International Programs

Office of International Programs

Introduction

The Office of International Programs supports the educational mission of the University by providing information and services to students, faculty, staff, and the community. The department endeavors to be an effective resource for the University and local communities. The Office of International Programs is responsible for all aspects of international student admissions, international transfer credit evaluation, international student advising with a special emphasis on US immigration regulations, management of the McNeese State University SEVIS immigration database as required by the Department of Homeland Security, and study abroad opportunities for students both international and domestic. In addition, the Office of International Programs strives to foster ties with the larger McNeese State University community, the larger Lake Charles community, and the international student population by promoting positive relationships between the various cultures in our global community and meaningful engagements among the various stakeholders.

The Office of International Programs provides a vast array of services to students on non-immigrant visas and to all students who wish to study abroad. Specifically, for students on non-immigrant visas, the Office of International Programs provides services during the recruitment phase, at the point of admission (advising on how to obtain an F-1 visa, housing options, processing of transfer credit and contacts with student groups, conditional admission), during orientation (presentation of F-1 regulations, student services, University processes and procedures and American life and culture) as well as continued cultural outreach (newsletters and semesterly outings) and immigration advising (monitoring, SEVIS reporting and assistance in filing for benefits) throughout the duration of studies and post-studies in the Optional Practical Training period. We also service all government-sponsored students by providing necessary verifications of enrollment, degree progress as well as liaising to ensure that sponsors' criteria are met.

For study abroad students, the Office of International Programs assists in identifying reputable programs, pre-evaluating transfer credit, liaising with other departments, specifically the Office of Financial Aid, and third-party providers to secure opportunities for students. Finally, the Office of International Programs is responsible for processing transfer credit after the study abroad program is complete.

Due to immigration regulations that require students on F-1 visas to maintain a ¾ majority of all coursework in a traditional, face-to-face format, the Office of International Programs does not cater to distance education or offer special services, as we actively seek to limit distance education for students on non-immigrant visas. Each semester, we monitor enrollment to ensure that students meet the minimum face-to-face requirements to maintain their lawful status. Furthermore, many government sponsored students are prohibited by their sponsors from taking on-line classes, and the Office of International Programs services students by verifying that they have met these guidelines.

With the current growth of online degree programs, the Office of International Programs now also serves as the responsible agent for recruitment and admission of non-domestic students in such programs. The Office of International Programs is also the primary point of contact for transfer articulation agreements with non-US institutions, which, as they expands, will require managing the off-site compliance of the agreement as well as facilitating the admission, transfer credit evaluation and initial advising of students participating in such programs.

For students studying abroad, the Office of International Programs is working to develop cross-enrollment courses that would be online and conducted in tandem with the study abroad experience. This course is currently under development and review.

Performance Objective 1 To assist University efforts to recruit and retain culturally diverse students.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Achieve a minimum 65% yield rate for new international students enrolled compared to total accepted international student applicants in the fall and spring semesters.

1.1 Data

International Student Yield Rate - Accepted vs. Enrolled:

Academic Year	Fall			Spring		
	Accepted	Enrolled	Yield	Accepted	Enrolled	Yield
2009-2010	183	114	62.3%	92	60	65.2%
2010-2011	125	87	69.6%	74	57	77.0%
2011-2012	129	68	52.7%	55	39	70.9%
2012-2013	91	70	76.9%	59	42	71.2%
2013-2014	107	74	69.1%	83	54	65.0%
2014-2015	177	109	61.5%	161	109	67.7%
2015-2016	370	237	64.0%	133	82	61.6%
2016-2017	178	104	58.4%	104	55	52.8%
2017-2018	289	111	38.4%	134	47	35%
2018-2019	261	74	28.3%	92	50	54.3%
2019-2020						

