
A Research Agenda for Inbound Mobility

*Understanding the International Student
Experience on U.S. Campuses*

Leaders in International Higher Education

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Abstract

This paper provides SIOs with a number of research questions to consider related to students coming to the U.S. to enroll in institutions of higher education. The intention is to give SIOs a broad understanding of questions pertaining to this important aspect of the internationalization higher education, and to help them become effective stewards of inbound mobility at their institutions. The paper begins by setting the context for a discussion on inbound mobility during the decade since the 1996 AIEA publication, *A Research Agenda for the Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States*. It then examines seven topics identified in the research and by participants in a 2013 AIEA Roundtable discussion as the most pertinent for a U.S.-focused research agenda on inbound mobility: 1) adjustment issues; 2) recruitment strategies and international student decision-making; 3) orientation practices; 4) English language programs and academic supports; 5) social support and campus connections; 6) intercultural learning; and 7) immigration and legal issues.

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Overview

This article is the result of input received from a roundtable discussion at the 2014 AIEA conference and is intended to be an update to the discussion of inward mobility of international students and scholars contained in *A Research Agenda for the Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States* (AIEA, 1996), and is helping to launch a series of articles on research in the internationalization of higher education for AIEA. A commentary on such mobility over the past decade, it is written by a U.S. American currently serving as the dean of a Japanese university that has seen a 140% increase in students studying abroad over the past few years. However, during the same period, the United States has fallen from the students' premier destination choice to the last option due to cost of programs in the United States and stricter visa requirements. This is hardly a lone occurrence, and efforts to amend the current situation can be seen in joint statements such as CULCON XXVI, endorsed by President Obama and Prime Minister Abe, which aims to double the two-way exchange between Japan and the United States by 2020. In such a global environment, it becomes urgent for Senior International Officers (SIOs) at a national level to use their influence as a community of higher education leaders to ensure that the United States does indeed remain competitive in attracting students from all over the world.

A research agenda for an organization such as AIEA cannot be written by a single author. Therefore, it is hoped that this piece, although vastly limited in scope, will serve as a catalyst to encourage the seasoned SIO or faculty member to become an active participant in the dialogue by noting which of the research questions need immediate attention and which are already being addressed, as well as to deepen the understanding of the literature on student and scholar mobility beyond works cited in the text. The opportunity to do so is provided via the blog linked to the series. At the same time, for those just entering the field, it is hoped that the piece will provide background information and context and serve as a springboard to enter into the discussion. No matter how the piece is read, it is hoped that other scholars will want to contribute additional work to AIEA's research series that will help illuminate issues related to international student and scholar mobility.

SIOs have a very diversified and challenging role. As previously stated, they need to operate at a national level to ensure global competitiveness. However, it is also equally important for SIOs to serve their own institutions so that the highest levels of excellence in internationalization efforts can be attained. To illustrate this at a micro level, let us begin the discussion by imagining the following situation. The setting is a second semester freshman seminar on the topic of internationalization. The class consists exclusively of students from the home university. The seminar is co-taught, with both instructors being immigrant professors speaking in a language that is not their native tongue. Halfway through the semester, students are asked to interview an international student on campus. As they do not know where to "find" an international student, the professors arrange for eleven international students to come to the next class. Students from the home university work in teams of two to interview the international students, and the following week, presentations are given. The produced outcome shows that the vast majority of students say that having met an international student,

they now want to attend more on-campus international events and continue to interact with the international students on campus.

The concerned SIO will thus need to be able to answer questions similar to the following to ensure the inclusion of internationalization efforts and an allocated budget in the university's strategic planning: How many of the students stated above actually went on to attend an on-campus international event? Was meeting an international student just a chance encounter for those students or did it develop into a lifelong friendship? Did taking courses with an international focus have an impact on the students' university careers? Did it enhance the experience of the international students at the home institution? Did it lead to opportunities to conduct joint research between the two universities? What social capital does having immigrant professors bring to the home university? The profound gaps in our current understanding about the impact of international students and scholars on U.S. campuses is staggering and needs to be addressed through a comprehensive research agenda for the immediate future.

