

Division of Student Services
Office of International Students and Scholars Diversity, Equity and
Inclusion 2020-2021 Annual Report

1. Introduction

The Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) provides assistance, direction and compliance with the following:

- Admission to the University of Nevada, Reno.
- Transition from home country to living in the United States.
- Increased understanding of the policies, procedures, and regulations that pertain to immigration status.
- University policies, procedures, and resources.
- Issuance of federally required immigration documentation for F-1 and J-1 students, J-1 scholars, and all nonimmigrant dependents.
- Expertise on federal laws that pertain to international students and scholars.
- Intercultural understanding, training, and programming for campus community.
- Social and cultural programming for international students and scholars.
- Maintain federally mandated SEVIS database for students and scholars, including semester updates, validations, and compliance documentation.
- Recruitment and implementation of exchange programs, involving both incoming and outgoing students.
- Contract development with international partners on cooperative programs for faculty research, student development, and faculty exchange.
- Department referrals, coordination, and liaison to University approved immigration attorneys:
 - Initiate communication between the immigration attorney and the department for employer sponsored cases.
 - Maintain a public inspection file required by the Department of Labor for each H-1B worker.
- Health and safety liaison related to federally mandated insurance requirements for international students and scholars.
- Financial liaison between students and campus financial resources.

Our staff members have extensive knowledge and experience in the international education field and work with students, scholars, and community members to help enrich their study and research experiences at the University.

Populations served (based on Fall 2020 data):

- Undergraduate students: 120
- Graduate students: 348
- Exchange students: 1 (This populations was drastically effected by COVID-19)

- Post-completion (students that we are required to assist after graduation): 183
- Scholars: 183 J scholars

2. Department Foundation

Vision

The Office of International Students and Scholars seeks to promote diversity, inclusion, access and equity at all levels and encourages the university community to embrace these principles as well as to advance the internationalization of our campus.

Mission

It is the mission of the OISS to promote the benefits of international education and to contribute to the globalization of the university community by providing the infrastructure to bring international students and scholars from around the world to the University of Nevada, Reno. International education contributes to a diverse university community, to strong academic programs and to the state's economy.

Values

- Diversity and inclusion:
 - Respect of cultural differences and the multiple dimensions of our populations' identities and cultivate an equitable environment.
- Collaboration:
 - Establish and sustain ties with the University and surrounding community to better serve our populations.
- Integrity:
 - Strive to be equitable and accountable in our work to foster access and inclusion.
- Student success:
 - Acknowledge and address students' unique needs and provide support to remove barriers to their academic and personal success.
- Ethical practices:
 - Fairly and impartially apply University policies and state and federal regulations.
- Advocacy:
 - Provide support, direction, and a voice for our populations to enhance their University experience.

Diversity Statement

Engage members of our community as active informed participants in a multicultural world and help them recognize diverse background and ideas as being essential to the academic experience. Provide activities designed to improve the acculturation, retention, and graduation rates of international students and scholars.

Overall Department Goals

- Ensure a wide range of geographic diversity of individuals.
- Ensure international students are retained and graduate at rates comparable to the University undergraduate rates.
- Provide opportunities for staff to assess and expand their cultural humility.
- Increase international opportunities for students to study abroad.
- Assess staffing ratios and services to be in line with campus initiatives and growth.

3. Goals/Work Related to DEI and Addressing Systemic Barriers In 2020-2021

Goal Area 1 - Education for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- OISS collaborated with other departments to educate about cultural humility pertaining to international students.
 - International students represent diverse cultural backgrounds. To this end, it is imperative for the recruitment and retention of international students for the campus faculty and staff to receive training. The results of this effort are reflected in a more appropriate handling of cultural differences and acceptance of our international students. In 2020-2021, OISS participated in on-boarding trainings for different departments to inform them of the special needs international students have as well as any communication barriers they face to facilitate a better understanding of international students. We established relationships with these departments for them to contact us regarding any questions or concerns pertaining to international students.
- Systemic barriers
 - International students face limited employment and funding opportunities. Due to federal regulations, international students cannot work without restrictions and often need assistance funding their education. With COVID-19 limiting on-campus employment options for students, OISS diligently researched funding options international students could apply for. We also provided workshops to inform students of their employment options during and after their program completion.
- By the end of Spring 2021, OISS staff committed to serve on the Division's DEI committees and working groups.

Goal Area 2 - Student Recruitment, Access, Engagement and Retention

- Through collaboration with the Office for Prospective Students (OPS), Mike Murry's (International Admissions & Recruitment Coordinator) reporting changed to OPS to provide increased recruitment resources. OISS continued to support with applications and processing of documents.
 - OISS used its limited recruitment budget to maximize ROI by hosting webinars and participating in virtual large-scale regional recruitment fairs allowing us to access new markets. This has resulted in Fall 2021 undergraduate applications from 35+ different countries.

