

Speaking My Language:

Specialized outreach for international
students with disabilities



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International Student Demographics



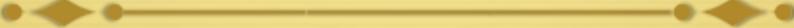
- ✦ Two types of “international” students
 - ✦ Students with F1 and J1 student visas (non-resident aliens)
 - ✦ Refugees, Documented, and Undocumented immigrants (resident aliens)

F1 and J1 Student Enrollment



- ✦ International student enrollment with F1 and J1 visas has steadily increased in the last decade (IIE, 2016)
 - ✦ 974,926 international students in 2014/15 academic year
 - ✦ 10.0% growth from 2013/14 academic year
 - ✦ Represents 4.8% of total US student population in higher education
- ✦ Top four countries of origin nationwide (IIE, 2016):
 - ✦ China: 31.2%
 - ✦ India: 13.6%
 - ✦ South Korea: 6.5%
 - ✦ Saudi Arabia: 6.1%

F1 and J1 Student Enrollment



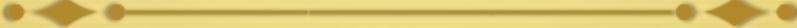
- ✦ Increased enrollment largely related to recruitment efforts, institutional reputation, economic factors and pathway programs such as intensive English language programs (IIE, 2014)
- ✦ Decreased enrollment often related to insufficient support staff and other factors (IIE, 2014)

F1 and J1 Students at PSU



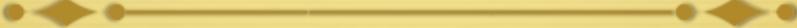
- ✦ 7.7% of student body (2152 total) (OISSS registration data, fall 2015)
- ✦ Countries of origin:
 - ✦ China (19%)
 - ✦ Saudi Arabia (17%)
 - ✦ India (14%)
 - ✦ Kuwait (7%)
 - ✦ Japan (7%)
- ✦ 27 F1/J1 students registered with DRC (1.3% of 2152)
- ✦ Students from China and India particularly underrepresented

Resident Alien Enrollment



- ✦ Resident aliens (refugees, documented, and undocumented immigrants) (Refugee and Immigrant Student Issues Committee, 2012)
 - ✦ Often “hidden” student population
 - ✦ Diverse group depending on country of origin and documentation status
 - ✦ Refugees from countries impacted by war or other extreme situations such as Syria and Ethiopia
 - ✦ Immigrants often from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Mexico

Resident Aliens at PSU



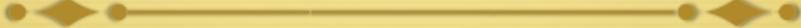
- ✦ Cannot identify country of origin in current informational systems.
- ✦ Permanent resident is noted but not refugee or immigrant status and country of origin
- ✦ Do not have data on how many are at PSU
- ✦ 33 registered with the DRC

Survey Summer 2015



- ✦ Surveyed F1 and J1 visa students identified through the International Student Life Office (ISL) and Intensive English Language Program (IELP) in partnership with Rachel Joy, Conflict Resolution Masters student
- ✦ 46 respondents (36 with usable data)
- ✦ Respondents countries of origin:
 - ✦ 16 from Asian countries (China, Thailand, Japan)
 - ✦ 15 from Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Iran)
 - ✦ 8 from Brazil
 - ✦ 6 from India and surrounding areas (Nepal, Bangladesh)
 - ✦ 1 undisclosed

Survey Summer 2015



- ✦ 2 reported using DRC services though many reported conditions that may have been eligible for services such as “thinking/learning” or “sensory/speech” issues that may have an “effect on learning”
- ✦ 37% reported not having any knowledge of DRC services

Survey Summer 2015



- ✦ Possible reasons for not accessing services:
 - ✦ “Some due to the fear of potentially not being accepted and some due to peer pressure as not being treated as an equal part of their classmates/group.”
 - ✦ “Maybe because I felt ashamed and didn't want anybody to know about my disability.”
 - ✦ “Language or cultural [barrier]. Not knowing about the services”
 - ✦ “Thinking that if I can't help myself nobody can.”
 - ✦ “By the name, it seems that I am someone who has a problem.”

Survey Spring 2016



- ✦ Surveyed students registered with the DRC who are either non-resident aliens (F1/J1 visas) or resident aliens (refugees and immigrants)
- ✦ 64 students surveyed with 19 responses (17 with usable data)
 - ✦ 7 F1/J1 students (non-resident aliens)
 - ✦ 11 Refugee/immigrant students (resident aliens)
 - ✦ Countries of origin:
 - ✦ 4 Africa
 - ✦ 4 Canada
 - ✦ 2 Middle East
 - ✦ 4 Central and South America
 - ✦ 5 Other Nationalities

Survey Spring 2016



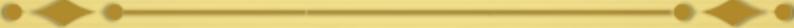
- ✦ Perceived attitude toward disabilities:
 - ✦ “Invisible disability and illness are especially stigmatized, and I have been personally criticized, having my status as disabled student openly questioned.”
 - ✦ “Some people are really very unfriendly to disabled people, and I even experience that in my classes.”
 - ✦ “For the most part it has been positive but sadly, the biggest hurdles or obstacles were in the form of faculty unwilling to work to accommodate my specific needs.”

Survey Spring 2016



- ✦ Concerns an international student with a disability may have:
 - ✦ “Accepting the fact that they do have a disability because of the fear of being looked down upon.”
 - ✦ “Language barrier, lack of support systems at academic and personal levels.”
 - ✦ “Student with disability may worry about the [lack] of support. Some of them may [even] have a hard time to find support such as DRC due to language issue.”
 - ✦ “Services given to to disabled people should be clear; special attention should be given to a student with disability as it's very difficult to be on the page even with other people with disabilities who are from here.”