At a 2004 American Council on Education (ACE)–organized roundtable on Research in International Education, participants observed that little attention had been paid to the international student experience and that it remained unknown how these international students affect our students, institutions, society, and economy. It was also unclear what the students took home with them after their sojourn in the United States. How did the experience of studying in the United States change their attitudes and skill sets? Moreover, very little was known about the impact of international scholars and the skills they brought back to their home institutions after leaving the United States. Based on this lack of knowledge, the following top research priorities were defined: 1) examine the impact of international students and scholars on the community and their home countries; 2) conduct a longitudinal study of what students learn from and value about their international learning experiences in college; and 3) look at international student learning in terms of what students learn, what they hope to learn, and the intended and unintended consequences that occur during this learning. These top priorities still remain a decade later.

In 2007, Bevis & Lucas published *International Students in American Colleges and Universities: A History*. As the title suggests, this volume examines the experience of both undergraduate and graduate international students in the U.S. from 1900 to the present day. The authors laud the assistance of these students in technological development for the U.S. and stress the need for reforming immigration laws and initiating strategic planning to continue to attract such global scholars.

Two years later, *International Students: Strengthening a Critical Resource* (2009) identified the issues and challenges facing students in the U.S. and recommended resources to strengthen campus support systems. The seven topics identified by the authors are: 1) adjustment issues; 2) recruitment strategies; 3) orientation practices, 4) English language programs and academic supports, 5) social support and campus connections, 6) intercultural learning, and 7) immigration and legal issues. Four years later, at the 2013 AIEA conference, many of these same issues were restated by participants at the roundtable discussion on a research agenda for the internationalization of higher education in the United States. Because these seven topics remain pertinent, they will serve as the focal point for the following discussion on inbound mobility.

Adjustment Issues

One year prior to the 1995 publication of AIEA's A Research Agenda for the Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States, preliminary findings from an acculturative stress scale for international students were reported in Psychological Reports. The study by Sandhu & Asrabadi (1994) found that 128 international students enrolled in ten regions of the U.S. worried most about perceived discrimination and alienation. Fear was another contributing factor in creating stress. Fear seems to have been caused by the sense of insecurity in unfamiliar surroundings, high rates of crime and violence in American society, racial discrimination, and sociopolitical realities framing the relationships between foreign students' native countries and the United States. The study pointed out that international students feel socially alienated, and as a result, they seek out other co-nationals for primary support and do not make special efforts to reach out to Americans during the acculturative process. On the other hand, American students do not feel the need to go out of their way to socialize with foreign students. Are these findings still true a decade later?

In these past 10 years, have international students' feelings of fear increased or decreased? How have universities responded to these concerns? Do international students today still feel socially alienated? How have recent innovations in technology, allowing real-time correspondence with relatives and friends back home, altered the findings of the original research? Do international students continue to seek out co-nationals on campus for support, do they retreat to a safe virtual "back home" environment, or do they exhibit other coping mechanisms, or even a combination of these responses?

These are the research questions that need to be prioritized and addressed by SIOs at the institutional level to ensure the highest levels of excellence in their internationalization efforts. Furthermore, the resulting data should be shared with other SIOs at a national level to ensure that a collective approach is taken to see that the United States does indeed remain competitive in today's global environment.

Where should the process begin? As is the case with research on study abroad, there are many instruments available for the researcher. There are sociocultural adaptation scales, satisfaction with life scales, intercultural potential scales, coping inventories, scales that look at general or specific levels of contact, ego-resiliency scales, and big-five personality inventories, as well as specific instruments such as the Survey of Undergraduate Research Experiences (SURE), Grinnell Survey of International Experience, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), Strategic Inventory for Learning Culture, and the Clifton Strengths Assessment. With such a plethora of instruments available, why are we still so unaware of the adjustment issues facing our international students? Perhaps it is not that we are unaware of the issues, but rather that we are unaware of what our fellow researchers are doing.

The concerned SIO and their campus colleagues have multiple options outside of conducting these large-scale surveys. SIOs can arrange to conduct exit interviews with departing exchange students or with international students completing their degrees, convene focus groups, or look at survey data collected by their institutions to compare international and domestic student

experiences. Or they might analyze the topics discussed at the meetings of an international student organization, or analyze the content of international student blogs.

There is thus a great need for a systematic approach to assess the adjustment issues of international students on campus, to store these data in a comprehensive research database, and to disseminate findings widely. Longitudinal studies on how assimilation is related to cultural stress are also necessary for future strategic university planning. But where should we begin? How do we determine what is meant by successful adjustment for an international student? And when will we begin to examine how the presence of international students also poses adjustment issues for domestic students? The following are just a few notable gaps in the current research that require further attention.

Correlation levels of international and domestic student “success.”