- Collaborated with OPS by including international prospective students in their virtual programming including Nevada Bound Live, Wolf Pack Live, Virtual Campus Tours, Among Us Social Events, and more. This provided opportunities for international prospective students to experience the vibrant campus community and connect with domestic prospective students.
- Coordinated targeted Facebook marketing campaigns with MARCOM which reach over 1 million people and generated 6,000 web sessions from six key markets.
- Created a new user-friendly and visually appealing international admissions page which includes answers to the most common questions: admission requirements, scholarships, research, location, infrastructure, etc.
- Utilized WhatsApp and the Virtual Front Desk to allow students more non-traditional ways of communicating with our office and staff.
- Planned and launched a New Graduate Admitted Student Reception with the Graduate School, GSA, and Graduate Program Directors that was attended by 80+ admitted international students.
- OISS provided engagement opportunities for increased student retention.
 - When the University converted to remote operations, OISS established a Virtual Front Desk through Zoom to providing students the ability for virtual face to face contact with office staff. This service allowed students that were out of the country to still have that sense of community by being able to connect with OISS staff members.
 - We continued our collaboration with Counseling Services to provide virtual “Success Pizza” meetings for students to safely meet virtually with their peers and Counseling and OISS staff to discuss any issues or concerns.
 - We established virtual “Game Nights” to provide social interaction for students and in out of the country.
 - We held virtual meetings for students and staff to inform them of changes related to COVID-19 and how the changes affected international students.

Goal Area 3 – Faculty/Staff Recruitment and Retention

- Faculty included DEI goals in their annual evaluations.

4. Department DEI Plan

- OISS is actively working on increasing international student recruitment efforts.
- Streamline the exchange/cooperative agreement procedures to provide a streamlined process and ensure that departments follow the same standards in developing agreements.
- Increase cooperative agreements to include research and training opportunities.
- Improve our website and brochures to ensure inclusive language.
- Provide opportunities for staff to participate in DEI trainings.
- Develop and expand the OISS DEI plan, as staffing changes are made.

5. DEI-related Training/Professional Development Assessment

OISS Training and Professional Development is included in the Enrollment Services/Admissions and Records report created by Heather Turk-Fiecoat. We had 100% staff participation.

Appendix: OISS DEI Plan

Goal Area 1 - Education for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Staff will include their DEI goals in evaluations and progress will be reviewed mid-year.
- End of summer 2022: provide increased opportunities for staff to participate in DEI trainings provided by the University, NAFSA (organization for international educators), and NASPA depending on budget.
- Continuously collaborate with other departments to educate about cultural humility and systemic bias pertaining to international students:
 - Summer 2021: participate in on-boarding trainings for different departments to inform them of the special needs international students have as well as any communication barriers they face to facilitate a better understanding of international students.
 - Spring 2022: provide a workshop to University faculty and staff regarding students and scholars as well as functions of the OISS.
- End of summer 2022:
 - If available, staff will have participated in the Disability Resources Center (DRC) workshop series focused on Universal Design for Learning Practices.
 - Staff will be able to locate the key terms and definitions for the Students Services diversity and inclusion key terms and definitions and have integrated them into their work.

Goal Area 2 - Student Recruitment, Access, Engagement and Retention

- Spring 2022: to address the systemic barrier of lack of funding opportunities, OISS will aim to increase the percentage of international students submitting the Institutional Methodology (IM) form and CARES application by 30%.
- Recruitment by end of summer 2022:
 - Increase international recruitment activities by identifying recruitment events with the best ROI to maximize global reach.
 - Analyze past recruitment fairs, events, and other methods of generating new leads to identify high achieving prospective students.
 - Increase collaboration with OPS recruiters in Las Vegas and California to target international students already studying in the US at both high schools and community colleges.
 - Proactively utilize current students and recent international graduates to help increase peer-to-peer recruitment.
 - Collaborate with the Northern Nevada International Center (NNIC) to promote degree-seeking programs to students participating in their short-term academic and cultural programs.
 - Collaborate with EduCO and recruitment agents to recruit more international students. OISS will play a role in assisting with providing recruitment materials and processing admission and immigration related documents.

- End of summer 2022: review and update our website and materials to ensure accessibility.
- Create an activities calendar to provide programming that will enhance engagement and retention of students by end of July 2022:
 - Collaborate with Persistence Research on learning outcomes and assessment for applicable activities.
 - Collaborate with Counseling Services, Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno (ASUN), the Graduate Students Association (GSA), the Graduate School, and The Center Every Student. Every Story (The Center) amongst others to develop programming promoting cross-cultural education and cultural humility.

Goal Area 3 – Faculty/Staff Recruitment and Retention

- Spring 2022: develop competency markers based on the ACPA/NASPA Competency Areas of Social Justice and Inclusion for individual staff that will be incorporated into the annual evaluation process.