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:
- The yield rate was 58.4% for fall 2016 and 52.8% for spring 2017. The performance indicator was not met for either semester. However, while the percentage yield rate was below the target, the number of accepted applicants (262 as of July 21, 2017) and enrolled applicants is getting close to matching the historical high for fall 2015 (369), data that should supersede the yield percentage rate in terms of importance. The average international student yield in the U.S., as published in a recent IIE report, is currently 24%, so our current yield is over twice the domestic average.
- A variety of policy issues, specifically admission testing requirements, related to our largest student demographic from Saudi Arabia continue to impact both the number of applications, the acceptance rate (including acceptance by exception) and the enrollment rate. With the new, fully functional online application, we are now receiving more applications, which skews the numbers as more people apply who may not fully intend on attending. Additionally, with the 2016 election and the international response, many students are choosing to study in other countries besides the United States. This is a documented trend and has been reported in major news outlets.

2017-2018:
- The yield rate was 38.4% for fall 2017 and 35% for spring 2018. The performance indicator of at least 65% was not met for either semester. However, while the percentage yield rate was below the target, the number of accepted applicants (423 for fall 2017 and spring 2018 combined) is second only to our historical high of 503 accepted students in 2015-2016.
- Visa denials (or delayed issuance) and geo-political shifts towards schools in Canada played a role in our enrollment numbers. These trends have been documented in various mainstream news agencies as well as professional organizations such as NAFSA.
- The closure of our intensive English program has also impacted that pipeline and ability to recruit students with an initial need for English language training.

2018-2019:
- The benchmarks were not met; however, they are outside industry norms, which is closer to 24%. We exceeded the average industry yield. The benchmark should be re-established to reflect more realistic goals, 24-25%.

- Recruitment efforts have focused heavily on the Indian sub-continent, Vietnam, and Africa, where our market analysis shows that our programs and price point are desirable.
- We are seeking to engage agents in these markets, especially in Asia, where agents are the norm. This is an articulated goal and action plan; however, lack of support from upper administration has prevented any agreements from being signed.
- We are also seeking out strategic partnerships in Vietnam and West Africa, whereby facilitating the mobility of qualified transfer students. These agreements are all effectively stalled due to administrative review.
- Six Action Plans related to recruitment initiatives to be included with RNL efforts have been written, but no feedback has been received.

2019-2020:

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Achieve total international student enrollment equal to or greater than 400 students in the fall and spring semesters.

2.1 Data

International Student Enrollment:

Academic Year	Fall Enrollment	Spring Enrollment
2009-2010	438	419
2010-2011	423	411
2011-2012	376	363
2012-2013	343	315
2013-2014	317	314
2014-2015	359	413
2015-2016	560	553
2016-2017	488	453
2017-2018	454	443
2018-2019	404	406
2019-2020		

2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:
The total enrollment was 488 for fall 2016 and 453 for spring 2017. The performance indicator was met and surpassed. (Note: Historical enrollment peak was set in the fall 2015 with 560 students.)

2017-2018:
The total enrollment was 454 for fall 2017 and 443 for spring 2018. The performance indicator was met and surpassed, albeit not showing growth.

2018-2019:
Performance indicator was met. Recruitment plans are in place to support and increase enrollment including new markets and strategic partnerships. We are also working on retention efforts, including Campus Buddies, expanded CPT opportunities, and increased facilitation of fee payments.

2019-2020:

3 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Achieve a 1st to 2nd year retention rate for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking, international students equal to or exceeding the University targeted retention rate for all students in the cohort.

3.1 Data

1st to 2nd Year First-time Freshman Retention Rate:

	International	International	International	University

Term (Fall - Fall)	students in cohort	students retained	student retention rate	targeted retention rate**
2008-2009	30	27	90.0%	67.5%*
2009-2010	31	28	90.3%	67-71%
2010-2011	31	29	93.5%	67.1-71.1%
2011-2012	22	22	100%	67.3-71.3%
2012-2013	19	19	100%	67.5-71.5%
2013-2014	32	26	81.3%	67.7-71.7%
2014-2015	50	47	94.0%	67.3%
2015-2016	146	100	68.5%	66.1%
2016-2017	63	53	84.1%	68.1%
2017-2018	72	50	69.40%	69.7%
2018-2019				
2019-2020				

*Baseline

**Note, with the end of the LA Grad Act, targets are no longer being articulated, however, the stated rate in this field represent the University retention rates as a whole.

