

Data and Research Regarding International Undergraduate Students at the University of Minnesota: An Overview

This packet includes information about nine University of Minnesota, Twin Cities-based data-collection and research projects related to international undergraduate students. We encourage you to explore these summaries to gain insights about the projects as well as connections to your own work. Please review the full reports (listed on global.umn.edu/icc/resources/umntc-ugis-data when available) for more detailed information.

Background and Need for Data and Research

The University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus has changed; in 2006, about two percent of our undergraduate population enrolled here as an international student. In Fall 2014, just over nine percent of the undergraduate student population enrolled as international students, with this percentage change representing nearly 2,000 more students. The campus has responded in a variety of ways to understand and best serve these students. In Fall 2013, the University of Minnesota Office of Undergraduate Education instituted an additional fee for international students. Revenue generated by this fee was allocated to several projects around campus, and several of the projects presented here were undertaken using funds from this additional fee. One of the goals of such projects was to create an understanding of where some of the additional revenue might be spent – in other words, what are the areas of greatest need on our campus regarding the international student experience?

The accompanying projects represent efforts by a range of units to dig deeper into the international student experience including International Student and Scholar Services and Internationalizing the Campus and Curriculum of Global Programs and Strategy Alliance, Minnesota English Language Program, the Center for Educational Innovation, and the Office of Student Affairs. As a campus, we want to be driven by facts about the international student experience and are taking advantage of our vantage points in these units to access this population. We look to use this data to inform our own practices and services, as well as to help shape the campus conversation, as well as the broader campus community.

A collective presentation of these projects is useful to demonstrate the range of the data driven projects happening on campus, and this data will help as we engage in a dialogue about our campus and areas for coordinated action.

This document includes an overview of the following projects:

1. Seeking Best Practices for Integrating International and Domestic Students
2. International Student Barometer (ISB) results
3. Listening Sessions with UMN Departments
4. Office of Student Affairs Listening Sessions
5. Survey of Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) 2014
6. Study of the Educational Impact of International Students in Campus Internationalization
7. Korean Undergraduate International Students' Experiences
8. Career Services for Undergraduate International Students
9. Student Voices: A Report On First Year Experience of International Undergraduates

Using This Information

Representatives from the data-collection and research teams facilitated a retreat to present and discuss these projects with departments and stakeholders across campus on January 21, 2015. The goal of the retreat was to discuss the key findings; consider the impact this data might have for our campus as a whole; and explore how the findings intersect with the work of various units and departments across campus. These reports thus provide a starting place for discussions about data driven solutions for improving the environment on campus and the experience for our international student population.

Elements Of Student Life and Themes of Successful Projects

Reviewing the results from each project takes time, as does considering the themes that emerge from the data. Preliminary reviews show that this research touch on the following aspects of our campus community and the student experience:

- Pre-departure and Arrival Experiences
- Overall Academic Experiences
- In-Class Interaction with Faculty
- In-Class Interaction between Students (Domestic and International)
- Social Interaction Outside of the Classroom
- Housing and Living Experience
- Available Supporting Resources and Programs
- Career Concerns and Future Plans
- Overall Experience

The data collection and research projects (and the discussions that happened with departments and stakeholders from across the University at the retreat) also show that successful integration projects must:

- Ensure collaboration and shared ownership between groups including University departments, faculty, staff, and international and domestic students
- Encourage international students to become more confident about reaching out to domestic students and University faculty/staff
- Make domestic students more curious about other countries and the experiences and viewpoints of international students
- Be intentional and include facilitated interaction

During the next academic year, we will work with campus partners to compile a set of recommendations based on these themes and on-going conversations with campus partners.

Thank you for your interest in these projects!

The Advisory Team

Alisa Eland

Beth Isensee

Barbara Kappler

Elizabeth Schwartz

Gayle Woodruff

Diana Yefanova

Xi Yu

Project #1:

Seeking Best Practices for Integrating International and Domestic Students

Research conducted by Nancy Young, commissioned by ISSS, 2014

Report available at http://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/14_integration_best_practices_overall.pdf

Integration of international and domestic students has long been recognized in International Education as a critical part of all students' intercultural and academic experience. This study explores innovative integration practices at other U.S. higher education institutions.

