

International Student Services Departmental Goals and Assessment Plan 2013-2014

Department Name: International Student Services

College Priority & Objective: Strategic Priority II – Improve Student Access and Success: Implement best practices to improve student participation in advising, learning support and non-curricular activities that are related to student persistence.

Student Services Learning Outcomes:

1. Develop cognitive skills
2. Acquire knowledge
3. Display practical competence and intrapersonal skills
4. Department practices to enhance student completion

Departmental Goals for 2013-2014

1. Focus on Shifting Student Demographics; Identify new issues; challenges and possible remediation for new international student populations.
2. Continue Developing a Comprehensive Plan for Health Insurance Enrollment for F-1 Students
3. Continue to work with IT to identify in Banner international students who have been issued the Form I-20 from SLCC. These are the students who are required to have health insurance coverage & to submit immunization records.
4. Continue to work with the Business Office for tuition collection, and to include the health insurance charges with tuition each semester.
5. Evaluate ESL Program Infrastructure with English Department and SAT ESL program.
6. Achieve a fully-staffed International Student Services Department.

7. **Project (Assessment) Title:** Focus on Shifting Student Demographics; Identify new issues, challenges and possible remediation for new international student populations. Success or Risk of Entering into a Global Pathways Contract with Kaplan

Purpose of the Project:

Identify emerging international student populations who bring new issues and challenges to SLCC. Evaluate the emerging population of Global Pathways students in order to make a recommendation to either encourage or dissuade SLCC recruitment efforts in association with a contract with Kaplan.

Methodology & Research

The Chinese international student population at SLCC has more than doubled in the past four years. From Fall 2010 to Fall 2013 it increased 119% from 42 to 92 students. This recent growth at SLCC is not only a result of greater awareness of U.S. community colleges internationally but primarily a result of the transfer students from the University of Utah Global Pathways Program. In partnership with Kaplan, the U of Utah recruited Global Pathways students from their home country of China to attend the University's hybrid program of specialized areas of academic study along with intensive English language training. In order to remain enrolled at the University of Utah after three terms, these students were required to maintain a 2.5 GPA or higher and in their third semester, take the Michigan Test with a score of 66 or higher (in 2013, University of Utah's requirement for the Michigan test changed to 76 or higher). If Global Pathways students failed to meet both of these standards, they had two options; return to their home country or transfer to SLCC. Many students chose the latter and transferred to SLCC. In fall 2011, 47% of the students unable to complete the U of U program, transferred to SLCC.

International Student Services (ISS) Admissions welcomed the influx of new Chinese students, yet as time progressed it was observed that the students were submitting late applications and were not fully informed about the transfer process. Students felt reluctant to transfer because they felt they were being "kicked out" of the University of Utah. ISS wanted to come across in the best possible light, working with each student to explain comparable education, quality instruction, class selection and size, transferability and articulation of classes between the two institutions. The ISS staff recognized the cultural and academic challenges the students faced and were prepared to do more outreach and preparation for the students as they moved through the transfer process. Unfortunately, at the time the Kaplan staff felt that they could not pre-identify students to our International Student Services' staff stating privacy and cultural breaches; the students could not be shamed, therefore, ISS staff were initially unaware of which students were Global Pathways transfer students.

After making several inquiries to the U of U International Center and Kaplan in hopes of getting a qualifying feature for these transfer-in students ISS staff noticed the unique timeframe on the USCIS form I-20. Staff noticed that the I-20s issued from the University of Utah were for only a 16 month period. This was unusual for a four-year university program, thus we finally realized that this was the identifier for Global Pathways transfer students. Based on these I-20 dates, ISS admission staff had an identifier to track Global Pathways students on their individual student files and in the fsa atlas database.

Based on the number of Global Pathway students transferring to SLCC, ISS wanted to know if we should propose a program at SLCC for Global Pathways students who are not ready for a university program. In this assessment through the use of International Admissions records, Banner student reports, ISS student files and faculty feedback, ISS will identify Global Pathways students who are "at risk" based on their transfer record and previous enrollment at the

University, Accuplacer score, and GPA to assess success at SLCC. Using this data, ISS will assess success and retention of Global Pathways students to determine if a partnership with Kaplan will be beneficial to SLCC. Based on the findings, a recommendation will be made to either encourage or dissuade Global Pathways recruitment efforts.

