students and employment published in New Directions for Student Services.
- ISSS worked with Admissions to take on processing of immigration documents of newly admitted students as well as exchange students.
- Created new series of pre-arrival webinars to supplement and expand information for incoming students regardless of location around the world.
- Streamlined the exchange student nomination and application process.
- Worked with Benefits Office to clarify and improve insurance requirements and tracking of J-1 students.
- Hosted Thanksgiving dinner for 120 international students, scholars, and family.
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2017-2018





Pomerantz Career Center

- Amanda McFadden, Director of Academic Programs and International Services, and Lee Seedorff of ISSS collaborated on presentations for campus academic advisors during the UI Advise Professional Development day as well as for staff for the Building Our Global Community workshop.

Office of Admissions

- China Next Steps events held in Shanghai, Beijing, and for the first time Guangzhou.

- Extended Chinese social media beyond WeChat into Bilibili, Zhihu, Baidu, and Weibo.
- Exclusive invitation as sole university to speak at FIRST Robotics Competition world championship in China.
- Created dedicated International Student Ambassador organization.
- Established a Hawkeye Hometown Visit program for international students.
- Benchmark academic credentials by country added to Admissions web pages.
- Hosted large group of counselors and students from Pakistan via StudyIowa consortium.
- First reciprocal visit and recruitment tour to Pakistan and Nepal.
- First tour into US boarding schools of California.
- Additional MOU's written with Seattle area community colleges and Malaysian American degree transfer programs.
- Established the International Distinction in Education (IDEA) scholarship.

University Counseling Service

- Offer counseling in Mandarin, Hindi, Spanish, English, and Marathi.
- Included student organization the Heart Workshop (focus on international student mental health) in Fresh Check Day Mental Health Fair as a founding organizational member.
- Expand the "International Student Conversation Group" support group.
- 8% of UCS visitors were international students.

2017-2018

2018-2019

ISSS and International Programs

- Raised money through UI GOLDrush crowdfunding campaign to create a scholarship to assist one new undergraduate student from Africa meet expenses to attend the UI in Fall 2019.
- ISSS staff (Lee Seedorff, Michael Bortscheller, Shuhui Lin, Andrea Siebenmann) participated as leaders at the NAFSA Region IV conference in Duluth, serving as workshop chairs, co-instructors, and presenters.
- In collaboration with ESL Programs, College of Engineering, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Tippie College of Business, and Academic Advising center, met to review and begin process of revising the August undergraduate international student orientation. Revisions will include a shorter orientation week, more time with academic advising units, reintroduction of small groups led by student leaders, and alternative delivery methods for some basic information.
- Created a new [website for international parents](#) as a “one stop shop” source of information.
- Provided intercultural training, along with ESL Programs and Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, to the Clinton Community School District to help plan for a large enrollment of high school students from China.
- Continue partnership with Center for Student Involvement and Leadership to jointly employ Shuhui Lin, focusing on student academic performance and involvement.
- Partnered with the Benefits Office to require new international students to be on a UI health insurance plan, with a few limited exceptions, ensuring students are properly covered and protected. Previous policy permitted students to substitute inferior insurance plans that ended up with excessive out of pocket costs or not providing adequate coverage, which was financially devastating for some students.





Admissions

- Held recruitment activities in 18 countries.
- Expanded China Next Steps programs beyond Beijing and Shanghai to include Shenzhen and Chengdu.
- Conducted yield events in India.
- Associate Director Becky Hanson serving in leadership role in NAFSA Region IV Regional Team.
- Established new International Admitted Student Visit Day.
- Hosted 3rd annual visit of Pakistan students and counselors.
- Additional MOUs with Malaysia American degree transfer programs.
- Provided campus tour guides fluent in Mandarin, Spanish, or Portuguese

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences/Campus Conversation Center

- Initiated new conversation outreach programs with local community.

Pomerantz Career Center

- Continued partnership between PCCs Career Series for International Students and ISSS Life in Iowa to offer programs on CPT, OPT, job search strategies, and internships/gaining experience.
- Debuted [International Student Resources](#) website, with employment tips for international students.

University Counseling Center

- Introduced new series of programming/workshops for international students, including: “Come Play! Creative Approaches to Staying Healthy,” “Who Am I In This Space? Expressive Arts—Mask Making Activity,” “Cross Cultural Jeopardy,” “Friendship, Sex, Dating—Unspoken Rules Across Cultures,” “Mental Health Concerns of International Students and Way to Be An Ally.”

UI Libraries

- Numerous instruction sessions for Iowa Intensive English Program and ESL Program students.
- Provide tours for J-1 visiting scholars.
- Collaborate with Campus Conversation Center to provide space for the program.