Aspirational and multidimensional definition of *integration*:

Integration is an intentional process to create community, by encouraging domestic and international students to engage with each other in ongoing interaction, characterized by mutual respect, responsibility, action, and commitment.

Successful integration in the higher education context is characterized by the following:

- Active facilitation, support, and modeling by faculty, staff, and administration in the curricular and co-curricular contexts;
- An academic climate that recognizes and reflects the goals and values of inclusion;
- Assessment, evaluation, and mindful reflection of intercultural and global competence at all levels of the institution (individual, classroom, school, institution-wide);
- Movement from “contact with” and “celebration of” cultures to deeper layers of engagement and enrichment, leading to the creation of common ground;
- Commitment to and recognition of the mutual benefits of such engagement; and
- A sense of belonging, contributing, and being valued.

Key Findings:

4 Critical Characteristics of Successful Program

1. Partnerships – Working with faculty, other offices, or student groups
2. Active Leader/Learner Student Role – Students are actively involved as leaders and learners
3. Community – Building community is an important goal
4. Committed Intentionality – Programs created with passion, belief, and commitment to a broader goal of Integration.

5 Categories of Best Practices

1. Institutional Infrastructure – Courses, campus dialogues, international student advisory board
2. Preparatory – Pre-arrival or early involvement
3. Faculty Facilitated – Global competency badges, ethics discussions, film discussions
4. Facilitated Friendship – Mentors, friendship program
5. Leadership Development – Increase leadership skills and involvement

Benefits to Students

Leadership development, improved quality of life, facilitated relationships, safe place for discussion, increased cultural competency, self-discovery, new intellectual interests, and official recognition (bolsters resume).

What Findings Suggest For Our Campus:

- Examine the results to find ways to improve our own integration efforts and try new ideas
- Convene a think tank including other U.S. institutions to continue the discussion

Other Information:

- Integration increases international student class participation, thus enriching everyone's academic experience.¹
- Integration is a process not an event. It is accomplished in persistent, manageable steps.²
- Integration is not just the responsibility of international students. It is the University's responsibility.
- There is an ongoing national conversation about integration.

¹ Gareis, E. (2012). “At a gathering of senior educators, the integration of international students was a theme.” *Inside Higher Ed*. <http://www.insidehighered.com>

² Simon, L. (2012). “A presidential perspective on global engagement,” *International Briefs for Higher Education Leaders*, no. 2. <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/International-Briefs-2012-November-Global-Engagement.pdf>.

Project #2:

International Student Barometer (ISB) – Fall 2013

Xi Yu

The survey, administered at 178 institutions in 13 countries in 2013, asks students to rank their satisfaction with a variety of categories related to their arrival, learning, living, support, challenges, and choice of institution.

Key advantage: Benchmarking with U.S. institutions & a smaller “peer group” consisting of seven institutions¹

Key Findings:

1. ARRIVAL: 92.7% Satisfied Overall

- Example Satisfactory Items:
 - 98.4% found “One Stop Student Services” satisfactory for providing information when they arrived
 - 91.0% were satisfied with the Social Activities offered upon arrival
- Example Items of Concern:
 - Students expressed lower satisfaction with class registration process

2. LEARNING: 87.5% Satisfied Overall

- Example Satisfactory Items:
 - 94.3% found their access to Online library resources, such as journals, satisfactory
 - 94.2% were satisfied with the learning technology available
- Example Items of Concern:
 - Students expressed lower satisfaction with the size of their classes, long-term career advice and guidance given by academic staff, and opportunities for work experience or placements as a part of their studies

3. LIVING: 87.4% Satisfied Overall

- Example Satisfactory Items:
 - 90.2% expressed satisfaction with the university’s residence services
 - 87.1% were satisfied with the social activities and organized events
- Example Items of Concern:
 - Students expressed lower satisfaction with how safe and secure they felt, and “making friendships with American students”

4. SUPPORT: 91.6% Satisfied Overall

- Example Satisfactory Items:
 - Students expressed high satisfaction with majority of the resources and services available on campus, e.g., Boynton Health Services

5. Interaction with Domestic Students

- In the classroom: 85% of respondents say “Sometimes” or “Often”, but only 41% say “Often”.
- Outside the classroom: 72% of respondents say “Sometimes” or “Often”, but less than 33% say “Often”.