The first problem here is to define “success.” What are the skills, knowledge, and awareness that we aspire for an international student to gain while on our campus? How does the acquisition of this skill set compare to domestic students’? Where international students face the obstacle of acquiring this skill set in a second language, are grades an accurate or “fair” form of assessment? An argument can be made that what would be “success” for a domestic student in the form of a GPA equivalent cannot correlate with the experience of an international student struggling to adjust to different approaches to teaching and learning, unfamiliar standards for academic integrity, and (for non-native speakers of English) the sheer volume of material being presented in a second language. As an academic community, can we define skill sets that we feel are necessary for our domestic students that can also be assessed for international students? With what and how will these skill sets be determined and measured?

Adjustment issues for transfer students.

The 1995 AIEA research agenda proposed that research focus on international students who transfer from a two-year to a four-year institution and how they learn about international issues and events. What special challenges face an international student who transfers to a four-year institution? As many general freshmen classes provide students with opportunities to discuss international issues and events, in what ways are transfer students, who may not need to take these general requirements, exposed to these kinds of learning opportunities? Should certain courses be mandatory for international students, apart from language requirements, to address these gaps? How many of these same issues affect domestic transfer students, and what correlations exist between the two populations?

Differing levels of ownership between undergraduate and graduate students.

Graduate students are more visible as contributing members to the academic community than undergraduates on many of our campuses. For

example, graduate students participate in academic conferences and are recognized for their contribution, resulting in feelings of ownership. Can (or how can) some of their successful strategies for integrating into campus life be implemented for undergraduate international students? What opportunities are offered to the undergraduate student that may produce similar feelings of ownership and belonging?

The role of extracurricular activities in the adjustment of international students.

Does international student participation in extracurricular activities increase feelings of acceptance and adjustment? Does the presence of international students enhance the extracurricular activity for domestic students? How are international students informed and encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities?

Survey research based on a phenomenological approach.

The adjustment process for international students cannot be accurately measured by instruments that do not take into account the development of human consciousness and self-awareness. How are these topics addressed in our research design? Are there lessons to be learned from newer communication strategies such as blogs, posts, or “likes” that give insight into international students’ adjustment, satisfaction levels, and states of mind?

The silent spouse.

Although research abounds on adjustment issues for the international student, the experiences of spouses who accompany international students are largely unknown. Teshome & Osei-Kofi (2011) examined the critical issues faced by spouses, who, as holders of F-2 visas while in the United States, are legal dependents of their student spouses and therefore are prohibited from engaging in full-time study and working. Does the university have a role to play in aiding the adjustment of these international student spouses? Would such outreach result in higher levels of adjustment for international students?

These issues all illustrate the urgent need for scholars to collaborate on a research agenda specifically focused on ways to enhance the adjustment of international students on our campuses. However, there is an equal need to also examine the adjustment issues faced by domestic students due to the presence of international students on campus. If these issues are not addressed, it will be difficult for SIOs to ensure the inclusion of internationalization efforts in their university’s strategic planning.

Recruitment strategies and international student decision-making.

The inclusion of higher education in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) exemplifies how the presence of international students on our campuses has taken on greater implications. As stated by Knight, “It is therefore important that educators are cognizant of the impact of trade liberalization on

higher education and are taking steps to maximize the benefits and minimize the threats to a robust and quality higher education" (2002, p. 3). Although the GATS debate will not be addressed here, it is mentioned to illustrate how recruitment strategies have taken on new meaning. The presence of international students on campus is not merely a happy coincidence of successful recruitment practices, but rather is becoming a high priority for strategic planning. According to the Hanover Research 2014 report, recruitment strategies "increasingly focus on international students...both Canada and the U.S. are competing for international students on a growing scale with Canada increasing its international enrollments by 94 percent over the last decade and the U.S. increasing international enrollments by nearly ten percent" (p. 3). It is in this capacity that a focused research agenda on recruitment strategies for U.S. universities is merited in order to ensure that the United States can continue to successfully compete with other nations in recruiting international students.

Lee, Maldonado-Moldonado, & Rhoades (2006) have looked at student choice when studying abroad. Examining international students as agents of their own actions, not just recruited numbers to be leveraged by U.S. institutions, helped illuminate students' decision making. As the recruitment of international students is not limited to a U.S. setting, there may be additional lessons to be learned from the practices in other countries. The interested reader is directed to the development of Taiwan's international student recruitment policies from 1950 to 2011 as researched by Ma (2013).

While recruitment policies offer one avenue of research, there is also a need to examine what it is that attracts a student to select a specific campus. A study of Australian students (Forsy, Broomhall, & Davis, 2011) found that students' choice of nation or region within a nation depended on "adventure" first, "fun" second, and third, "tradition." Although such research is beneficial for recruitment purposes, a true research agenda should also determine if these predeparture expectations were met by the host institution and how met or unmet expectations impacted the adjustment of international students.

Cultural aspects are also paramount to successful recruitment. As found by Bodycott and Lai (2012), to effectively market, manage, and provide academic and financial support for Chinese students studying across borders, host universities must develop strategies that acknowledge and demonstrate respect for cultural traditions, parental perspectives, and their related influence. This support needs to be tailored for each prospective culture where recruitment activities are undertaken. Thus, in order to facilitate effective recruitment strategies, it becomes crucial for scholars to not only share their research findings but also create an accessible database for practitioners to clarify lessons learned. This illustrates the dual role of the SIO once again—to be aware of what happens at the institutional level but to also then be able to utilize this knowledge at a national level to instigate positive change for all.

In addition to specific research questions and content areas, it is important to discuss methodological and design challenges, theoretical models, and instrumentation in the area of recruitment strategies. The following discussion makes note of significant gaps in the existing research and suggests directions to pursue.

Conveying the reality of life on a U.S. campus.

Unlike domestic students, an international student will probably see their chosen campus for the very first time upon arrival for orientation. Therefore, the literature that defines the university is their main (and perhaps only) source of information. We all know that glossy brochures tell one story of what life is like on our campuses. However, is that the reality an international student experiences upon enrollment? How do we unravel the myth of what reality is like on a U.S. campus? Instrumentation needs to be developed that examines what attracts an international student to a certain setting and, once accepted, how those expectations are met or not met after enrollment. Furthermore, this research should be done in tandem with the data collected on adjustment issues (mentioned previously), again, to ensure that the information used to recruit students allows for their successful matriculation and correlates meaningfully with their subsequent on-campus experience.

Changing demographics of inbound students.

The Open Doors report celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2009. Many of us are quite familiar with the data provided by IIE (see <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors>), which provides valuable information on the changing demographics of inbound students to the United States. But what do these changes in demographics mean at the ground level? Are there certain populations that are now being actively recruited that were not before? How do recruiting strategies change in regard to various student populations? Are there model populations that universities want to recruit over others? Is it ethical or advantageous to limit recruitment strategies to certain demographic populations? What are the compelling reasons that SIOs would need these questions to be addressed by a comprehensive research agenda?

Post-doctoral international scholars.

Many universities actively recruit post-doctoral international scholars, who are seen as a positive source of social capital for the university. The arrangement is considered reciprocal because the international scholar has the opportunity to gain valuable research experience within the university setting. Are there lessons that can be learned about the recruitment strategies for post-doctoral international scholars that would provide similarly positive situations for all international students? What is the correlation between the recruitment of post-doctoral international scholars and the opportunity for future international research and development activities for the university?

Outside-the-box recruitment.

Successful recruitment of international students could result in unintended consequences. For example, U.S. engineering degrees have been found to improve marriage and dowry options for Indian students (Yakaboski & Sheridan, 2013). The authors suggest that the recruitment and retention of Indian men and women engineers for graduate school migration could thus encourage policy makers and administrators to consider nontraditional motivators. What other unintended consequences exist in regard to international student recruitment? Are there negative consequences for certain populations after studying in the

United States? Are there lessons to be learned for successful recruitment strategies based on data collected after students return to their home country? Are there lessons to be learned by U.S. institutions from the unexpected consequences of international student recruitment in other countries?

International students as alumni.

Alumni have long been targeted as a valuable source for recruitment of new students. Are international students considered alumni in the same way domestic students are? What is the concept of international students as seen from the viewpoint of alumni relations? Is a post-doctoral scholar an alumnus? A one-year international exchange student? Is the active cultivation and maintenance of relationships with international alumni worthwhile for universities? How can universities conduct strategic planning so that international students remain a valuable resource even after they return to their home countries?

Dobson (2011) makes the case for international alumni relations as a requisite for being global and plans to publish a book on the topic in 2015 through EAIE. Thus, there is interest in the topic elsewhere around the world—something U.S. institutions should take note of from a competitive perspective.

It goes without saying that individual universities have been quite effective in leveraging well-placed alumni abroad to secure grants and contracts, such as the work of Mike Proctor at the University of Arizona to mobilize alumni in Mexico and the Gulf to secure large contracts. SIO Joel Glassman, working with a key alumnus from the University of Missouri–St. Louis, was able to establish a college in Oman, resulting in a flow of Gulf-funded projects. Although these are only selected examples, they illustrate the increasing entrepreneurial role of the SIO, in which international alumni play a strong part in expanding the strategy and the need to prioritize research in this area.

This section overall has shown that the successful recruitment of international students depends on a variety of factors that have not been adequately addressed in the literature to date. Thinking of international students merely as a source of revenue for the university denies the social capital they bring not only during their sojourn in the United States, but also long after they return to their respective home countries or move on elsewhere. It is hoped that future research will address the questions outlined here and provide universities with effective means to enhance recruitment strategies to reflect the reality experienced by international students and to assure the inclusion of these international students as valued alumni.

Orientation practices.

It is not only recruitment strategies that need to be considered before international students arrive on campus. How the international student population, as well as the domestic student and faculty population, will be oriented to sharing the campus needs to be addressed in a research agenda. In the appendix to *Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future of Internationalizing Higher Education* (2011), Mestenhauser recollects a case study in which 18 U.S. students, each living in a campus residence hall with an international student, requested to be reassigned a roommate after the first month. In keeping with residence hall policy, in one dorm, the head resident reassigned the six students

in question. However, another head resident provided cross-cultural training for both the U.S. and the international students. After completing the three sessions, all 12 U.S. students decided to continue living with their international student roommates. At the end of the year, evaluations showed that most of these students found living with an international student to be “the most important learning experience in their lives—even more important than the classes they were taking” (Mestenhauser, 2011, p. 184). This anecdote points to important considerations for practice. But is research of this nature guiding universities as they prepare for the arrival of international students on their campuses? What are we doing to examine the effects of international students on our campuses? As universities strategically plan for the growing presence of international students, the following issues must be researched.

U.S. student orientation practices in relation to international students. Although international students at many institutions are provided with extensive orientation to the campus, what are the orientation experiences for the U.S. student population in relation to their international peers? Under whose jurisdiction does this aspect of U.S. student orientation fall? Are domestic students welcoming to international students, are they unwelcoming, or are they largely unaware of or uninterested in the international student population at their institution? From the research on adjustment issues, what lessons can be learned and incorporated into a general orientation for the entire student body? And to whom will this task fall? These are just a few of the questions that should be discussed as universities plan their future orientation practices.

Faculty development for working with international students.

In addition to orientation practices that focus on the student population, what programs are being developed and offered to faculty who will teach these international students? Social network analysis has been used to study the impact of student self-selection as opposed to grouping by the faculty member (Rienties, Alcott, & Jindal-Snape, 2014). The results show how students from diverse cultural backgrounds build learning and work relations. Insights from this kind of literature should be disseminated to faculty teaching in such situations.

Reports such as the ACE's 2012 Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses are invaluable in examining faculty policies and practices, and through web tool assessment, comparisons can be made to peer institutions and national averages. Global comparisons, however, are also needed to ascertain how many of our universities actively pursue faculty development to deal with diverse behaviors in the classroom and to manage conflicts in an intercultural learning environment. Does faculty development of this nature take place as an orientation experience for new faculty or as ongoing professional development? Is such training optional or required? What are the correlations between faculty development (and particular approaches to faculty development) and international student success? Are current practices in the United States sufficient, lacking, or somewhere in between compared to the policies and practices of our global competitors?

Faculty and student perceptions of international students.

In order to provide effective orientation practices, it is important to examine the current perceptions held by both faculty and students towards the international student population. Do faculty consider having international students in class a blessing or burden? How do our domestic students feel about having international students in class? After having a class with international students, do perceptions change, and if so, how? What lessons can we learn to create more meaningful orientation practices for all? What is the long-term outcome for those who study with international students? Are we as a research community spending sufficient time examining these issues and reporting back on them? Where is the focal point for these initiatives?

The role of the faculty advisor.

Although international students may be very aware of the services provided by the international student office on their campus, what is the role of the faculty in advising international students? Is this role different for undergraduate and graduate students? How involved does the advisor get? From a simple coffee chat through shuttle service to sponsoring a visa for a relative, the issues faculty advisors may face with their international advisees may span a wide range, and anecdotal evidence suggests that they are seldom considered proactively. What orientation practices for faculty advisors provide the most benefit to the international student while also providing the necessary legal and ethical guidelines for faculty advisors?

Post-orientation practices.

We all have felt bombarded with information overload at some point in our lives. For international students, many of whom deal with orientations in a second language, what is the retention level of all the information imparted during their preliminary days and weeks on campus? Are there benefits to conducting orientations in the native language of the international student? What is the policy for revisiting orientation information or activities throughout the school year? How are international student events publicized to both the international and U.S. student population? Are records kept of repeat attendance and correlations drawn between the benefits accruing to those U.S. students attending an international event on campus?

As international student populations become more prevalent on our campuses, we need to seriously examine the preparations we make to welcome, orient, and include these international students as active contributing members of our communities. These orientation practices must include opportunities for faculty to appreciate the benefits and challenges of having international students in class or as advisees. Efforts must also be made to encourage both U.S. and international students to participate in orientation practices throughout their campus lives so that optimal benefits can occur from sharing a campus or even sharing a room.

English language programs and academic support.

Many of our universities have strict requirements for entrance into academic programs that are based on a certain level of English language proficiency as demonstrated by a standardized score. Furthermore, there are multiple instruments to assess pre-and post-levels of language competency, such as vocabulary matching tests, vocabulary knowledge scales, situational vocabulary tests, and simulated oral proficiency interviews. Language proficiency can also be measured by completed coursework, entry-level fluency, and discretionary language usage. But have we equally considered how to teach and prepare students to understand and appreciate the cultural issues and values, nuances and cues, that are situated within the language—for example, that the question “How are you?” is simply a greeting, and nobody really cares about the answer? The issues related to language training and related academic support are virtually endless and in vast need of an improved research agenda that addresses the intersection between language readiness and cultural integration.

English language and overall well-being.

It comes as no surprise that as English language ability improves, the international student's sense of well-being will also improve. Research shows that language proficiency is a pervasive factor in the personal security of international students in all domains inside and outside the classroom (Sawir et al., 2012). As fear was a primary adjustment issue for international students, it would appear we need ample research conducted on how to most effectively increase language proficiency so that international students can reach a state of overall well-being soon into their sojourn abroad. However, what works for one population may or may not work for another. The vast research already conducted on English language programs needs to be compiled and disseminated, highlighting best practices to pursue in support of international students' health and security.

Research on academic misconduct.

The wealth of research on English language programs is in stark contrast to the dearth of research on other means of academic support. Perhaps most outstanding is the lack of understanding on how to effectively provide support for international students in the area of academic integrity. It is one thing to impose standards with regard to plagiarism, but how to actually teach what is meant by plagiarism and how to assist students in avoiding academic misconduct are questions of urgency for our research agenda. What cultural implications come into play when a student “copies” the work of an elder or teacher? In a U.S. setting, this would result in charges of academic misconduct, whereas for some international students, the act of using a revered teacher's words verbatim would show respect. If we are serious about accepting international students into our communities, we must also be willing to put forth the effort to prepare them to be successful.

It is naïve to think that success will come merely from an international student mastering the English language. Although we do need to be aware of which English language programs help international students to adjust to life on campus and increase feelings of well-being, issues relating to how the English

language is used in academic have too often been ignored or viewed from a rather ethnocentric perspective. A more comprehensive research agenda that takes into account the cultural aspects of academic integrity is a very high priority.

Social support and campus connections.

Not only academic support but also social support and campus connections are in need of an updated research agenda. The current research is dated, and we need to make a concentrated effort to look at what happens in the period between a student's initial orientation and their ultimate graduation. A recent project begun by UCLA with the support of Terra Dotta Software has created a clearinghouse resource on special efforts to support international students and campus internationalization, with survey responses from over 100 campuses (see <http://globaled.us/internationalization/>).

An additional focal point for research across the board for higher education institutions also has international implications—retention. We need to do a better job of assessing the graduation rates for international students and putting into place benchmarks to ensure that these retention rates are enhanced, if needed, or else successfully maintained.

Instruments exist—such as the Attachment Style Questionnaire (which focuses on such issues as security, anxiety, and avoidance), the Index of Life Stress, the Index of Social Support, and the Brief Symptom Inventory—and can be used to assess students' perceived social support and campus connections. Tools like i-graduate's International Student Barometer can also provide universities with valuable information (see <http://i-graduate.org/services/international-student-barometer/>). That being said, no one tool is perfect, and when disseminating data for one's university, specific purposes will need to be considered and subsequent tweaking done to make the most of whatever instrument is being employed. Specific research areas that need to be considered as they relate to social support and campus connections can be found below.

