

**Division of Student Services**  
**Office of International Students and Scholars Diversity, Equity and**  
**Inclusion 2021-2022 Annual Report**

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## **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 2021 data):

- Undergraduate students: 132
- Graduate students: 418
- Exchange students: 23
- Post-completion (students that we are required to assist after graduation): 122
- Scholars: 188 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 2021-2022

### 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 2021-2022, OISS continued to 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. 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. We shared the University scholarship and financial aid application information with international students. OISS provided workshops to inform students of their employment options during and after their program completion.
- OISS staff education
  - Served on the Division's DEI committees and working groups.
  - Virtually attended the 2022 Northern Nevada Diversity Summit.
  - Staff has integrated the Students Services diversity and inclusion key terms and definitions into their work.

- Some staff received Adult Mental Health First Aid training to be better prepared to serve students of diverse backgrounds and mental states.
- Some staff virtually attended the NAFSA Diversity and Internationalization Summit.

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

- OISS continued to support with applications and processing of immigration documents for international students. Fall 2020 to Fall 2021 we saw a year-over-year (YoY) increase in total international students of 20%+ and a YoY increase in Fall 2022 undergraduate applications of 30%+ through July 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - 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 2022 undergraduate applications from 47 different countries, up from 35 for Fall 2021.
  - Established new relationships with EducationUSA Advisors which has created opportunities to present directly to groups of prospective students. Direct results include three undergraduate applications from Cape Verde.
  - Continued to update our user-friendly and visually appealing international admissions page which includes answers to the most common questions: admission requirements, scholarships, research, location, infrastructure, etc.
  - Created a way to capture leads directly from prospective students already visiting our website, this form has been completed by 100+ prospective students.
  - Continued to collaborate with EduCO and recruitment agents to recruit more international students.
  - Utilized WhatsApp and the Virtual Front Desk to allow students more non-traditional ways of communicating with our office and staff.
- OISS provided engagement opportunities for increased student retention.
  - OISS continued to use our Virtual Front Desk through Zoom to provide students the ability for virtual face to face contact with office staff. This service allows students that are out of the area or country to still have that sense of community by being able to connect with OISS staff members. It also provides an alternate means to contact our office in addition to phone, email, and walking in to the office.
  - We created an activities calendar for 2021-2022 that included event collaborations with Counseling Services, Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno (ASUN), the Graduate Students Association (GSA), and the Graduate School.
  - 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 held a Social Day in Fall 2021 for any new students that arrived since the lockdown in 2020. The day was a collaboration with Counseling Services and consisted of reflecting on their time in the U.S., how to deal with culture shock, and a social bowling event.

- Began the relaunch of our International Student Ambassador Program (ISAP) to aid new international students. This will allow students to have another experienced student help them with settling in at the University and increase their sense of community.
  - Partnered with the Graduate Students Association (GSA), Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno (ASUN), The Multicultural Center, and the International Affairs program to recruit ambassadors.

#### Goal Area 3 – Faculty/Staff Recruitment and Retention

- Faculty included DEI goals in their annual evaluations.
- Pushed back the development of 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.

## 4. Department DEI Plan

### Summary

- 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.

### Progress Toward DEI plan

OISS staff are participating on committees with various campus stakeholders to determine what is needed to increase and retain the international students population on-campus. Being on these committees enables us to identify the resources available and still needed to reach our goals.

### Update on Progress

Refer above to Section 3, Goal Area 2, addressing our long-term goals for student recruitment, access, engagement and retention.

### Description of Short-term Goals

Please see Section 3, Goal Area 2.

## 5. DEI-related Training/Professional Development Assessment

All staff have reported that they have completed the 2021-2022 Annual Report Professional Development.

DEI-Related Content Area	# of staff who said "yes"	# of staff who said "no"	Total # of Staff
Allyship	1	4	5
Brave Spaces	2	3	5
Cultural Humility	2	3	5
Implicit Bias	1	4	5
Intercultural Competency	2	3	5
Mental Health Support	3	2	5
Neurodiversity	1	4	5
Safe Zones	1	4	5
Social Justice	2	3	5
Student Identity Development	1	4	5
Trauma Informed Care	2	3	5
Universal Design & Learning	1	4	5

Based on the data from the 2021-2022 Annual Report Professional Development, OISS should encourage staff to participate in more professional development opportunities. This will be a focus for 2022-2023 to ensure staff are developing skills to better assist them in serving our students.

## Appendix: OISS Future 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 2023: 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 2022: 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 2023: provide a workshop to University faculty and staff regarding students and scholars as well as functions of the OISS.
- End of 2022:
  - Staff will have participated in the Student Services Professional Development courses.
  - 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 2023: 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 application by 20%.
- Recruitment by end of summer 2023:
  - Increase international recruitment activities by identifying recruitment events with the best ROI to maximize global reach.
  - Consistently travel to key recruitment markets a minimum of twice per year.
  - Build an international recruitment team which can focus on specific regions.
  - Analyze past recruitment fairs, events, and other methods of generating new leads to identify high achieving prospective students.
  - Increase scholarship funding for undergraduate international students to be more competitive with offers from peer institutions.
  - Encourage department-specific recruiters to participate in a minimum of 2 international-specific recruitment events per year.
  - 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.
- Increase agent network with high quality AIRC approved agents who provide a consistent stream of 3-5 applicants per agent each semester.
- End of summer 2023: continue to 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 2023: 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.



## **Addendum: Goals in Support of the Division of Student Services Strategic Plan**

### **Recruitment, Retention and Graduation**

#### Goal Area 1 – Recruitment

##### Activities:

- Collaborate with agencies, such as Shorelight, for recruitment.
- Increase international recruitment activities by identifying recruitment events with the best ROI to maximize global reach.
- Increase scholarship funding for undergraduate international students to be more competitive with offers from peer institutions.
- 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.

##### Assessment:

- If the contract with Shorelight is finalized, track the number of students Shorelight brings in.
- Track the number of recruitment events we attend and the number of inquiries and applications we receive from each event.
- Track the number of students that choose to apply to UNR as a result of scholarship funding from us.
- Track the number of inquiries and applicants we receive as a result of collaborations with OPS and alumni.

#### Goal Area 2 – Increase Retention

##### 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.
- Increase the percentage of international students submitting the Institutional Methodology (IM) form application.

##### Assessment:

- Track total number of collaborations or attempts to collaborate.
- Survey students for feedback regarding the programming event.
- Summer 2023, request data of the number of international students submitting the IM and compare to previous years.

#### Goal Area 3 – Ensure Adequate Staffing and Resources to Meet Students' Needs

##### Activities:

- Fall 2022 – hire enough student workers to staff the front office during work hours in order to provide services to students.
- Add on professional staff to adequately serve the increasing student population.
- Provide training to student workers and staff to perform their jobs efficiently.

Assessment

- Review office coverage to ensure the front office is covered majority of the office hours.
- Review the students to staff ratio

Goal Area 4 – Graduation

Activities:

- Encourage undergraduate students to enroll in at least 15 credits per semester.
- Provide students with information and programming regarding campus resources to assist in program completion.

Assessment:

- Review student enrollment each semester.
- Survey students for feedback regarding the programming event.

## Technology

Goal Area 5 – Increase Utilization of Terra Dotta to Provide Better Access for Students for Immigration Requests

Activities:

- Transition into the Terra Dotta ISSS New Student Experience.
- Invite students into the new system.
- Provide staff training for the new system.

Assessment:

- Track the number of students that create an account in the new system after receiving an initiation.
- Get feedback from students and staff regarding the new system.

## Grow Student Enrollment

Goal Area 6 – Assess Our Processes for New Admits to Remove/Reduce Barriers to Enroll

Activities:

- Summer 2023: review the requirements for students to remove holds to enroll in classes.
- Continually review and revise our new admits communication to provide clear and concise enrollment instructions.
- Collaborate with departments to know the enrollment requirements for international students to better assist them.

Assessment

- Track complaints and issues students have with hold removals to review what can be changed or how to better communicate with them.

- Spring and Fall 2023 – track the number of new students that have not enrolled and survey for feedback as to why they did not enroll.

Goal Area 7 – Remind Continuing Students to Enroll

Activities:

- Contact students that have not enrolled in classes within one month of the start of the semester.
- Send enrollment communication to students.

Assessment:

- Spring and Fall 2023 – track the number of continuing students that have not enrolled after being contacted to enroll and survey for feedback as to why they did not enroll.