3.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:
The 1st to 2nd year retention rate (fall 2015 to fall 2016) for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking, international students was 68.5%, exceeding the University's targeted retention rate for all students in the cohort. The performance indicator was met.

2017-2018:
The Office of International Programs is currently proposing several initiatives to address retention issues, specifically advising and student experience as they relate to international students.

2018-2019:
- The Office of International Programs has pending initiatives to address retention issues, specifically advising and student experience as they relate to international students, including: Campus Buddies program, Friendship Families, and pathway agreements.
- Participation in off-campus excursions has been constant, and the Office of International Programs has requested student input to guide future destinations and event development.
- A new SGA Senator position has been created and the Office of International Programs has recommended a student leader to represent the needs of international students.

2019-2020:

4 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Achieve a 1st to 3rd year retention rate for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking, international students equal to or exceeding the University targeted retention rate for all students in the cohort.

4.1 Data

1st to 3rd Year First-time Freshman Retention Rate:

Term (Fall - Fall)	International students in cohort	International students retained	International student retention rate	University targeted retention rate**
2007-2009	42	26	61.9%	53.8%*
2008-2010	30	24	80.0%	54-58%
2019-2011	31	26	83.9%	54.1-58.1%
2010-2012	31	27	87.1%	54.4-58.4%

2011-2013	22	20	90.9%	54.8-58.8%
2012-2014	19	17	89.5%	55.2-59.2%
2013-2015	32	22	68.8%	67.3%
2014-2016	50	38	76.0%	53.6%
2015-2017	146	66	45.2%	53.2%
2016-2017	63	47	74.6%	58.1%
2018-2019				
2019-2020				

*Baseline

**Note, with the end of the LA Grad Act, targets are no longer being articulated, however, the stated rate in this field represent the University retention rates as a whole.

4.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:
The 1st to 3rd year retention rate (fall 2014 to fall 2016) for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking, international students was 68.8% exceeding the University targeted retention rate for all students in the cohort. The performance indicator was met.

2017-2018:
The Office of International Programs is currently proposing several initiatives to address retention issues, specifically advising and student experience as they relate to international students.

2018-2019:
See notes for YR1-2 retention. Additionally, higher retention rates for YR1-3 is indicative of a need for more intensive advising and intervention in the first year.

2019-2020:

5 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Achieve a percentage of international student population as compared to total student population of 4% or higher.

5.1 Data

Student Population – International vs. Total:

Academic Year	Fall Enrollment			Spring Enrollment		
	Total	International	%	Total	International	%
2009-2010	8645	438	5.1%	8099	419	5.2%
2010-2011	8941	423	4.7%	8313	411	4.9%
2011-2012	8791	376	4.3%	8136	363	4.5%
2012-2013	8588	343	4.0%	7767	315	4.1%
2013-2014	8349	317	3.7%	7646	314	4.1%
2014-2015	8242	359	4.3%	7395	413	5.5%
2015-2016	8162	560	6.8%	7252	553	7.6%
2016-2017	7626	488	6.3%	6866	453	6.5%
2017-2018	7638	454	5.9%	6827	443	6.4%
2018-2019	7649	404	5.2%	6844	406	5.9%
2019-2020						

5.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:
The percentage of international students as compared to the total student population was 6.3% for fall 2016 and 6.5%

for spring 2017, meeting the performance indicator for both semesters. (Historically, 7.6% in the spring 2016 was the greatest percentage of international student representation on campus to date.)

2017-2018:
The percentage of international students as compared to the total student population was 5.9% for fall 2017 and 6.4% for spring 2018, meeting the performance indicator for both semesters.