Concept of student services.

Although many U.S. students are familiar with the student services provided on campus, international students may not utilize these services. Preliminary research has been done on the relationship between acculturative stress, including individual factors of acculturative stress, and international student utilization of campus-based health and counseling services (Hofmann, 2010). More in-depth research that looks at how and why international students access the student services on our campuses is of the utmost importance. This relevant data can then be incorporated into recruitment strategies as well as orientation practices.

The role of the SIO.

Since the publication of the AIEA 1995 research agenda, the role of the SIO has become more prominent. However, research on what the SIO can accomplish in terms of the successful adaptation of international students to campus life in the United States has yet to be conducted. One interesting study to date shows that there is a disconnect between the self-assigned grade of SIOs

and the grade assigned to their work by international educators where SIOs perceive their work as more effective (Poole, 2012). Studies such as this one must be continued so that we can assess the role the SIO plays and learn how to incorporate the SIO into the successful strategic planning of the university as a whole.

Advising from unofficial channels.

In examining the concept of care as provided by teachers to students, the special role a student advisor holds may come immediately to mind. However, do international students utilize a student advisor in the same manner as U.S. students? If international students do not understand the role of a student advisor, to whom do they turn for academic counsel? What are the consequences for international students when they take the unofficial advice of co-patriots already on campus instead of utilizing the resources provided by the university? Are these established international students better informed as to what issues need to be addressed? Without a clearer understanding of how international students receive advising and of the authenticity of the advice that they do receive, our universities run the risk of failing to provide the best possible services for these students.

How international students make connections on campus.

When interviewing international students, one researcher found that nine out of 10 students cite that to “fit in” means to have American friends. However, in the acculturation process, these same students say they have nothing to talk about with U.S. students besides superficial topics, hence discouraging true friendships. This discrepancy not only begs for a clearer understanding of language proficiency and cultural adaptation but also highlights the need to examine at a basic level how our international students are making friends on U.S. campuses. Are there benefits to enforcing mandatory requirements for contact with domestic students? What are the advantages of incorporating a “buddy project,” such as the one described by Campbell (2011), where students in an intercultural communication class became a buddy for a newly arrived international student for a semester? Do U.S. students not involved in such programs lose out on specific learning experiences as a result of not participating in a structured exercise to befriend an international student?

When we reminisce about our own university experiences, many of us will reflect on certain individuals who became influential in our becoming the people we are today. Are these same kinds of influential individuals present in the lives of our international students? If not, how can we assure that our campuses in the future will provide the kinds of environments that will facilitate rich relationship building opportunities for international students? These questions must be deeply explored for us to establish true learning communities, not only for international students but for the domestic faculty and student population as well.

Intercultural learning.

The questions examined so far in regard to a research agenda on inbound mobility highlight various issues. At the core, however, we must ask the

basic question: what learning outcomes result for domestic students and inbound international students who share the same U.S. campus? Such a discussion must begin with an understanding of the different expectations held by both groups of students.

The AAC&U rubrics on integrated learning, global learning, intercultural learning, and high-impact practices are an invaluable tool in this assessment. The Global Studies Institute at Cal State Long Beach has also conducted a study and developed a Global Learning Inventory (GLI). Additional instrumentation includes the Global-Mindedness Scale and the Global Perspective Inventory as well as instrumentation specifically focused on assessment and development of intercultural competence such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). To further assess the intercultural learning of both our international and U.S. student population, a research agenda should incorporate the following topics.

What are our students learning?

This appears to be a very basic question, and yet the ramifications of curriculum choices are just in their infancy when it comes to research. Studies on changes in “postsecondary course taking” from 1972–2000 have been conducted (see <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/empircurr/index.html>).

This so-called empirical curriculum forces us to consider the needs of today's student and how these needs may be different for an international, as opposed to a domestic, student population.

How do students self-report their learning?

We no longer live in a world where formal reports suffice as the sole avenue to report student outcomes. Xia (2013) used discourse analysis to classify the comments and explore the patterns of studying behaviors for Chinese learners commenting on Western online courses. As researchers, we must now delve into the vast amount of self-reporting done by our international and domestic students via communication media that were not available just a few years ago. What are the “likes” that constitute intercultural learning?