6. Top 2 Student Identified Challenges:

1. Building friendship outside home culture
2. Language proficiency

What Findings Suggest For Our Campus:

1. Class registration process upon arrival needs to be improved for a smooth transition for international students.
2. Greater teacher interaction and employment assistance are sought by international students.
3. Purposeful facilitation for meaningful interactions among domestic and international students is needed.

¹ For more on the benchmarking information, visit www.i-graduate.com.

Project #3:

Listening Sessions with University Departments

Xi Yu

(This is an ongoing initiative. Contact Xi Yu at yuxxx637@umn.edu for information or to request a session)

Overview:

Listening sessions have been conducted collaborating with other units/Colleges on campus to compliment data sets, such as the International Student Barometer (ISB) and SERU, as a way to further research the gaps shown in those existing data sets or other unit-based assessments.

Listening session assistance from ISSS includes the development of outcomes and questions, recruitment of students, session facilitation, evaluation of the results, identification of possible resources, and prioritizing next steps. These sessions have been extremely beneficial in gathering feedback on courses, services or communications with international students.

Outcomes:

Over the past year, over 10 service units and Colleges on 12 projects requested Listening Sessions to better understand the experiences of international students. These projects included approximately 20 to 25 groups and over 150 international students. The data collected from the sessions have provided first-hand information directly collected from students, and it assisted professionals on campus to prioritize next action steps for creating a more inclusive environment, enhancing student academic success or increasing their satisfaction.

Selected Listening Sessions:

Collaborated Units	Topics
College of Biological Sciences (CBS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To learn about CBS international student's expectations for their experience at CBSTo learn about CBS international student's experience in CBS coursesTo learn about CBS international student's experiences with CBS peers/faculty/staffTo learn about resources CBS international students have used and found helpfulTo learn about what resources/support CBS international students wish to have
Community Engagement Service Learning (CESL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understanding of community engagement and service learningInvolvement and challenges for volunteering and service learningVisibility and improvement of CESL services
Housing & Residential Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Perspectives on their sense of belonging in the living communityCultural differences in experiences and expectations about housingConcerns and challenges about their living and learning environmentAccessibility and effectiveness of using relevant resources
Housing & Residential Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Experiences and challenges for housing selection and applicationExperiences with living and learning communitiesExperience of building connections with others and the campus
Minnesota English Language Program (MELP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">MELP alumni students who are currently enrolled in academic degree at UMNTo understand their experiences and suggestions for improvement of MELP programTo improve curriculum development of MELP courses to better prepare international student's English skills
Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To learn from students how the admission and enrollment process work for themTo improve communication strategy for admission process
International Student Academic Resources Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To understand how and in what amount international students use academic resourcesTo learn challenges of access and usage of academic resources

Example:

ISSS and CBS collaborated on listening session to better understand CBS international students experiences. The results revealed the great challenge for international students of working in groups in large classes at CBS, the need of faculty to facilitate the involvement of international students more effectively in class, and the wish of international students for resources on campus to enhance social interaction. The findings have been shared with CBS academic leadership team and used by faculty working with Center for Educational Innovation to re-design curriculum. It have also created beneficial opportunities to have international students' opinions heard – the students actively participated in the session and seek future opportunities to raise their voices.