2018-2019:
The benchmark was exceeded. See comments on retention and recruitment efforts in previous benchmark analyses. Additionally, efforts to make inroads on quality of life initiatives both on campus and in the community and making scholarships more accessible and visible will also impact this goal.

2019-2020:

Performance Objective 2 To provide exemplary customer service that meets the needs of applicants, students, faculty, staff, and other patrons of the University.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: On the International Student Exit Survey, score at least 4.00, on a 5.00 scale, on all 16 items.

1.1 Data

Item	Fall 2015 (N=6)	Spring/ Summer 2016 (N=13)	Fall 2016 (N=7)	Spring/ Summer 2017 (N=12)	Fall 2017 (N=15)	Spring/ Summer 2018 (N=10)
Overall, I have been treated in a courteous manner by the ISAO staff.	5.00	4.46	4.29	4.08	4.40	4.27
Overall, the ISAO staff acted in a professional manner.	5.00	4.31	4.29	3.92	4.40	4.27
Overall, the service that I received from the ISAO was processed as efficiently as possible.	4.83	4.38	4.43	4.08	4.56	4.20
Overall, the ISAO staff provided services in a timely manner.	4.50	4.31	4.43	4.08	4.70	4.33
Overall, I feel that the information I received from the ISAO staff was accurate.	4.83	4.00	4.14	4.08	4.50	4.20
Overall, I would be willing to recommend MSU to a friend in my home country.	4.83	4.00	3.71	3.83	4.20	4.13
Overall, my experience at MSU has been positive.	4.67	4.15	4.43	3.92	4.50	4.00
Overall level of satisfaction with the following:						
International Admissions	4.50	4.23	4.29	4.58	4.60	4.86
International Student Orientation	4.83	4.25	3.71	4.78	4.30	4.62
Various Letters	4.67	4.46	3.86	4.33	4.33	4.53

International Transfer Credit Evaluation	4.50	3.90	4.20	4.70	3.67	4.42
Emails/Email Newsletters	4.50	4.38	3.86	4.75	4.00	4.53
Information/Advising on Immigration	4.40	3.82	3.83	4.58	4.33	4.57
Immigration Lawyer Presentations	3.67	3.43	3.50	4.29	3.50	4.64
International Mixers/ Picnics/Socials	3.67	3.80	3.67	4.45	4.50	4.38
Problem Resolution	4.60	4.08	3.75	4.09	4.63	4.62
Average	4.56	4.12	4.02	4.28	4.32	4.41

Item	Fall 2018 (N=)*	Spring/ Summer 2019 (N=15)	Fall 2019 (N=)	Spring/ Summer 2020 (N=)	Fall 2020 (N=)	Spring/ Summer 2021 (N=)
Overall, I have been treated in a courteous manner by the IPO staff.		4.64				
Overall, the IPO staff acted in a professional manner.		4.71				
Overall, the service that I received from the IPO was processed as efficiently as possible.		4.73				
Overall, the IPO staff provided services in a timely manner.		4.67				
Overall, I feel that the information I received from the IPO staff was accurate.		4.67				
Overall, I would be willing to recommend MSU to a friend in my home country.		4.4				
Overall, my experience at MSU has been positive.		4.4				
Overall level of satisfaction with the following:						
International Admissions		4.87				
International Student Orientation		4.53				
Various Letters		4.8				
International Transfer Credit Evaluation		4.15				
Emails/Email Newsletters		4.8				
Information/Advising on Immigration		4.8				

Immigration Lawyer Presentations		4.5				
International Mixers/ Picnics/Socials		4.71				
Problem Resolution		4.73				
Average		4.63				

*Data for Fall 2018 was not collected.

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:
On the International Student Exit Survey for fall 2016, the overall average score was 4.02, but only eight of the 16 items met or exceeded the 4.00 target. For spring 2017, the overall average score was 4.28, only 13 of the 16 items met or exceeded the performance indicator. Thus, the performance indicator was not met in either semester.

