



COLLABORATION TO ADVANCE INCLUSIVE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT



AUTHORS

Sherif Barsoum, New York University

Kati Bell, Ed.D., University of California, Irvine

Lauren (Lo) Chow, Babson College

Jennifer Donaghue, Ed.D., The George Washington University

FOREWORD BY

Anthony Pinder, Ph.D., Emerson College



[diversityabroad](https://diversityabroad.org)

1731 Delaware St #100, Berkeley, CA 94703

Copyright © 2022 by Diversity Abroad. All rights reserved.

Diversity Abroad resources and publications may not be distributed or otherwise re-purposed without expressed written consent. When referencing Diversity Abroad resources in presentations, articles, etc., credit must be provided to Diversity Abroad as well as relevant authors.

Suggested citation: Barsoum, S., Bell, K. Chow, L., Donaghue, J. (2022) Date retrieved YYYY, Month DD. Collaboration to Advance Inclusive International Student Support. Retrieved from diversitynetwork.org.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4** ABOUT
- 5** 2020 STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP FORUM PARTICIPANTS
- 6** FOREWORD BY DR. ANTHONY PINDER
- 7** INTRODUCTION
- 9** BACKGROUND
- 13** OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
CAMPUS COLLABORATION
 - 13** FACULTY & STAFF ENGAGEMENT
 - 15** ADVOCACY
 - 16** DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION
 - 17** COMMUNITY & LOCAL ENGAGEMENT
- 19** CONCLUSION & MOVING FORWARD
- 20** GLOSSARY
- 21** REFERENCES
- 24** AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

ABOUT

WHO WE ARE

Diversity Abroad is the leading organization that inspires and supports educators, policy makers, industry professionals and other stakeholders in leveraging inclusive global education to advance academic success, interpersonal development and career readiness of students from diverse and historically marginalized backgrounds. Together, Diversity Abroad and its global member community lead the field of global education and cultural exchange in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in and through its work.

OUR MISSION

To create equitable access to the benefits of global education by empowering educators, engaging stakeholders, and connecting diverse students to resources and opportunity.

ABOUT THE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP FORUM

Diversity Abroad's Strategic Leadership Forum presents a unique opportunity for Chief Diversity Officers, Senior International Officers, and other education administrators to explore strategic collaboration on campus internationalization and diversity and inclusion goals. Such collaboration is especially critical given the current demands for universities to address and make visible policy changes in the area of racial justice, educational equity, and social mobility.

2020 STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP FORUM PARTICIPANTS

Diversity Abroad is grateful for the contributions from the Chief Diversity Officers, Senior International Officers, and other education administrators at the following institutions who attended the 2020 Strategic Leadership Forum.

- Agnes Scott College
- Babson College
- California State University, Los Angeles
- Central Michigan University
- Columbia University, Teachers College
- Dominican University of California
- Emerson College
- George Washington University
- Georgia Gwinnett College
- Miami University
- Milikin University
- Mobility International USA
- New York University
- Texas Tech University
- University of California, Davis
- University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
- University of Missouri
- University of New Orleans
- University of Washington, Tacoma
- Western Michigan University

FOREWORD

By Dr. Anthony Pinder

Vice Provost, Internationalization & Equity - Emerson College

We are living in a time when public confidence in higher education is in serious doubt. As our government grapples with how to help students manage college debt, the criticism regarding the return of investment on the traditional college education and increasing cost cast doubt and fear across the Academy. The COVID-19 pandemic called into question the affordability, equity, and access to a college education. As a result, institutions of higher education have become increasingly complex and difficult to lead.

An added challenge is the continuance of making global education one of the top strategic educational priorities, while the United States is increasingly entangled with a diverse array of global players and challenges. This challenge is exacerbated by a strongly parochial American society. Parochialism's long history within higher education has in some cases arrested the effectiveness of global education as a concept, and comprehensive internationalization as a strategy in higher education.

One proven, albeit under-invested, strategy of internationalization in U.S. higher education has been international student retention. During this current time of immense reckoning for higher education, the time is now to transform institutions to achieve a holistic set of diverse learning objectives, inclusive of the entire matriculation experience of the international students on our campuses. This will take courageous, visionary, innovative, and collaborative leadership to realize.

The participants of the 2020 Diversity Abroad Strategic Leadership Forum, comprised of Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs) and Senior International Officers (SIOs), came together to first consider their independent professional charges, and then explore the ways in which their work could be better aligned to support the success of international students at U.S. colleges/ universities. At the core of both of their professional charges is their empathy, courage, and acute awareness of the importance of creating a campus community of belonging, so that everyone within the community can thrive.

What was clear from their forum engagement was the expectation to see more advancement in practice that involves intentional institutional attempts to educate and support international students on our U.S. campuses. The creation of a shared, and more integrated approach to assigning responsibility – and accountability for facilitating engagement with international students was another expectation. This thoughtful examination by the 2020 Diversity Abroad Strategic Leadership Forum contains

a description of some of the challenges and corresponding recommendations of seasoned researchers and practitioners whose work focuses on the many intersectional identities of international students on our U.S. campuses. The participants focused their discussion and subsequent recommendations on four key areas that impact the support of international students at U.S. colleges/universities: 1) faculty and staff engagement, 2) advocacy, 3) diversity, equity, and inclusion, and 4) local community.