Project #4

Office of Student Affairs Domestic and International Listening Sessions

By: Amelious N. Whyte, Marjorie Savage

Key Findings:

A. Benefits of Meeting Students from Another Country:

Shared By International Students

- Understanding different cultures/overcoming challenges adjusting to the US
- Networking
- Learning language; Learning tolerance

Shared By Domestic Students

- The point of college is to meet new people, learn about new cultures, and learn about the world
- New interactions facilitate deeper understanding of your own culture and yourself
- Future jobs—will have to work in diverse settings with people who are different from you

B. What Makes Domestic and International Students *Inclined* to Meet Each Other?

- Cultural exchange or mutual benefit
- Wanting to make new friends (freshmen especially)
- Interest in knowing about different perspectives
- Having the outgoing personality to reach out to students
- Seeing each other on a continuous basis (class, work, etc.)
- Similar professional goals

C. Challenges to Forming Relationships with Domestic Students

- Feeling self-conscious
- Cultural differences
- Language barrier
- U.S. personality
- Academics

D. What Makes Domestic and International Students *Disinclined* to Meet Each Other?

- Language, cultural barriers (e.g., American culture intimidates some)
- Past negative experiences with international students
- Unsure of appropriate interactions with internationals and fear of offending
- Intimidated by large groups of international students
- Lack of understanding
- Not knowing where to meet international students
- The belief that international students are only in the United States to get their education and then will return to their home country
- Hygiene and personal habits

What Findings Suggest For Our Campus:

A. What is needed to build positive experiences?

- American student curiosity and support
- Being outgoing (both International and Domestic Students)
- Branching out of usual comfort zone (both International and Domestic Students)
- Social environment to encourage interactions (both International and Domestic Students)

B. Recommendations from students

Shared By International Students

- Build international students' confidence
- Leverage engagement opportunities
- Promote activities to international students
- Help Americans care more about meeting international students and be more curious
- Support classroom instruction for international students

Shared By Domestic Students

- Incorporate cultural competence into orientation, welcome week, and initial experiences on campus
- Intentionally pair international and domestic students in residence halls
- Purposeful classroom/academic work integration
- Enhance global/cultural competence
- Give more attention and visibility for multicultural events on campus
- Intentionally encourage domestic students to reach out to international students

Other Information:

OSA has already implemented several initiatives in order to increase international student engagement, including:

- Discussions with Minnesota International Student Association (MISA)
- Soccer game for new international students
- Intercultural Communication and Staff Development Graduate Assistant
- Parents Weekend Programming

OSA is also considering how to best implement several other initiatives, including:

- Tips for connecting with students from a different country
- Intentional outreach to international student groups about OSA resources
- Ongoing international student "focus group" and advisory board
- Introduction to American football for international students
- OSA International Ambassadors

Project #5:

Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) Survey – 2014 Comparisons Between International Students & Domestic Students

Compiled by Xi Yu & Beth Isensee

Overall SERU Results available at <https://www.oir.umn.edu/surveys/seru/public>

Key Findings:

A. International students expressed lower rates of satisfaction with the overall academic experience provided by the University of Minnesota along with more concerns about the tolerance of diversity on campus.

Compared to domestic students, fewer international students expressed satisfaction with:

- Their overall academic experience
- The availability of their desired classes and academic majors
- The treatment and responsiveness of faculty to their concerns and needs
- The academic advising services they receive from their college, departments, and peer advisers
- The availability of academic resources including library staff and research materials, educational enrichment programs, and research opportunities
- Their overall sense of belonging
- Their personal involvement in academic settings
- The diversity of the University's climate and the tolerance for differing religious or political beliefs

B. While international students perceived themselves as having lower skills than when they started school, many believed they improved while attending the University.

As part of the survey, students were asked to do a self-assessment of their skills when they started at the University. Overall, international students reported lower skills in:

- Critical thinking and communication skills
- Cultural appreciation
- Research skills

However, international students reported more improvements in the areas above while they were at the University of Minnesota, compared to domestic students.

C. International students also scored higher than domestic students in the areas of:

- Academic initiative
- Research activity
- Academic disengagement
- Poor academic habits

What Findings Suggest For Our Campus:

1. This is the first time there has been a notably lower satisfaction rate between international and domestic students in the area of the appreciation for diversity on campus. With only 52.3% and 57.2% of international students saying they feel respected regardless of their political beliefs and religious beliefs (respectively), there should be a conversation regarding what events occurred on campus that may have led to this change and what the University can do to increase the appreciation for the diversity international students bring to the University campus.