Qualitative:

1. Meet with English as a Second Language faculty, exchange emails to share observations and historic performance and behaviors of Global Pathways students in the classroom
2. Meet with a continuing Chinese student for insight into culture and educational outcome expectations

Quantitative:

3. Review Banner reports of admission, placement & grades/GPA
4. Assess the value of Salt Lake Community College entering into a contract with Kaplan to deliver a Global Pathways Program

Actions Taken

- International Student Services (ISS) staff assessed student files, Banner student reports, and international admissions records to identify the transfer students from the U's Global Pathways within the past three years. Fifty-one students were tracked for their first term of attendance, first term GPA, and last term GPA to assess their academic performance at SLCC.
- ISS developed and administered a survey with Campus Labs and sent to the Global Pathways students via email. The goal of the survey was to get student feedback describing in their words, the student understanding for transfer to SLCC, and to hear their academic and personal challenges as they transitioned from the University of Utah to Salt Lake Community College.
- On September 25, 2013, the ISS director and international student advisor interviewed a continuing Chinese student to gather information regarding the differences in the U.S. education system and the Chinese education system, the impact of the Accuplacer in placement of students, and the cultural influences that may attribute to Chinese students' performance.
- Director of International Student Services interviewed the Coordinator of College Level 4 ESL Program to get feedback on Global Pathways students' academic performance and classroom participation and behavior.

In the beginning of fall semester 2013, an e-mail conversation between College level ESL 4 faculty and ISS was documented.

Results/Findings

The Chinese education system and the U.S. education system are very different. In the United States, poor academic performance does not prevent a student from entering an institution of higher learning. Contrary to U.S. ideals regarding academic progression and success, in China students must pass high school final exams in order to attend an institution of higher learning. In addition, it is an expectation in Chinese culture that children must receive an education and diploma in order to succeed in life. (In recent years, if a student in China has the financial resources to attend college they are able to do so despite a mediocre academic record.)

As a result of the emphasis placed on passing final exams in the Chinese education system and culture, most Chinese students are skilled at test taking and guessing based on deductive reasoning. The Accuplacer is a multiple choice test assessing reading, writing and math skills. Chinese students tend to do fairly well. The score determines placement within the College's ESL and academic programs. A challenge apparent early on was that even though Chinese students do well on tests, feedback from SLCC faculty showed that Chinese students do not perform well in the classroom setting because they do not attend class and they do not complete their homework assignments.

In the Chinese culture, students are usually told exactly what they should and should not do in academia. When they come to the U.S., it is a culture shock. They are entering an environment where they need to be engaged in decision making processes. Faculty and ISS staff found that without direction, Global Pathways students were not making decisions that would improve their academic performance.

Results of Actions Taken:

International Student Services staff assessed 51 Global Pathways student files from summer 2011 until summer 2014.

The group data revealed that only 5 students entered their first term at SLCC with a GPA above 3.5 (A GPA above 3.5 implies that although the students performed well academically, they did not meet the Michigan test score standards for continuing at the University of Utah).

All other students transferring from the University of Utah to SLCC had a 2.5 GPA or below in their first term.

After their first semester at SLCC 19 students had a GPA above a 2.0; 19 had below a 2.0 GPA and 13 students had no GPA recorded in Banner.

Twenty-seven students attended one semester; 16 students attended more than one semester. As of spring 2014, none of the students had graduated.

In their last semester at SLCC, 3 students had a 3.0 or above and at least 20 students had a 2.7 or below. Of this sample group, 16 students were placed into ESL level 4 courses. This is significant because Global Pathways program is a hybrid program of high level ESL and University level classes. It would be expected that after three semesters in the hybrid program a higher level of English proficiency would have been demonstrated upon admission to SLCC.

Survey Results

It is very difficult to make conclusions when there are little or no responses to the survey. No responses were received from the Campus labs survey which was open for ten days. None the less, non-responsiveness seems to be a continued pattern for this population of students. Further research and understanding of the motivators for this population of students is needed.

At the NAFSA: Association of International Educator's annual conference in late May, it was reported that generally students from China do not look at e-mail which may explain why our Campus Labs survey received no attention. Recommendations at NAFSA were to use the popular Chinese Weibo or WeChat to ask for a survey response. In talking with Campus Labs, it is possible to link our future surveys to any site.