2017-2018:
On the International Student Exit Survey for fall 2017, the overall average score was 4.32, but only 14 of the 16 items met or exceeded the 4.00 target. For spring 2018, the overall average score was 4.41, and all 16 items met or exceeded the performance indicator. Thus, the performance indicator was met in only one semester.

The areas that showed need for improvement included transfer credit evaluations and immigration lawyer presentations. The Office of International Programs only serves as a facilitator for both and will look into better mediating this bridge.

2018-2019:
- All goals were met for Spring 2019; however, data was not collected for the Fall 2018.
- The method of data collection will need to be evaluated. The survey does not show much variation and students appear to only direct their responses to one staff member, which would indicate that the data is not representative.
- Efforts to automate services and letters will be continued. Feedback from excursions and mixers will be solicited to inform future planning.

2019-2020:

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: On the Office of International Programs Survey for Students, score at least 4.00 (satisfied), on a 5.00 scale.

2.1 Data

Item	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Overall, the Office of International Programs treats me in a **courteous** manner.	4.49	4.72	
Overall ,the Office of International Programs Staff provides services in an **efficient** manner.	4.41	4.43	
Overall, the Office of International Programs Staff provides service in a **timely** manner.	4.35	4.56	
Overall, I feel that the Office International Programs is **accessible**.	4.41	4.56	
Overall, I feel the			

information received from the Office of International Programs is **accurate**.	4.28	4.58	
Overall, I feel that my needs are addressed by the Office of International Programs.	4.19	4.5	
Overall, I feel that my students' needs are addressed by the Office of International Programs.	4.11	4.47	
Average	4.32	4.44	
Average of (7) sub-scores of specific advising or services areas	3.96	4.45	

2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2017-2018:
This was the first year of independent data collection. Previously data was collected in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar.

The benchmark goals were met. Some sub-score areas show need, specifically: study abroad advising, OPT/CPT filing, and assistance with off-campus needs.

2018-2019:
Stated goals were met, and scores in all areas met or exceeded the benchmark. Written comments indicate that more visibility for study abroad is desired, and current efforts with ISEP respond to this. Written comments also indicate a desire for more department-specific guidance (specific to CPT, OPT, and program offerings); however, that has been attempted and lack of responsiveness from the departments and deans has limited our efforts.

2019-2020:

3 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: On the Office of International Programs Survey for Faculty and Staff, score at least 4.00 (satisfied) on a 5.00 scale.

3.1 Data

Item	Spring 2018	Spring 2019	Spring 2020
Overall, the Office of International Programs treats me in a **courteous** manner.	4.71	4.92	
Overall, the Office of International Programs Staff provides services in an **efficient** manner.	4.55	4.77	
Overall, the Office of International Programs Staff provides service in a **timely** manner.	4.6	4.85	
Overall, I feel that the Office International Programs is **accessible**.	4.62	4.77	

Overall, I feel the information received from the Office of International Programs is **accurate**.	4.56	4.77	
Overall, I feel that my needs are addressed by the Office of International Programs.	4.55	4.77	
Overall, I feel that my students' needs are addressed by the Office of International Programs.	4.59	4.82	
Average	4.59	4.81	

3.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2017-2018:
This was the first year of independent data collection. Previously data was collected in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar.

The benchmark goals were met.

2018-2019:
All goals were met. Written comments indicate that more visibility and explanation of services would be appreciated, as well as more information on how policies and admissions standards are created and set, as there is a misconception that the Office of International Programs controls this.

2019-2020:

Performance Objective 3 **To accurately maintain data in the SEVIS database for McNeese State University in accordance with regulations of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement under the Department of Homeland Security.**

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Achieve a zero audit finding rate during SEVIS site visits.

1.1 Data

2016-2017:
- SEVIS site visit was successfully completed on February 8, 2017. Follow-up communication with SEVP Field Representative indicated no areas of concern.
- The J-1 program request was successfully approved for McNeese.

