International Undergraduate Students
# International Undergraduates

## Fall 2008 Undergraduate International Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Number of International Students</th>
<th>Percentage of College Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Undergraduate Enrollment</strong></td>
<td><strong>576</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.8%</strong></td>
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## Historic Fall Semester Enrollments

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree Seeking</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Degree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Only</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>355</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
International Undergraduates

Undergraduates as Percentage of All International Students

Primary Majors
- Pre-business: 124
- Actuarial Science: 30
- Finance: 27
- Economics: 17
- Psychology: 16
- Biology: 14
- Mathematics: 14

Gender
- Male: 47.2%
- Female: 52.8%

Age
- Under 18: 2.6%
- 18-22: 74.5%
- 23-25: 9.7%
- 26-30: 6.9%
- Over 30: 6.3%
  - Average age: 21.7

Funding Source
- Family: 88.1%
- University: 10.2%
- Home Government: 1.5%
- Other: 0.2%
International Undergraduates

Undergraduate International Students by World Region

- North America: 2.4%
- Latin America & the Caribbean: 5.4%
- Europe & Russia: 8.3%
- Middle East & North Africa: 5.0%
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 3.1%
- South & Central Asia: 4.7%
- East & Southeast Asia: 69.6%
- Oceania: 0.9%
- Not reported: 0.5%

Largest National Representations:
- China: 218
- South Korea: 123
- India, Japan and Taiwan: 21
Transition and Retention Issues

- Basics
  - Most the challenges faced by new international students are the same as domestic students
  - Differences are most often in
    - Scope and impact
    - Impact of culture or language
    - Student knowledge of resources available
    - Ability to make a quick correction of the problem
Academic Challenges

Understanding academic structure and expectations

- Course requirements
  - General education/Philosophy of liberal arts education
  - Relative flexibility of US education

- Classroom expectations
  - Attendance/Participation
  - Ongoing assessment/Types of testing
  - Academic honesty as defined by US cultural norms
Transition and Retention Issues

- **Academic Challenges**
  - **Language**
    - Adjusting to constant use of English language
    - Accepting ESL testing and course requirements
    - Anxiety about own (perceived or real) language ability
  - **Academic relationships**
    - Professor/student relationship
    - Student/student relationships
Social and cultural challenges

- Cultural adjustment
  - Academic schedule can leave little time for this normal process
  - Unique challenges for particular groups can occur (fall semester 2009 begins in midst of Ramadan)
  - Students (and others) often fail to recognize cultural adjustment problems and thus do not address them
  - Everyday challenges include food, religious practices, transportation, friendships
  - Family support system is not readily available
Transition and Retention Issues

- Social and cultural challenges
  - Lack of background and knowledge of typical social and support structures on US campuses
    - Student Life/Student Development
    - Counseling/Advising
  - Some current issues on UI campus are culture bound and thus not easily understood
    - Alcohol use and abuse
    - Gender relationships/sexual harassment
    - Diversity
  - May depend on OISS for all their needs, and be hesitant about referrals—or may depend on friends (often of same nationality) to assist with problems
Transition and Retention Issues

- **Legal Challenges**
  - Immigration law allows very little flexibility or alternatives for students who are having academic difficulties
    - Rare exceptions to full-time enrollment requirement
    - Suspensions usually amount to permanent dismissals, as a student who has failed will probably not get a new visa
  - Students who do not have current visas may be hesitant to travel home due to fear of visa refusal
- **Financial Challenges**
  - Limited options for students who have financial difficulties
For Faculty and Staff Who Work with Students

- May need to adjust the balance between assisting student and helping student learn responsibility
  - May be different for international student due to missing cultural background, knowledge of our system, or language
- Realize that choice has not been a part of most international student’s educational experience
  - The student may expect to be told what to do rather than be given alternatives
For Faculty and Staff Who Work with Students

- Must avoid the natural tendency to view international student needs and concerns through our own and/or US student cultural norms
  - Can’t assume sameness
- Realize that students may be hesitant to challenge or ask questions of “the authority”
Language can be a barrier, often unrecognized

- Often not a question of general fluency, but meanings of specialized words or fine points that get lost in the translation
- Don’t assume fluency means full understanding of the system

Need to be aware of multiple resources available through OISS and other offices
Specialized Resource Offices for International Students

- Office of International Students & Scholars
  - Role is far beyond only immigration advising
    - International Student Orientation
    - Life in Iowa and other enrichment and educational programs
    - Individual advising on transition issues, often in partnership with other offices (academic advising, counseling, etc.)
    - OISS Update
    - Faculty/staff resource

- International Admissions
  - Understanding academic background and credentials

- ESL Programs
  - Available to assist individual students to address language needs
Current Support Structures and Activities

- International Student Committee appointed by Provost
  - Looking at infrastructure needs for growing undergraduate population, particularly
    - Orientation
    - Testing
    - Academic advising
    - Housing
- International Programs Executive Committee
  - Ongoing faculty resource for OISS
The Future (as best we can plan)

- Anticipate undergraduate international population could grow to 1200-1500 students in next 5 years
  - Peer assistants within OISS
  - Improved software support for immigration reporting
  - Revised orientation program to serve larger population
- Growth will require flexibility and changes in structure in many areas