Faculty Conversations Fall 2013

ISS: Approximately 24 students from China were admitted to SLCC this fall. Some are from the Global Pathways (GP) program. Others are applying on their own. In either case, the number of students from China is increasing.

Response from faculty Professors A & C taught morning classes and Professor B taught the evening section of ESL level 4, 1010 and 1020 (August 14, 2013):

Professor A: Why are we accepting these students when they have been unsuccessful in another program?

I plan on accepting the students on my waitlist, but any more is a disservice to those who have registered.

ISS: They have been at the U for three semesters in a hybrid program and have not maintained the required 2.5 GPA. Upon application to SLCC, some placed into level 3 or below. Since they have already demonstrated a level of English proficiency to get into the U, they will not be admitted to SLCC until they've re-tested and placed into level 4 or above. My recommendation is that they not sit together in class and that expectations be made extraordinary clear, especially

for attendance and regular progress. There are 12 Global Pathway transfers total that have placed into level 4.

9/16/2013 (one month later, (Professor B teaches the evening section)

Professor B: Nancy, you seemed concerned about the Chinese students and their work in my classes this term, so I thought I should share this with you. In the first 13 class meetings, they have had the following absences:

1. YAN 5
2. YUAN 7
3. TAIDA 2
4. MENG 4
5. ZIHAO 7
6. YUHUI 4
7. YANG 4

9/17/2013

Professor B: Their first test scores were even worse. None of the students listed came close to passing the first reading test in ESL 1020. Out of 100 points, all of them scored below 50. Several of them, below 40. My prediction—based on their frequent absences and low scores—is that they will all fail—unless the low score on the first test is enough to shock them into trying harder, but I doubt it. They took this test last night and none of them even returned to class tonight to get the test back. If there is something you wish to do with these students to advise them, I leave that in your hands, but there is nothing I can do as their instructor beyond what I have already done to help them learn. As far as I can tell at this point, they lack any commitment to succeed in my classes, which is very disappointing and frustrating.

9/26/13

Professor C: Hi guys. So, I'm confused. There's a student (Yulong) registered in my ESL 1010-004 who says he is taking Professor A's 1020, but when I checked online, I see he is registered for Professor B's 1020. He leaves my class early to get to Redwood in time for his next class, and on Monday he missed class because he had a test in the next class. He also has not yet purchased the textbook, and he asked me to make copies for him. What's up?

Professor A: It sounds like he is the one confused! He is not in my 1010 or 1020 class. As far as the text, I tell my student everyone else has the book, s/he needs to be like the other students. I refer to the syllabus about being prepared and then ask her/him to leave the class and return when s/he is ready to be a real member of the class.

I kicked a student out of class yesterday because he was a half hour late, came in and started playing with his cell phone. It was a little uncomfortable, but I hope it sent a clear message. I hope this helps,

Professor B: I know, it's a delightfully confusing situation, isn't it? Yes, Professor C, Yulong is registered for my ESL 1020 course at 7:30PM. He has missed over a third of the classes and earned a 41 out of 100 on his first exam.

Which is pretty much what the majority of my Chinese students from the U are doing this term. I have already shared my concerns with Nancy, but in the end, if these students are not committed to doing the work, there's really not much we can do to help.

Last week on Monday evening was the first exam in ESL 1020. All of those students failed, and since that evening, most of them have stopped attending class. They are still registered. I assume they have to be registered to stay in status. They just don't come.

I asked one of the two Chinese students from that group--the only two who do regularly attend--what is going on with the other students, why they don't come to the 7:30 class. He said they are probably just hungry and want to have dinner.

10/23/2013

Professor A: Li is failing my classes! He has been absent most of the last two weeks, and had very spotty attendance before that. I do not think he will pass ESL 1010 or 1020 this semester
Thanks,

This exchange of e-mails continued between ESL faculty and International Student Services through Fall semester 2013. On September 30, we heard that the U of U was cancelling this Global Pathways project and dissolving their contract with Kaplan.

After receiving this Global Pathways information, faculty were contacted again. Here is an abridged version of the message:

Even though the U of U is discontinuing their Global Pathways contract, we will continue to get GP transfer students from other Global Pathways programs in the country such as Northeastern University and a university in Texas.

We've dedicated great effort to get students into classes this fall. I would like to find a way to monitor and modify their behavior. If we can create a non-labor intensive intervention, that would be great. The goal is academic success and retention.

Professor C: We do give them the syllabus the first day of class and we go over it thoroughly, so I think the standards are stated quite clearly. In addition, we remind the students about the standards whenever they have been breached and give them plenty of warnings as well as opportunities to improve their behavior. So I don't share your assumption that they don't understand what's expected of them. My impression is that for some reason, they don't believe the standards apply to them!

The conversation above was the last documented exchange between the ESL faculty and ISS staff. One of the challenges that ISS continued to address was that the Global Pathways students waited until the last opportunity to transfer to SLCC and were late to register for classes. Even when the Kaplan advisors strongly suggested that they transfer to SLCC, the students waited until they received their U of U grades. This was their deciding factor in the transfer to SLCC. Most transfers were completed when ESL classes were already full and ISS had to advocate for their being added to ESL level 4 classes. This was a public relations challenge for ISS because when the students did not attend, faculty expressed regret that they had allowed the students in to their classes.

The students' first choice were morning classes but when they demonstrated low attendance ISS recommended to the students that they enroll in the evening ESL level 4 classes avoiding the challenge of getting up early and missing their morning classes. We hoped that this compromise to attend the evening sections would be more conducive to their attendance and success. Based on faculty feedback, this was not the case.

Use of Results/Findings

The main objective of this assessment was to assess the value of Salt Lake Community College entering into a contract with Kaplan to deliver a Global Pathways Program. Based on the findings we do not think that the College would gain a positive return on investment.

In these past few years initial contract conversations with Kaplan have been pursued. With the high turnover in Kaplan's contract negotiators, progress was not made. The final Kaplan contact person spoke expressed interest in sending students but without the support staff provided at university programs. Based on the results of this assessment, dedicating limited resources to increase enrollment is not a sound decision.

A secondary objective of the assessment was to identify if this population of students, who had been identified as "at risk," at the University of Utah, would succeed at SLCC. After three semesters enrolled in a University program the puzzle remains as to why they had not gained a greater understanding of the U.S. higher education system. The tracking of the Global Pathways students and feedback from SLCC professors revealed that Global Pathways students were posing an array of challenges through the admissions process and in the SLCC classroom.

A continuing objective for ISS is to improve services to international students and to enhance their experience at SLCC. For many international student populations, the dramatic shift in personal freedom that students experience when studying abroad in the U.S., is overwhelming. We persistently look for ways, through programs and services to help students acclimate and make positive decisions leading to the completion of their educational goals.

The importance of education abroad is evidenced by Chinese parents' investment in the education of their "one child." Communicating with and engaging Chinese parents may

potentially help bridge the cultural gap experienced by the students studying abroad in the U.S. Conversations at the NAFSA conference suggested that more connection with parents without violating FERPA may provide a pathway for student support and encouraging student accountability.

Based on the conversations with ESL faculty, we realize that faculty participation in the ongoing assessment of international students is a mutual learning objective. For many international students, English as a Second Language classes are their first experience in U.S. higher education. Close collaboration between ESL and ISS is mutually beneficial to the students and the success of the International Education program.

Next year International Student Services will assess the success and retention of international students who are on academic probation. With faculty and academic advisors we will determine the needs for those students who are in academic jeopardy. One objective is to develop outreach and remediation as well as a policy for termination if necessitated based on academic standing.

Conclusion

China is the fastest growing population of international students in the United States. Chinese students enrolled at the undergraduate level increased by 25.9%. There are now 235,597 Chinese students studying in the United States (Open Doors 2013). China is a fast paced market. As a technically advanced and fast paced culture there are communication changes every six months.

A contract with Kaplan is only one student recruitment and communication channel. Outsourcing recruitment to a private entity like Kaplan poses challenging issues such as the readiness and rigor of the students being recruited for a college program.

Before entering into any international recruitment contract, as an institution SLCC needs to increase its international market intelligence and design an effective and informed marketing strategy.

The greater question for SLCC to consider is, because of the existing resources in our college, could SLCC develop an in-house bridge or hybrid program for international students? At a community college, this hybrid program would serve all learners of English as a second language preparing to enter a college major. In the competitive world of international recruitment, this hybrid program is a way to accelerate international student satisfaction.

The benefits that international students bring to our campus are great. With the majority of our local students receiving some sort of financial aid, we recognize that local students may never have the opportunity to study abroad and explore the world. International students bring the world to our campus. Finding ways to support their academic and cultural success on our campus serves all College members.