The forum participants represent a growing cadre of practitioners and researchers concerned with fostering intentional practices, from a cross-section of campus stakeholders, which result in facilitating campus climates of belonging for international students and creating deeper awareness of how the intersectional identities of these students are affected by their experience on campus. This report, *Collaboration to Advance Inclusive International Student Support*, is timely in that it provides the beginnings of an action plan to support the rhetoric associated with both diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and internationalization that is commonplace on so many campuses. More importantly, it offers a critical and useful template for how to engage in similar discourse across the Academy.

INTRODUCTION

As the world begins to return to a new sense of normal following the pandemic caused by COVID-19, U.S. higher education professionals have felt its tremendous impact on international student mobility. COVID vaccine mandates and new travel guidelines have shifted the sphere for international students not only upon point of entry into the country, but also on the institutional campuses. No longer are immigration documents one of the primary requirements for these students. Campus resources and orientation programming that were previously regarded as essential to support international students have now shifted on many levels and continue to be re-assessed as the students' needs evolve. Additionally, the vital social movements in 2020 to address systemic racism and police abuse of authority in the U.S. spotlighted glaring education inequities for all BIPOC students, including our international and undocumented students. These events unquestionably disrupted global and international education fundamentally and it is unlikely that the field can or should return to the pre-pandemic state.

The third annual Diversity Abroad Strategic Leadership Forum took place virtually in October 2020 amidst what was to be the first fall of the COVID-19 pandemic. It focused specifically on supporting the success of international students at U.S. universities and colleges and brought together institutional leaders from across the nation to explore how Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs), Senior International Officers (SIOs) and other diversity and international education leaders can strategically collaborate to provide inclusive support for inbound international

students. As diversity, equity and inclusion increasingly play a critical role in higher education, diversity and international education leaders must work to ensure both exchange and full degree international students are prepared to navigate the diversity & inclusion landscape as well as be supported as they explore their own intersectional identities, including that of being an international student on a U.S. campus. Furthermore, diversity, equity and inclusion work must be made less U.S.-centric and globally inclusive in order to be truly encompassing of all.

In many ways, 2020 marked a starting point of reassessing the transactional perspective U.S. institutions of higher education have about international student enrollments. At that time, U.S. higher education institutions admitted three times the number of international students than those sent out on education abroad programs (IIE, 2020), yet concerns frequently voiced from the education abroad community about diversity, equity, and inclusion remain conspicuously left out of discussion for inbound international students. This phenomenon has continued to the present day, and reflects a historic tendency in higher education to only see international students as a monolithic group on U.S. campuses. The many intersectional identities of international students are rarely identified or addressed. Additionally, the recent struggle to acknowledge and combat Asian American and Pacific Islander discrimination and violence in the U.S. has a direct impact on international students, as the majority of students originate from Asian countries (IIE, 2021).

The 2020 Strategic Leadership Forum focused discussions on four key areas that impact the support of international students at U.S. universities and colleges. These findings continue

to be relevant in the present day. **Faculty and staff engagement** is a critical component to the academic and social success of international students, as they strive to adjust to the U.S. culture and higher education system. Many faculty and staff are unaware of the role they may play to positively or negatively impact this student group. Support for international students needs **advocacy** from many areas - both on and off campus. Additionally, **diversity, equity and inclusion** issues present a specific area of learning and understanding for the international student population. Finally, increasing support of international students should ideally include the **local community** in the engagement efforts. Cities and towns that host universities can and should play a role to acculturate international students in their new communities.

BACKGROUND

OVERVIEW

International student enrollment has been a significant facet of U.S. higher education since the rise of global student mobility after World War II, and particularly so in the last two decades since 2000. However, enrollment numbers have stagnated in the last several years and issues of inclusion and equity, transactionalism in recruiting, and sustainability have arisen with regards to international students in the U.S. (Glass, Godwin, & Helms, 2021). The QS International Student Survey (2020) noted particular “rapid disruption” (p. 2) in students’ perceptions of studying in the U.S. during the COVID-19 crisis. These issues led Glass, Godwin, and Helms (2021) to argue for “a new compact for international students among U.S. higher education institutions, organizations, and policymakers” (p. 4) which is built upon a foundation of commitment to a lifelong relationship between international students and their institutions, encompassing the entire lifecycle of the student experience from before they matriculate to after graduation. It is with this context as background that the 2020 Strategic Leadership Forum convened leaders across the field to explore supporting the success of international students in the U.S., and with which we embarked on a review of relevant literature as follows.

RATIONALES FOR INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

There are myriad rationales that scholars and practitioners have cited for creating inclusive practices for international students in the U.S., many of which fall under the categories of revenue generation and cultural/intellectual capital. Some of these rationales also have garnered criticism from others in the field.