2. Faculty and staff need to understand, recognize, and support international student's challenges of transition. Entering and adjusting to a new academic climate while learning in a second language takes time.

3. Please review College/Unit specific data (<http://www.oir.umn.edu/surveys/seru>) to identify barriers and opportunities to great academic success within your College/Unit.

Project #6:

Study of the Educational Impact of International Students in Campus Internationalization at the University of Minnesota: Phase 1

Gayle Woodruff, Barbara Kappler, Christopher Johnstone, Diana Yefanova

Study Available at http://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/15_EducationallImpact-IntlStudents.pdf

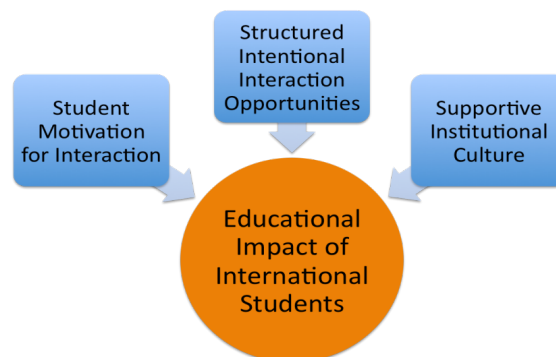
The College of Education and Human Development, the Global Programs and Strategy Alliance, and the International Student and Scholar Services conducted this study.

Key Findings:

What Are Students Learning? Through the analysis of student and faculty focus group and individual interview data as well as SERU wildcard module data, we identified several areas of learning and development that interviewees associated with cross-national student interactions. Student participants shared that they gained knowledge, attitudes and skills needed for effective intercultural communication; improved ability to reflect on their own culture; developed leadership and problem-solving skills; and engaged with course content utilizing multiple perspectives. International students reported benefitting from interactions with their peers from countries other than their own and from interactions with American students.

How Are Students Learning? The following factors emerged as maximizing the educational impact of international students in the classroom: individual student motivation and openness to cultural difference, opportunities for interaction created by faculty members and instructors around academic course goals, and overall institutional support.

- **Student Motivation.** Student attitudes such as respect for other cultures, openness, curiosity, awareness of cultural differences, willingness to listen and ask questions (often by “pushing” oneself out of the cultural comfort zone) help domestic and international students develop the capacity to engage with each other.
- **Opportunities for Course-Based Interaction.** Both student and faculty study participants described a range of instructional practices that faculty members and instructors used to create such opportunities: 1) Creating explicit expectations for peer interaction and collaboration among all students; 2) Integrating peer interactions into course activities and assessment; 3) Ensuring that international students comprehend content, activity and assessment criteria; and 4) Consistently building on international diversity in the course as a resource to engage with content knowledge.
- **Institutional Support.** Faculty study participants identified the need for opportunities for intercultural competence education and training for students, faculty members, and instructors. In addition, they suggested developing on-campus opportunities for students’ early exposure to cross-national interactions and strengthening the mechanisms available for faculty to support international students’ English language skills development. Faculty suggestions also included developing and disseminating pedagogical strategies to faculty members and instructors who are looking to facilitate and maximize domestic and international student interactions.



Factors Shaping the Educational Impact of International Students at the University of Minnesota

What Findings Suggest For Our Campus:

1. The Need for Culturally Mindful Instructional Strategies

The integration of international students into the academic and co-curricular student experience is both a process and an outcome. Ultimately, the process of faculty continuously modifying course delivery, adjusting pedagogy and content, and developing new instructional strategies, improves domestic and international student interaction within a learning environment. Faculty suggestions also included disseminating pedagogical strategies among faculty members and instructors who are looking to facilitate and maximize domestic and international student interactions.

2. The Need for Departmental, College-Level, and Institutional Support

Faculty study participants identified the need for opportunities for intercultural competence education and training for students, faculty members and instructors. In addition, they suggested developing on-campus opportunities for students' early exposure to cross-national interactions and strengthening the mechanisms available for faculty to support international students' English language skills development.