Student leadership development for international students.

Leadership is a skill that we hope to impart to our domestic student population. Do we bestow the same opportunities for leadership development on our international student population? What are the opportunities for international students when it comes to gaining this valuable skill? Do we actively recruit international students for positions of leadership outside of international student organizations? What are the long-term impacts of learning leadership skills in a culture different from one's own?

Alternatives to studying abroad.

Although many laud the benefits of a study abroad experience, the reality for a majority of our domestic students is that they will not have the opportunity to study abroad due to a variety of academic, socioeconomic, and

personal reasons. Therefore, the presence of international students on our campuses serves a very important role in providing a global viewpoint for these domestic students. Soria and Troisi (2013) found that students' participation in activities related to internationalization at home—participation in on-campus global and international activities such as enrollment in global or international coursework, interactions with international students, and participation in global and international co-curricular activities—may yield greater perceived benefits than study abroad for students' development of global, international, and intercultural (GII) competencies. We need to further identify what kind (and quality) of intercultural learning occurs when a student studies abroad, but equally focus on the intercultural learning that occurs at home and what we can do to enhance these opportunities, as the majority of our students remain at home. The work of European scholars, in particular Jos Beelen at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, should inspire SIOs to examine in greater detail the internationalization-at-home initiatives on their own campuses.

Shifts in the demographic composition of student bodies.

The profile of the domestic U.S. student population is becoming increasingly culturally diverse. Researchers are examining what these changing student demographics mean for long-term career prospects in specific fields. Su (2013), for example, examined international doctoral student flows into science and engineering departments in American research universities. Researchers, not only at the doctoral level, must also question what happens when undergraduate U.S. students directly (or even indirectly) work in culturally diverse groups. In this vein, the work of Kimmel & Volet (2010) reported that students' own attitudes toward intercultural interactions may be affected by the quality of close peers' experiences in culturally diverse groups.

When we examine the learning that takes place on our campuses, we must not be constricted by conventional instrumentation and reporting measures. In today's virtual world, student learning via self-reports posted for online communities must also be examined. It is by drawing from an array of sources in our research that we can gain a clearer picture of the intercultural learning that occurs for the student who never leaves a U.S. campus, particularly in light of the changing demographics of our student populations.

Immigration and legal issues.

It becomes increasingly more apparent that a research agenda for the future must incorporate an examination of the legislation that is imposing limitations on international students' freedoms. Although some scholars, such as Urias and Yeakey (2009), have provided analysis of the U.S. student visa system, their overarching questions—such as, “What are the relevant laws affecting international student study in the United States, and what are the consequences of having those laws?”—need to be further explored. As a research community, we need to help clarify the effects of the immigration and legal policies affecting our students, our institutions, and our field. Furthermore, the findings of our research need to be sufficiently robust and relevant to effectively guide our actions at whatever level of policy advocacy we choose to undertake. In short,

we require a solid body of documented research that provides provocative and grounded discussion.

Conclusion

This piece on the inbound mobility of international students and scholars has shown that it is only through a concentrated research agenda that our campuses can move from a position of operating under an untested set of assumptions about the situation of our students and the outcomes of our interventions to a position of greater confidence and understanding about the impact of our work. Seven pertinent issues, which were first raised in 2009, remain the focal points of an agenda on how to address the various needs and consequences of having international student populations on our campuses. It is the hope and desire of the author that, having outlined some of these questions, SIOs will now collaborate on setting research priorities that will not only enhance the quality of their own individual institutions but at the same time provide the necessary data for national-level decision making to ensure that international students will be drawn to the programs and opportunities found on U.S. campuses.

About the author

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The AIEA Research Agenda Series

In 1996, AIEA published a *Research Agenda for the Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States* in response to post-cold war concerns about the future of internationalization. Continuation of federal supports for internationalization was uncertain, and leaders in internationalization were justly concerned that the outcomes of internationalization were neither clear nor well-documented. Despite changes in funding, the internationalization of higher education has taken on even greater prominence in the U.S. and elsewhere since the report's publication, and research on internationalization has burgeoned. The aim of AIEA's new series is to reflect on existing research, identify gaps, and encourage new research to address the gaps. Further, while the series begins with two papers focused on questions pertaining primarily to the U.S. context, perspectives from outside the U.S. are very much needed and welcomed. Submissions may be sent to the AIEA editorial committee via aiea@duke.edu.

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