One widespread argument for including international students in U.S. higher education institutions, often made in response to xenophobic sentiments or adverse immigration policies, is that of the revenue - both through tuition payments and through living expenses - that this population contributes to the U.S. economy (NAFSA, 2020). While the net value of tuition from international students when considering the cost of recruitment strategies has been debated, the fact that their status as “cash cows” to begin with is under discussion makes a significant point about how they are seen (Cantwell, 2015). The approach of valuing international students for their revenue-generating potential has been critiqued and challenged as a barrier to inclusion in itself (Castiello-Gutierrez & Li, 2020).

International students are also commonly recognized for the cultural and intellectual capital that they contribute to institutions of higher education, particularly in the context of the value lost when they are not included. Urban and Palmer (2014) explored the ways in which institutions engaged or did not engage international students as a cultural resource, especially given a strong interest and willingness on behalf of many students to share their

culture through programming and discussions. A common defense when immigration policies are proposed which would limit the entry of international students is to cite the intellectual and human capital that they contribute to their universities and the larger communities in which they study (Garcia & de Lourdes Villarreal, 2014; NAFSA, 2020). Though there are ways in which each of the rationales of revenue and cultural capital can be problematized, they both contribute to prevailing narratives about the value of recruiting and including international students in U.S. higher education. Beyond the economic impact on institutions, recruitment of international students contributes to global engagement at home strategies.

CHALLENGES AND STRESSORS FACED BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students in the U.S. face many unique challenges and stressors related to their international status, including those related to personal and sociocultural stressors, such as language acquisition, cultural adjustment and finances; as well as those caused by federal immigration policy, and those resulting from the COVID-19 crisis. Scholars have conducted copious studies investigating sources of stress for international students that fall under personal and sociocultural categories. These students must often combat simultaneous pressure and tension from multiple angles of their lives while studying, working, and living in their campus communities. Poyrazli (2015) found that the top three concerns for this population relating to psychological symptoms were academics, career, and stress; Yan (2013) yielded similar findings through an inquiry into Chinese international students' multifaceted

life stressors. Non-inclusive treatment from other students and faculty/staff can also significantly contribute to stress in international students' personal lives. Both TerraDotta (2014) and Bothwell (2018) noted that simply enrolling international students at an institution does not automatically lead to integration among domestic and international students; in fact, doing so with a lack of intentional programming to socialize both groups together can foster negative sentiments between them.

Federal immigration policy in the U.S. has also acted as a significant stressor for international students who can experience not only barriers to maintaining status and finding employment in the U.S. after graduation due to policy changes, but also a sense of being unwelcome and devalued in the country they have chosen to study in. While it is easy to point to recent policy decisions and xenophobic rhetoric in the last five years under the Trump administration as explicit risks to international student well-being and inclusion (NAFSA, 2020), immigration policy has long been a source of stress in the post-9/11 world. As early as 2002, Hanassab and Tidwell (2002) were highlighting the challenges of obtaining work authorization and even maintaining enrollment in studies in connection to international students' ability to maintain their immigration status.

Few can ignore the immense impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world at large from all angles, let alone U.S. higher education. Indeed, international students have faced unique troubles throughout the COVID-19 crisis in many ways. In spring of 2020, when institutions across the country shuttered their doors and sent students home, "home" for international students was often a much more complicated place to reach than for domestic students, especially

given rapidly changing travel regulations and quarantine requirements (Siczek, 2020). While students everywhere were dealing with a sharp transition to online learning, international students did so from time zones around the world that resulted in classes being held at all hours of the night, variable access to the internet, and unstable housing situations (Siczek, 2020). Geopolitical tensions combined with COVID-related travel restrictions have resulted in difficulty for international students, particularly those from mainland China and Hong Kong, to participate in mobility to U.S. institutions (Mok, K., Xiong, W., Ke, G., & Cheung, J., 2021). Social support, lifestyle changes, residency challenges, and coping methods were additional barriers for them during the pandemic (Mbous, Y., Mohamed, R., & Ridisill, T. 2022). Anti-Asian sentiment and the Trump administration labeling COVID-19 as the “Chinese virus” also forced these students to be racialized in their host country (Yu, J. 2021). Mental health for students, especially international students, was a barrier that offices had to address. Chirikov et al. (2020) reported that depression was two times higher and anxiety was 1.5 times higher than prior to the pandemic for international students. As the pandemic has shifted and students have begun to travel to the U.S. in larger numbers again, institutions will have to re-assess the new challenges and stressors for their students. International students at U.S. institutions will certainly continue to experience stressors related to these new challenges going forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

In alignment with the rationale for including international students and in response to the aforementioned challenges, scholars and practitioners have created many recommendations for best serving this population.

Given that many stressors for international students arise from sociocultural factors, many best practices and recommendations in the literature are focused on integration. Yan (2013) found that one of the largest obstacles for Chinese international students at U.S. institutions was an inability to develop connections with Americans and recommended “directly adopt[ing] an integration strategy” that could include social activities, mentoring programs, and host family programs (pp. 81-2). Activities and programming that promote cross-cultural engagement should also have defined learning outcomes and objectives (TerraDotta, 2014; Urban & Palmer, 2014). Providing education on race and other identities in a U.S. context can help international students, who may harbor harmful stereotypes or unintentionally make insensitive remarks on these topics, to more effectively integrate with campus communities as well (Ritter, 2016). Finally, integration efforts should not solely focus on international students; The importance of addressing negative attitudes towards international students among domestic students who may view them as a source of competition or hold inaccurate stereotypes is of regular emphasis by those in the field (Bothwell, 2018; Quinton 2019). Hanassab and Tidwell (2002) noted that support for cultural diversity and valuing differences from top administrators sets

the tone for the rest of the university, so ensuring that inclusion efforts are represented at all levels of the institution is key.

Beyond the campus itself, advocacy on a national policy level is also an effective practice for institutions that wish to work towards inclusion for international students. Garcia and de Lourdes Villareal (2014) called for public policy leaders to assist universities with the flow of international student mobility by improving the student visa process, and for institutions to implement international student support centers, in order to address some of the many complex factors that contribute to students' decisions to study in the U.S. Funding for international students can also be a major factor in enabling international students to remain a part of a campus community, and McFadden, Maahs-Fladung, and Mallett (2012) recommend implementing business strategies and improving funding on both an institutional and federal level to achieve this end. Programs such as Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT), particularly the extended time with STEM OPT, provide opportunities for these students to work and gain additional career skills related to their field of study.

CONCLUSION

The landscape of international student enrollment and inclusion in U.S. higher education continues to shift as the world gradually moves from a pandemic to an endemic phase and attitudes and policies about immigration in the United States change. While the future remains unpredictable, the strong body of research on international students in the U.S. holds many valuable lessons for us in how to work most effectively going forward - the number of journal articles published relating to international students increased from approximately 25 per year in 2000 to over 350 per year now (Jing et al., 2020). It is with this base of collective knowledge among scholar-practitioners in the field, along with a commitment to supporting the success of international students in the United States, that we will go beyond the monolithic nature of support of international students to a holistic approach to support the wellbeing and academic and professional success of international students and integration into the campus community.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CAMPUS COLLABORATION

Across the country there are a variety of promising practices for how the campus community can strategically collaborate to tie the goals of their individual units to the mission/vision of the university. This publication seeks to explore collaborative opportunities to increase campus inclusion for international students. The goal of the Strategic Leadership Forum think tank sessions with international education and diversity, equity and inclusion practitioners was to identify opportunities for better engagement

of international students in the U.S. through cross-campus collaborations. The think tank participants came from across the country and from a wide range of universities and colleges. The participants broke into four subgroups that examined different campus areas that intersect with international students: Faculty & Staff Engagement, Advocacy, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Community and Local Engagement. This section presents recommendations and promising practices from these respective areas.

1. FACULTY & STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Though faculty and staff play a critical role in supporting all students to be successful, there is limited research devoted to how faculty and staff, including those who support operations and maintenance of the campus, can specifically support the academic and acculturation success of international students. Many campus educators and administrators may be unaware of the point and purpose of having international students on their campus and would benefit from increased knowledge about this population of students. Knowing the roles faculty and staff can play during the international student “lifecycle,” i.e. prospective, admitted, matriculated, and graduated students, serves to better support the success of international students as they make their way through various stages of their academic experience. Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs) and Senior International Officers (SIOs) bring valuable capital to this area because they bridge two important areas of expertise - communicating across cultures and supporting marginalized populations. Leveraging these valuable skill sets to create professional development opportunities for faculty and staff helps the campus as a whole learn the important intersectionalities of international students, and how the work they do directly affects the international student experience. Additionally, it helps the campus community move away from seeing this population as a simplistic monolith. In turn they will understand that some of their needs and knowledge of campus resources are different from those of domestic students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Providing International Student Data** - Faculty and staff need information about the campus international student population to better understand the realities of this student group and to help counter existing, and often negative, stereotypes or assumptions. Making international student demographic data (country of origin, major, gender, class level, etc) available through a variety of means, such as website, reports, or email updates from the international programs office, serves to keep the campus community up-to-date and also lets them know where this data is stored and who to reach out to with further questions. Many campuses send a specific memo every semester to each dean with international student data for their respective college/school. This may also include qualitative data that helps explain the international student experience through lived experiences.
- **Creating Opportunities for Dialogue** - Understanding the goals and motivations for a campus's international student population are critical for helping faculty and staff define their role in international student success at the institution. By creating opportunities to ask questions, give feedback, and have discussions, more of the campus community is involved in addressing and developing solutions related to international student issues. Many campuses have committees or working groups devoted to international student needs and concerns. Additionally, brown bag lunches, zooms, and/or discussion forums are also useful ways for engaging faculty and staff on this topic.
- **Professional Development** - We are always in a state of learning; providing faculty and staff with new knowledge and skills about improving the teaching and learning for international students is critical in increasing academic and social success for this population. The CDO and SIO can benefit greatly by collaborating to develop a professional development curriculum that pulls from their respective expertise in intercultural communication and diversity, equity and inclusion.

Diversity Abroad specializes in diversity and inclusion training and development for staff, faculty and administrators who support education abroad, international students and global learning. From its annual conference, Global Inclusion, to the International Education Diversity & Inclusion Certificate, thousands of professionals have turned to Diversity Abroad to develop the skills, competencies and confidence to effectively support today's students. Learn more at diversitynetwork.org.

2. ADVOCACY

International educators in the past few years have endured many setbacks and government restrictions on international students. There were bans on entry to the U.S. for students from certain countries, Student Exchange Visitor Program and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services fee increases, rhetoric that was perceived to be hostile to international visitors to the U.S., and of course increasing scrutiny and delays for all benefits for international students and scholars. Many universities expanded their government affairs outreach and advocacy to support fair and equitable visa policies and full-time remote course enrollment during the pandemic for their international students. For the universities that have congressional outreach offices, developing consistent protocols and relationships with staffers that may advance the cause of international education and be proactive in getting answers to difficult cases when they are delayed due to administrative issues is imperative. Further, ensuring the campus community as a whole recognizes the challenges faced by international students and the important aspect they play in campus life by adding to the diversity of the campus, augmenting global learning and often paying full tuition and fees serves to advance advocacy efforts as an institution.

International offices have utilized technology to more effectively track student issues as they arise to monitor trends and to efficiently provide necessary information to government affairs outreach offices. Technology also allows for local engagement with the community to enhance the international student experience on campus through advocacy within the local community, including colleagues on campus, various departments, and student leaders. There is no doubt that advocacy is vital and it works in advancing more comprehensive and equitable immigration policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- International offices would be well served to work closely with their government affairs colleagues and members of congress to advocate and inform policy in Washington, D.C. Many universities have joined various Amicus Briefs in support of various policies for internationals. Rather than this falling to one area or another of an institution, collaborate together as a shared institutional voice to demonstrate support for international students and scholars.
- **Create an advocacy page** on the university website or the international student office site to list all advocacy efforts the university is involved in and supports. This demonstrates that the international students that the university is actively advocating on their behalf, and evidence to the campus community the expectation of leadership to be committed to supporting international students and scholars.
- **Demonstrate the benefits international students bring to the campus and the local community.** There are various reports on the economic impact of these students and the number of jobs they bring to the community. There are also the civic engagement opportunities that internationals are involved in. The value of soft diplomacy should not be underestimated. Many world leaders have studied in the U.S. and have led their countries with values that are rooted in equality and diversity. Several of the top technology focused companies in the U.S. have also made a commitment to hire international students.

- **Develop a system for centrally tracking different international student issues that arise using technology.** This assists not only with immigration compliance, but also with tracking trends that positively or negatively may impact the international student experience. Data helps unpack the experience of international students and scholars in the United States and helps in decision making by leadership regarding allocation of resources.

3. DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are vital components of the student experience at every campus. Higher education researchers have recognized the shifting demographic of students entering higher education today (Clayton, 2021). Attending college may be the first time students leave their home community and make a foray into life and interactions with students from new and varying backgrounds and cultures. Indeed, diversification of the student body enhances learning inside and outside of the classroom as non-majority student voices are elevated in academic and co-curricular conversations. However, new perspectives and ideas bring with it challenges to previously conceptualized beliefs in truth which play out on the higher education stage. In that regard, institutions of higher education play a vital role in facilitating important conversations around diversity, equity and inclusion.

Further, in recent years, universities have recognized the critical importance of evaluating student success through a DEI lens. This has helped identify students from a variety of different backgrounds, including international students, to access student support programs that lead to higher success levels among a larger group of students. Though it seems counter-intuitive, many universities often neglect to include international students when addressing campus DEI issues (Bell, 2013). International students are frequently stereotyped and seen as having more privilege than domestic students, often because they pay full tuition due to a lack of federal financial aid resources. Additionally, during the 2019-2020 academic year, international students contributed \$38.7 billion to the U.S. economy (NAFSA, 2021). When framed in this light, they are often perceived as bringing financial benefits to an institution first, with their cross-cultural and global perspectives being secondary.

International students are also commonly seen as a monolithic group, which separates them from the possibility of simultaneously belonging to recognized marginalized student populations, such as first generation and low socio-economic status students. The intersectionality of international students needs to be promoted and better understood by the campus community. International students also have unique challenges to succeed at U.S. institutions. The pandemic served as a catalyst to bring forward some of these issues of international students stranded in the U.S.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Expanding campus awareness of international students** - Create multiple avenues to disseminate information that defines international students at the university and gives insight to the experience of international students on campus. Sharing demographic data, such as country of origin, major,

education level (undergrad, grad, postgraduate) highlights the level of integration of this population within the institution. Making this data available through the website, email, newsletters, flyers, bulletin boards and social media will educate the campus about its own international students.

- **Addressing prejudice and stereotyping of international students** - Develop relationships with the CDO and other relevant stakeholders to discuss challenges international students face specifically at your institution. These discussions may result in establishing a cross-campus task force to develop solutions to the unique challenges facing international students. Working collaboratively helps build a united coalition to tackle issues from many perspectives.
- **Promoting inclusion & understanding intersectionality of international students** - Build collaborations with student groups and clubs to encourage increased outreach to international students. Connect with student support services to educate about the intersectionality of international students, such as first generation, LGBTQ, or disabled identities, to increase visibility of international students in marginalized populations.

4. COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

International students' connection to the community outside of the campus is an area often overlooked by university international offices which focus on this population's role within the campus community. Yet both the local community and international students stand to benefit greatly from positive engagement and social support, as is the case with both parties in broader "town-gown" relations for many colleges and universities. Local officials may acknowledge the beneficial economic impact of students, often specifically international students, on the communities in close proximity to the university. In the 2019-2020 academic year, NAFSA (2021) found that international students studying at U.S. institutions contributed \$38.7 billion and supported 415,996 jobs to the national economy. That being said, it is also important to recognize the cultural value and other non-economic benefits of including international students in local communities, to avoid stereotypes of international students as a uniformly wealthy population (Castiello-Gutiérrez & Li, 2020). Students may contribute to the communities surrounding their place of study in many ways: volunteering with schools and nonprofits, creating and performing art, living with host families, sharing of their own cultural traditions, and participating in local events and activities. The presence of international students in these community engagements can help to educate community members about cultures different than their own as well as increase the student's social networks. This is a mutually beneficial recommendation in that the social supports that international students make while here help with their integration and reduce their acculturative stress (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015).

Giving access to opportunities that allow international students to interact with the local community may break down stereotypes held on both sides and create a richer experience for everyone. However, these mutually beneficial relationships between international student populations and local communities, much like the benefits possible through increasing student diversity within the institution, are not given simply through contact alone. Prejudice towards international students along lines of race,

nationality, or other identities may act as a source of stress (Bothwell, 2018), and international students themselves may hold negative and inaccurate stereotypes about various groups within the U.S. (Ritter, 2015). Therefore, community and local engagement among international students must be encouraged within an inclusive atmosphere that can provide support and structure to people's interactions. Discussions from the Strategic Leadership Forum addressed some of these potential pitfalls through the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Integrate knowledge of U.S. race relations and stereotypes in arrival and orientation** - Many campuses already include a pre-arrival orientation for international students and expanding it slightly to include information about U.S. racial climate will help break down media-influenced stereotypes about the U.S., as well as educate students about how their race/ethnicity may be perceived within the U.S. compared to their home country.
- **Leverage diaspora in the local community** - Reach out to local micro-communities to build campus/community connections to support international student populations where appropriate.
- **Increase awareness of international student populations** - Connect with university and local government public affairs offices to promote the international student population. Identify and create opportunities for local communities to connect and support international students for mutual benefit.
- **Promote Community Engagement** - Encouraging international students to better understand the local community through campus service-learning, volunteer and other community engagement activities.

CONCLUSION & MOVING FORWARD

The Strategic Leadership Forum was a valuable opportunity to elicit conversations from a myriad of campus professionals, including Chief Diversity Officers and Senior International Officers. More importantly, it yielded recommendations for improving the experience and success of international students at U.S. universities and colleges. The recommendations highlighted in this publication are by no means exhaustive, but serve as a useful starting point for strategic discussion about how we serve and promote the success of international students on our campuses. Some other avenues not discussed in this forum, but showing great potential include global/internationalization at home initiatives, addressing mental health, creating comfortable spaces for socialization and integration as a result of COVID-19, establishing outcomes for international student success, and leveraging the experience of former international students on campus (faculty/staff who were previously F or J-1 students) to provide guidance and additional support.

It has been a challenging two years at institutions and countries across the world to rebuild and reopen. As we have highlighted above, we also have much to reevaluate in terms of engaging and communicating with our students and applying what we learned during this time to enhance international student and scholar services as in-person settings become again a greater norm. The gains we have made in leveraging technology to better serve our populations will continue to play an active role in the months ahead.

As borders have reopened, vaccine mandates have been implemented, the campus climate

is slowly beginning to revert to a “new normal”. Despite this, many of the same as well as some new challenges have come to the forefront for including and engaging international students. This will continue to be an ongoing conversation and yearly goal for institutions to actively engage and address the needs of their diverse body of international students.

International offices need to develop more robust strategies for working effectively with student health and public safety units to address these issues and provide resources for students and scholars. We also want to again stress that international offices would benefit greatly when partnering with Inclusion, Diversity, Belonging, and Equity (IDBE) initiatives to help facilitate critical conversations and more effectively support the well-being, integration, and academic success of students and scholars.

With the new presidential administration in the U.S., we have seen positive changes for the international education community. Some of these include the [revocation of the travel ban proclamations from the Trump administration](#), allowing international students to continue to enroll in courses remotely during the pandemic and not affect their immigration status, the [withdrawal of the proposed rule to eliminate duration of status \(D/S\) for F students and their dependents](#), J exchange visitors and their dependents, and I media representatives (thanks in large part to the more than 32,000 comments the Department of Homeland Security received during the proposal’s public comment period), and expanded [special student relief benefits](#) for F-1 students from parts of the world that are

experiencing emergent circumstances give hope for brighter days ahead. The joint statement released in July 2021 by the U.S. Department of State and Department of Education, [Reengaging the World to Make the United States Stronger at Home: A Renewed U.S. Commitment to International Education](#), exemplifies this positive shift. But our work is far from over. We must continue to advocate on behalf of our

international communities to reinforce and expand the positive changes that have begun and to rectify the challenges that remain. Diversity Abroad - through the Strategic Leadership Form and other training and events will continue to provide opportunities to close the gap between diversity and inclusion and internationalization efforts and increase campus collaboration for inclusive support for all students.

GLOSSARY

Comprehensive Internationalization is a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate policies, programs, and initiatives to position colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected institutions (ACE, 2018).

International Students are international individuals who are in the U.S. on a temporary student visa and who are not immigrants (permanent residents with an I-51 or Green Card), undocumented immigrants, or refugees.

Diversity is the wide variety of shared and different personal and group characteristics among human beings.

Equity is the process that allows all of us to have the same opportunities and the same access to things.

Inclusion is the state of being valued, respected, and supported. It is about focusing on the needs of every individual and ensuring the right conditions are in place for each person.

REFERENCES

- American Council on Education (2018). CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization. Retrieved from www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/CIGE-Model-for-Comprehensive-Internationalization.aspx
- Bell, K. (2013). Similar goals and dueling agendas: perceptions of campus internationalization and equity policy. EdD dissertation. San Francisco State University.
- Bothwell, E. (2018, August 9). Ambivalent about international students. *Times Higher Education*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/08/09/students-western-nations-have-mixed-attitudes-international-students>
- Cantwell, B. (2015). Are international students cash cows? Examining the relationship between new international undergraduate enrollments and institutional revenue at public colleges and universities in the U.S.. *Journal of International Students*, 5(4), 512-525.
- Castiello-Gutiérrez, S., & Li, X. (2020). We are more than your paycheck: The dehumanization of international students in the United States. *Journal of International Students*, 10(3), i-iv. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v10i3.2676>
- Chirikov, I., Soria, K. M., Horgos, B., & Jones-White, D. (2020). Undergraduate and Graduate Students' Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic. SERU Consortium Reports. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/80k5d5hw>
- Clayton, T. B. (2021). Refocusing on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion During the Pandemic and Beyond: Lessons from a Community of Practice. American Council on Education.
- García, H., & de Lourdes Villarreal, M. (2014). The "redirecting" of international students: American higher education policy hindrances and implications. *Journal Of International Students*, 4(2), 126-136.
- Glass, C., Godwin, K., & Helms, R. (2021). *Towards greater inclusion and success: A new compact for international students*. American Council on Education. <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Intl-Students-Monograph.pdf>
- Hanassab, S., & Tidwell, R. (2002). International students in higher education: Identification of needs and implications for policy and practice. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 6, 305-322.
- Institute of International Education (2021). Open Doors data. Retrieved from <https://opendoorsdata.org/>

- Jing, X., Ghosh, R., Sun, Z. (2020). Mapping global research related to international students: a scientometric review. *Higher Education*, 80, 415–433. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00489-y>
- Mbous, Y.P.V., Mohamed, R. & Rudisill, T.M. (2022). International students challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic in a university in the United States: A focus group study. *Current Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-02776-x>
- McFadden, C., Maahs-Fladung, C., & Mallett, W. (2012). Recruiting international students to your campus. *Journal of International Students*, 2(2), 157-167.
- Mok, K., Xiong, W., Ke, G., & Cheung, J. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on international higher education and student mobility: Student perspectives from mainland China and Hong Kong. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2020.101718>
- Mor Barak, M. E., Cherin, D. A., & Berkman, S. (1998). Organizational and personal dimensions in diversity climate: Ethnic and gender differences in employee perceptions. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 34(1), 82-104.
- NAFSA. (2021). *NAFSA international student economic value tool*. <https://www.nafsa.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-resources/nafsa-international-student-economic-value-tool-v2>
- NAFSA. (2020). *Losing talent 2020: An economic and foreign policy risk America can't ignore*. <https://www.nafsa.org/sites/default/files/media/document/nafsa-losing-talent.pdf>
- Poyrazli, S. (2015). Psychological symptoms and concerns experienced by international students: Outreach implications for counseling centers. *Journal Of International Students*, 5(3), 306-312.
- Quinton, W. (2019). Unwelcome on campus? Predictors of prejudice against international students. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 12(2), 156-169.
- QS Quacquarelli Symonds. (2020). *International student survey: New pathways for international education in an age of global disruption*. <https://www.qs.com/portfolio-items/international-student-survey-2020/>
- Ritter, Z. (2016). International students' perceptions of race and socio-economic status in an American higher education landscape. *Journal of International Students*, 6(2), 367-393.
- Siczek, M. (2020). International student agency in the face of a global health crisis. *Journal of International Students*, 10(4), vii-ix. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v10i4.2424>

Sullivan, C., Kashubeck-West, S. (2015, Spring). The Interplay of International Student' Acculturative Stress, Social Support, and Acculturation Modes. *Journal of International Students*, V5 N1 p1-11. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1052843.pdf>

TerraDotta. (2014). *Engaging and embracing your international student body*. <https://www.terradotta.com/articles/article-Engaging-and-Embracing-your-International-Student-Body-10-14.pdf>

Urban, E., & Palmer, L. B. (2014). International students as a resource for internationalization of higher education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 18(4), 305-324.

Yan, B. (2013). Chinese international students' personal and sociocultural stressors in the United States. *Journal of College Student Development*, 54(1), 62-84. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2013.0010>

Yu, J. (2021, September). Caught in the middle? Chinese international students' self-formation amid politics and pandemic. *International Journal of Chinese Education* (1-15). DOI:[10.1177/22125868211058911](https://doi.org/10.1177/22125868211058911)

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



ANTHONY PINDER, PH.D.

**Vice Provost, Internationalization & Equity
Emerson University**

Dr. Anthony Pinder currently serves as the Vice Provost for Internationalization & Equity at Emerson University. He leads the College's faculty development program Curriculum Internationalization Studio and provides leadership to the offices of International Student Affairs; Education Abroad & Domestic Programs; English Language Learning, and units that support International Fellowships & Awards, International Visitors and Scholars and International Faculty Support Services. Dr. Pinder's research and professional interests focus on the international dimensions of higher education at the institutional, system, national and international levels, student global learning outcomes/assessment and people of color serving institutions. He's written and presented extensively on the internationalization of HBCUs. His 19 years in higher education have also included serving as the senior international officer at two historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), notably, Executive Director of the Andrew Young Center for International Affairs at Morehouse College and Associate Dean of Global Studies at Dillard University. Dr. Pinder has held senior level appointments with the United Negro College Fund; The African American Institute; and the grain- trading conglomerate, Cargill, Inc. in Minneapolis, MN. Dr. Pinder serves on the Boards of Diversity Abroad; The Forum on Education Abroad; and Arcadia University's College of Global Studies.



SHERIF BARSOUM

**Associate Vice President for Global Services
New York University**

Sherif Barsoum is the AVP for Global Services at New York University. He served for 3 years as vice president of public policy and practice at NAFSA: Association of International Educators (2011-2014). Sherif serves on the AIEA board as Policy chair (2021-2024) Previously, he was at Vanderbilt University where he served as the director of international student and scholar services for 8 years. He has 28 years of international education experience. He entered the field of international education at Ohio State University, where he spent 13 years as assistant director of the international office. He is a two-time graduate of OSU where he received a Bachelors and a Masters in higher education administration. Sherif has also completed doctoral course work at the University of Alabama. He is an adjunct professor in the International Education Masters program at NYU. Originally from Cairo, Egypt, Sherif has lived and traveled to many countries and enjoys meeting people and learning about new cultures. He enjoys conducting cross-cultural workshops and intercultural programming. He led short term, as well as service learning programs to Egypt, Morocco and South Africa.



KATI BELL, ED.D.
Deputy Chief Global Affairs Officer
University of California, Irvine

Dr. Bell (she/her) is the Deputy Global Affairs Officer at University of California, Irvine (UCI). As an International Educator for over 25 years she has worked at numerous universities around the world, including Ukraine and Australia. Bell's experience includes: building international exchange and research affiliations, implementing diversity and inclusion strategies, and leading campus internationalization initiatives. Dr Bell's current research interests focus on implementing and assessing internationalization policy that reflects achievable curricular goals and outcomes for both international and domestic students. She holds a BA in German Studies from Sacramento State University, an MA in German Literature from San Francisco State University and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from San Francisco State University.



LAUREN (LO) CHOW
Assistant Director, Education Abroad
Babson College

Lauren (Lo) Chow is Assistant Director of Education Abroad at Babson College in Wellesley, MA, where she advises for undergraduate abroad programs in Asia and Europe and manages the incoming exchange student program. Prior to joining the team at Babson, she worked for College Year in Athens and Lessons From Abroad in addition to completing 2 years as a Fulbright grantee in Koding, Malaysia. Lauren has chaired Diversity Abroad's LGBTQI+ Task Force, served on the planning committee for the Lessons From Abroad New England Conference, and co-chaired the inaugural Lessons From Abroad Virtual Conference on a nationwide scale in 2020. In 2019, she was awarded the Region XI Rising Professional Award by NAFSA: Association of International Educators. She has also presented on intercultural topics at regional and national conferences, and her master's research on the intersections of international and multicultural higher education was published in the Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education. Lauren holds a BA in cognitive science and educational studies from Carleton College and an MA in international higher education and intercultural relations from Lesley University, and is currently pursuing a Certificate of Advanced Management from Babson College.



JENNIFER DONAGHUE, ED.D.

**Assistant Provost, International Education
The George Washington University**

Dr. Donaghue serves as Assistant Provost for International Education at The George Washington University (GW). Her portfolio includes international student and scholar services, education abroad, and international partnerships. Jennifer studied and interned abroad in Spain, and taught English in Japan before moving to Washington, D.C. to pursue a graduate degree in International Affairs at American University. Jennifer earned her doctorate degree in Higher Education Administration at GW University, and holds faculty teaching appointments in the School of Education and the Elliott School of International Affairs. From 2016-present she was an invited keynote speaker and facilitator for AmidEast re-entry workshops, and she began serving as a facilitator for the Diversity Abroad Strategic Leadership Forum beginning in 2018. She recently served as a panelist for the Department of State's "Education USA Dialogues - the Intersection Of Campus Internationalization and Diversity, Enquiry and Inclusion." In 2021, Jennifer was a recipient of the Fulbright France Higher Education Administrator grant.



members@diversityabroad.org
diversityabroad.org

Follow Us: @diversityabroad