2017-2018:
- SEVIS site visit was successfully completed on August 2, 2018 . Follow-up communication with SEVP Field Representative indicated no areas of concern.
- The J-1 program at McNeese is still authorized.
- Pending re-certification for F-1 program. All update materials have been submitted.

2018-2019:
- SEVIS visit was successfully completed on May 2, 2019. Follow up communication indicated no areas of concern.
- The J-1 program was ended and all necessary communication to complete this was sent to the Department of State.
- Pending re-certification of F-1 program. All materials have been submitted and field representative was informed of extreme delay.

2019-2020:

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

Maintain
- Maintain strong professional relationship with SEVIS Field Representative.

Revise
- Engage in continued F-1 and J-1 training for all staff members.

Develop
- Work with McNeese Institute for Industry Education to identify possible programs that can operate under the J-1 visa.

2017-2018:

Maintain
- Maintain strong professional relationship with SEVIS Field Representative.
- Continue F-1 and J-1 training for all staff members.
- Work with McNeese Institute for Industry Education to identify possible programs that can operate under the J-1 visa.

Develop
- Create system for SEVIS notifications during emergencies for compliance.

2018-2019:

Develop
- Finalize UCS report request for emergency communication as required by SEVIS (request submitted April 2019)
- Communicate new SEVIS fees with administration and students.
- Create new procedures to meet SEVIS rules on I-20 shipment.

2019-2020:

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Meet all SEVIS update and recertification deadlines (every two years).

2.1 Data

2016-2017:
SEVIS legacy updates were submitted on June 2, 2014, ahead of the deadline. SEVIS recertification was submitted June 27, 2014, three months prior to the deadline. The performance indicator was met. At this time no action is required to maintain compliance.

2017-2018:
SEVIS recertification is currently pending. All update materials have been submitted and are under review. SEVIS Field Representative is aware of extended pending status.

2018-2019:
SEVIS recertification is still pending. SEVIS Field Representative is aware of extended pending status. Escalation of adjudication has been requested.

2019-2020:

2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

Maintain
- Maintain strong professional relationship with SEVIS Field Representative.

Revise
- Engage in continued F-1 and J-1 training for all staff members.

Develop
- Work with McNeese Institute for Industry Education to identify possible programs that can operate under the J-1 visa.

2017-2018:

Maintain
- Maintain strong professional relationship with SEVIS Field Representative.
- Continue F-1 and J-1 training.
- Continue outreach with the McNeese Institute to develop J-1 program.

Develop
- Work with academic departments to develop short-term programs that can operate under the J-1 program.

2018-2019:
- J-1 program was officially ended due to low participation and the University's decision to disengage with partners sending exchange students where the partnerships were viewed as unbalanced.
- The new, automated course withdrawal system has been developed with policies to ensure F-1 compliance.

2019-2020:

Performance Objective 4 **To promote awareness of and to expand participation in study and service abroad opportunities.**

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Achieve an above average level of satisfaction (3.5 or higher) for services related to study abroad as measured on student and faculty/staff surveys as well as promote increased engagement with study abroad as measured by inquiries and self-reported levels of awareness and interest.

1.1 Data

	Spring 2019		Spring 2020	
	Faculty/Staff Responses	Student Responses	Faculty/Staff Responses	Student Responses
Percentage of Interaction with OIP (out of total interactions reported with OIP)	7.7%	5.6%		
Have you ever inquired about SA?	N/A	7.3%		
How important is SA to you as a student? (percentage reporting very important or important)	N/A	36.6%		
General perception of OIP (on 5 point scale)	4.11	4.01		

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
- Data for Spring 2019 is intended for benchmarking purposes. Future assessments will seek to show an increase in interactions and inquiries related to Study Abroad (SA), as well as an increased level of perceived importance of both SA and the services provided by the Office of International Programs (OIP).
- Complete implementation of the ISEP network, related advising, and the launching of a new minor in the Department of Social Sciences will play a vital role in achieving this goal.

2019-2020: