

Campus Services Provided to International Students

International Student and Scholar Services

Updated May 2014

Quick Facts

Total international student population: **4049 as of Fall 2013**

Undergrads: 2253

Grad/Professional: 1490

Post-graduation employment: 306

- International students around 13% of total UI enrollment.
- Several hundred J-1 scholars (those here for teaching/research purposes) each year.
- Top countries: China (~57%), Korea, India, Taiwan, Malaysia, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Japan
- ISSS advisors received over 9000 visits from students last academic year.

Pre-Arrival

- **Pre-Arrival Checklist** – A “one-stop shop” on steps to obtain the visa, make travel arrangements to Iowa City and from the airport, complete placement exams, apply for housing, arrange health records, and receive individualized orientation schedules.
- **ISSS Website** – Additional information on sending belongings to Iowa City, a “Guide to Living in Iowa City” (currently being updated in conjunction with City of Iowa City and Student Legal Services) including groceries and restaurants, local transportation systems, driver’s license information, schools, recreation/entertainment, safety, and weather.
- **Friends and Neighbors Program** – A “penpal program” for last two years, in collaboration with the Center for Diversity and Enrichment, connecting incoming international undergrads with upper level domestic students to exchange emails, then sponsoring an event to meet in person during the first or second week of classes. Will be expanded and become part of new program, see notes below on matching program.

Orientation

- **Fall Semester** – Graduate students two weeks before classes begin, undergrads week before classes begin
- **Spring/Summer** – Combined orientation during week before classes begin
- **Content** - Welcome session, immigration check-in, English proficiency testing, academic advising. Information sessions on cultural adjustment, health insurance and health services/immunizations, mental health, safety, immigration regulations, community organizations, academic environment and success panels, U-Bill.
- **Housing** – For last several years, University Housing has made arrangements to open dorms early to accommodate arriving international students, adding early dining services this year.

- **“International at Iowa” Online Course** – Begun Fall 2013, 8-week online course required for all new international undergrad students, expanding on topics covered during orientation week (immigration and other laws, cultural adjustment, mental health, academic success, and academic expectation, including expanded subsection on plagiarism and other forms of misconduct). In Fall 2014, will be expanded to include small-group meetings in second half of the semester with domestic student leaders to engage in cross-cultural discussions, adjustment issues, and exposure to events international students might not otherwise attend.

Ongoing Programs and Services

- **ISSS Advising Services** - Immigration, financial, and personal advising (i.e. anything but academic advising).
- **Life in Iowa** – Extended orientation sessions throughout the year, focusing on practical, social, and cultural events. Examples include job interview tips or resume writing, American holiday celebrations such as pumpkin carving or gingerbread decorating, study nights, game nights, information sessions on body image or relationships, and trips to Iowa locations such as Effigy Mounds, the Dubuque aquarium, or the Amana Colonies.
- **Global Buddies** – Special program specifically for students coming on formal exchanges (usually one or two semesters); more intensive cultural adjustment support, matches with returning Study Abroad students for frequent social and cultural events.
- **Scholar Programs** – Provides similar cross-cultural and social programming specifically for scholars and their families; along with Global Buddies recently recognized by US Department of State as a “best practices” example of cultural programming for exchange visitors.
- **Campus Conversation Partners** – Through ESL programs, offered to students enrolled in intensive English courses to match with UI staff for English practice.
- **Tax Program** – Staffed by volunteers specially trained by VITA in non-resident tax issues, provide workshops for in-person help and an online program to help process federal non-resident returns each spring.
- **Bridge Program** – Intercultural leadership certificate program for international and domestic students, meet weekly during spring semester to discuss cross-cultural issues and focus on a campus event.
- **Building Our Global Community** – Certificate program for UI staff and faculty (10th year in 2014), series of workshops and trainings focusing on cross-cultural communication/awareness, self-awareness, specific country/area studies.
- **International Advocate Certificate** – New certificate program for ISSS staff to recognize “above and beyond” work of UI staff/faculty to assist international students, scholars, and internationalization efforts.
- **Student Organizations** – OASIS (Organization for the Support of International Students), numerous nationality/culture groups (Chinese Students and Scholars Association, Indian Student Alliance, Sri Lanka, African Student Association, Arab Student Association, etc.), special service-oriented groups with international focus such as AiCheng Magazine group, Heart Connection; recent increased involvement of international students in UISG, Grad Student Senate.
- **Community Organizations** – International Women’s Club, Friends of International Students, local religious organizations, Foreign Relations Council, CIVIC.
- **International Student Committee** – Consisting of representatives from numerous UI offices, analyzes trends and projections, makes recommendations for new or existing programs and infrastructure.

- **College-level Programs** – Increased resources for helping international students in speaking and writing labs on campus, specialized staffing and programs developed for students in CLAS, Business and Engineering colleges.

New Programs and Initiatives

- **International “Who Does What”** – A reference list styled after the old Registrar “Who Does What” lists, to be utilized by both staff/faculty and students to reduce confusion on what services are provided regarding international students.
- **International Student Handbook** – Reviving a formerly published handbook that has been inactive for several years, which contains a “Living in Iowa City” guide as well as other topics and “how to’s” for international students, in conjunction with City of Iowa City and Student Legal Services. Will also incorporate new one-minute “how-to” videos that will be created on a variety of topics pertinent to new students.
- **New Matching Program “Friends Without Borders”** – Creating new program to match international with domestic students one-to-one for friendship/cultural learning. Will collaborate with Center for Diversity and Enrichment, expanding on penpal program. Will sponsor kickoff and closing events at start/end of academic year. Will include incentive program where pairs can win awards for engaging in a certain number and type of activities together during the academic year.
- **Support and Retention Specialist** – New position in ISSS to oversee specialized aspects of student programming, assist with the domestic leaders side of the International at Iowa course (Global@Iowa), track at-risk students identified through first-semester survey MAP-Works, conduct student needs assessments.
- **Communication and Outreach Specialist** – New position in International Programs to assist with alumni relations and outreach via social media programs.
- **International Student Case Management** – Developing system for specific ISSS staff to work more closely with other campus programs such as Threat Assessment Team/UI Police, University Counseling Services, and Dean of Students Office to provide specialized case management support for students encountering severe mental health and other issues.
- **Pre-Departure Info Sessions** – Following a practice started by Chinese Students and Scholar Association, International Programs will collaborate to hold pre-departure sessions in Shanghai and Beijing each summer for incoming students and parents.
- **Data and Surveys** – Compiling and analyzing data from new and recent surveys (MAP-Works, SERU) to help assess needs and climate.
- **Student Recognition** – New program to recognize leaders among international student community, “International Programs Dream Team.”
- **Blog** – Working on creating an ISSS blog to help highlight important announcements/issues but also give a spotlight to student accomplishments.
- **Parent Focus** – Working to increase communication with and recognition of international parents. Suggestion may include an International Parent of the Year, expanding information sessions for parents who accompany students to orientation.
- **Student Steering Committee** – Working with UI Student Government, who is creating an advisory board of students to work with our office.

Statistical Report: http://international.uiowa.edu/files/international.uiowa.edu/files/file_uploads/fall_2013_statistical_report.pdf

ISSS Website: <http://international.uiowa.edu/iss>

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