Project #7:

South Korean Undergraduate International Students' Experiences

Soo Kyoung Lee, Alisa Eland, and Drew Smith

This study explores Korean students' motivation, experiences, challenges and support-finding patterns in order to identify and address sub-group international students' unique needs.

Key Findings:

1. Motivations to study at the University of Minnesota

- Korean students knew about the University of Minnesota through 'family' (25%), 'exchange program' (24%), 'high school' (15%), 'friends' (14%), 'agency' (14%) and 'other' (8%), such as the internet
- Students chose the University of Minnesota because of its 'high ranking', 'reasonable tuition and cost of living', 'degree program' and for their 'family or friends' who knew well about the University.

2. What Korean students like the most about the University of Minnesota

- Many students stated that they enjoy the 'educational atmosphere', such as 'high quality of classes' and 'research opportunities for undergraduate students'.
- Students enjoy University facilities, such as 'recreational center', 'libraries', 'access to laboratories' and 'shuttle bus system' as well as the 'urban environment' and 'Korean community' at the University.

3. Transnational Korean students

- 38% of the survey participants were transnational meaning they graduated from high schools in the U.S. (23%) or other international high schools outside of Korea and the U.S. (15%).
 - Strengths of transnational students – higher English language proficiency and cultural adaptation
 - Challenges of transnational students – feeling alone, identity issues, and keeping up with two languages

4. Challenges

- Specific challenges for Korean students are 1) Building meaningful cross-cultural friendships and 2) Having to complete military services for male students
- Others include:

Academic	"American English", "work load and time management", "feeling alienated" in class, "classroom discussion", and "group work"
Non-Academic	"Homesickness", "loneliness", "cross-cultural friendships" and "anxiety for future"
Career	High concerns yet low utilization of the career services: did not know about the services (80%), did not think it would be helpful, or was not ready to use the services
Mandatory Military Service	For male students, the related challenges are "Deciding when to go to serve military service", and "readjustment to the University" after the service

5. Support

- Korean students heavily rely on their friends more than the university student service staff.
 - For academic support - 'Friends' (40%), 'Professors /TAs' (32%), 'Classmates' (19%), 'University' (4%), such as adviser or counselor, "Parents /Tutors" (2%), and 'Other' (5%), such as the internet or myself
 - For non-academic support - 'Friends' (69%), 'Church' (13%), 'Parents' (12%), 'University' (0%), and 'Other' (6%), such as none or myself

What Findings Suggest For Our Campus:

- It is important to learn about the diverse needs of international students depending on their backgrounds, such as their nationality and their experiences prior to coming to the university.
- Student support from friends for challenges is very important, however, it may exacerbate the students' disengagement on campus and deprive them of the opportunities to build cross-cultural friendship.
- Outreach to students and explanation of available resources and how to use them should be on-going.

Project #8:

Seeking Best Practices for Career Services for Undergraduate International Students

Soo Kyoung Lee, Alisa Eland, and Yuki Rowland

ISSS conducted four studies to explore best practices in serving the career needs of undergraduate international students: 1) General international student survey of career experiences/expectations, 2) Internship focus groups and 3) Interviews of international alumni who found jobs, and 4) Interviews with other institutions about best practices.

Key Findings of the Four Studies:

- A. Student experiences at the University of Minnesota (from a general survey of all international students)
- 92% of the survey participants want an internship before graduation and 75% of them hope to work in the U.S. after graduation.
 - Participants' top job search challenges include 'limitations of visa status' (36%), 'language proficiency' (18%), 'lack of connection or networking' (10%), 'lack of qualifications' (9%), and 'interviewing' (8%).
- B. Best Practices of Successful International Students and Alumni (who found jobs in or outside the U.S.)
- Students found an internship in their field by the following:
 - a. Attending job fairs and other career events on campus
 - b. Utilizing internet resources and applying online
 - c. Using a network of people including advisors, professors, and mentors
 - d. 'Being excellent' in classroom projects and company competitions
 - Helpful resources include career events, mentorship, internship classes and internships, online resources, workshops (resume, interview, communication, OPT/CPT), and student clubs.
 - Students recommendations for:
 - Career services: International alumni/employer connections, training on working with international students
 - ISSS: Online resources, clarify ISSS/career service roles, explain cultural differences
 - Tips for other international students who are looking for work experiences:
 - Start early and be strategic, know what you want, understand job search process
 - Network and be proactive
 - Know American work culture, e.g., know how to sell yourself
- C. Best Career Services Practices of Successful Institutions (interviews with staff at recommended institutions)
- Collaboration across colleges/units (ISSS, career services, alumni association, employer's relations. etc.)
 - Staff training (intercultural competency, cross-cultural communication, and immigration policy)
 - Providing resources and programs to international students:
 - Career education/resource: Workshops on job search/skills, handbook, list of OPT/CPT companies, certificate program, student mentoring, and global career development
 - Networking/panel – With international-friendly employers, and with international alumni, with other successful international students, and bilingual/ international career fair
 - Diversifying ways to communicate with students (flyers, emails, newsletters, and social media)
 - Providing the following resources to employers: Employer guide, workshops, webinar, and newsletters

What Findings Suggest for Our Campus:

- University colleges and units need to collaborate in order to meet the specific needs of international student job search in the U.S. and abroad.
- Career Services and ISSS need to develop and provide resources for the local, national, and global job market.

Project #9:

Student Voices: A Survey of International Undergraduate Students' First-Year Challenges

Mike Anderson, Beth Isensee, Kate Martin, LeeAnne Godfrey, and Mary Katherine O'Brien

Key Findings:

Theme 1: Challenges of studying and participating in a second language

- 40% indicated a lack of confidence using their English in class
- 35% cited heavy reading load
- 34% said too many examples used in class were drawn only from American culture
- 29% were unclear about expectations for group work

Theme 2: Lack of shared academic/classroom culture

Students expressed difficulty understanding the educational system in general, as well as the expectations of and communication with professors and staff.

- 40% said their previous school expected less in-class participation
- 48% said their previous school required less homework
- 41% said they were often unfamiliar with the types of assignments given here
- 41% prefer to ask questions that arise in class immediately afterwards rather than during class or office hours

Theme 3: Feelings of isolation and exclusion

Students commented specifically on a feeling of isolation from U.S. students. The main reason given for the isolation was a difference in cultural background or understanding.

Theme 4: Recommendations from students regarding how the University could ease the transition for new international students

- Creating structured opportunities for integration.
- Being aware of the cultural background differences within the classroom setting.
- Encourage international students to use campus resources.

What Findings Suggest For Our Campus:

Institutional Recommendations:

- Solidify a strong common vision, goals and outcomes for the internationalization of the campus and curriculum. Creating an engaging climate not only for international students but for all members of the campus community.
- Concrete steps can be taken by the University to create a climate in which faculty, staff, and students value the presence of international students, recognize their adjustment challenges, and are able to assist them in navigating cultural differences to improve and maximize their first-year experience on our campus.
- Encourage mutual adaptation where learning is seen as a two-way exchange.
- Build collaborations among students, colleges, departments, and student services to enhance curricular/co-curricular learning of all students.
- Assess inclusion and engagement of international students in departments, programs, services, and opportunities.
- Create an expectation and establish rewards for faculty and staff participation in opportunities to build their cultural self-awareness.
- Integrate English as a second language support into the curriculum to help students be more successful in their classes and acknowledge the importance of doing so.

Curricular and co-curricular recommendations

- Recognize the challenges of adjusting to learning in a second language.
- Audit print and online materials aimed at first year students for slang, idioms, and examples that might impede key learning for new international students.
- Imagine a course or programming from the perspective of a newcomer to this country to identify areas where expectations can be more explicit.
- Communicate to students directly about faculty, staff, and student roles, as well as about student support resources available on campus.
- Notice or assess the engagement of international students in courses and programs and work to improve it.