Survey Spring 2016



- ✦ What would an international student need to know before deciding to come to PSU?
 - ✦ “Location and requirements needed to receive services from the DRC.”
 - ✦ “More information about the disability support when we first [arrive] in PSU.”
 - ✦ “He has to now first what types of accommodation the PSU provides for disability.”
 - ✦ “Despite my own disabilities and challenges, I have connected with, and made friends with a very diverse community, and have found wonderful support, and advocacy through the Students with Disabilities Resource Center, the Women's Resource Center, and SHAC.”
 - ✦ “Participating in class would also help to be easily recognized by the instructor and reduces students misconception towards our abilities.”
 - ✦ “That there are systems in place to help a student resolve potential and existing hurdles to educational access.”

Survey Spring 2016



✦ Referral sources:

- ✦ Other departments such as advising, ISL, TRiO, and other resource centers
- ✦ DRC website
- ✦ Tabling Event

✦ Reasons for seeking services

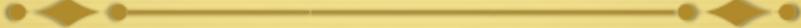
- ✦ Wanted accommodations
- ✦ Encouragement from others such as faculty and mentors

Survey Spring 2016



- ✦ Perceived reasons why an international student with a disability would not seek services:
 - ✦ Not aware DRC exists (82%)
 - ✦ Not aware particular disability qualifies for services (82%)
 - ✦ Cannot get verification of disability (73%)
 - ✦ Embarrassment or shame about needing services (64%)
 - ✦ Do not consider themselves “disabled” (64%)
 - ✦ Doing fine academically without support (45%)

Survey Spring 2016



- ✦ Best outreach methods for letting international students know about DRC services:
 - ✦ Website link on international student websites (75%)
 - ✦ Information provided at orientation by DRC staff (75%)
 - ✦ DRC staff holding office hours at ISL and/or IELP (67%)
 - ✦ Printed material about DRC in different languages (58%)
 - ✦ Peer mentors encouraging students to register (58%)
 - ✦ Video featuring international students already registered with the DRC (42%)

Next Steps for Study



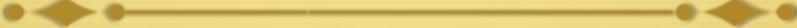
- ✦ Film at least five qualitative interviews with international students with disabilities registered with the DRC
 - ✦ Determine factors related to overall adjustment to PSU
 - ✦ Determine factors related to decision to register with DRC
 - ✦ Determine factors related to satisfaction with DRC services
 - ✦ Determine factors related to adjustment to disability
 - ✦ Determine best practices based on this information for further outreach and services

International Student Stressors



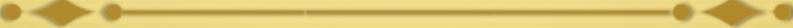
- ✦ Increased depression and anxiety due to adjustment factors (Sümer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008)
 - ✦ Most significant indicators include loack of social support and language barriers
- ✦ Perceived discrimination (Lee & Rice, 2007)
 - ✦ Perceptions of unfairness and inhospitality
 - ✦ Cultural intolerance and confrontation
 - ✦ Institutional accountability for discrimination

International Student Stressors



- ✦ Adjustment factors (Andrade, 2006)
 - ✦ Challenges related to English language and culture
 - ✦ Need for different types and levels of support
 - ✦ Faculty misinterpretation of behaviors and need for greater understanding of academic, social, emotional, and psychological challenges
- ✦ Acculturative stress (Yeh & Inose, 2003)
 - ✦ Language barriers impacting support services
 - ✦ Lack of social connections increasing isolation and loneliness

Cultural Factors



- ✦ Adjusting classroom behaviors from passive to active orientation (Andrade, 2006-2007).
- ✦ Collectivist vs Individualist cultures (Hart & Coates, 2010).
 - ✦ Collectivist: Tend not to express emotions outwardly and discussions tend to be intimate.
 - ✦ Individualistic: Pride themselves on self-expression; uniqueness
- ✦ High Context vs. Low Context cultures (Yamashita and Schwartz, 2012).
 - ✦ High Context: People tend to see themselves as embedded in a team or group. Relational.
 - ✦ Low Context: Independent from circumstances and particular relationships. Independent.

Best Practices from Literature



- ✦ Orientation and freshman seminars specific for international students that include disability and disability services (Andrade, 2006-2007).
- ✦ Outreach that is sensitive to high context cultures where relational interaction is valued (Yamashita & Schwartz, 2012)
- ✦ Flexibility in supporting individual needs (Supple & Abgenyega, 2011)
- ✦ Identifying knowledge and language barriers (Supple & Abgenyega, 2011)
- ✦ Acknowledging differences in values and beliefs of both student and faculty/staff (Supple & Abgenyega, 2011)
- ✦ Opportunities for interaction with US peers that increase friendships and adjustment (Williams & Johnson, 2011)

New DRC Practices Indicated



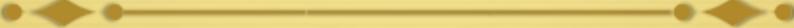
- ✦ Increase DRC staff presence at international student orientation
- ✦ Establish link specific to international students with disabilities on ISL and IELP websites
- ✦ Establish outreach practices prior to coming to PSU through international student admissions
- ✦ Develop peer mentoring connection between international and domestic students with disabilities

New DRC Practices Indicated



- ✦ Increase connection with other departments who may serve both resident and non-resident aliens such as multicultural student services, TRiO, SHAC, and other resource centers
- ✦ Increase connection with other departments who serve non-resident aliens such as ISL, IELP, and other international programs
- ✦ Increase overall flexibility and outreach in communication to reach more students
- ✦ Produce outreach materials in multiple languages
- ✦ Produce outreach video with other international students with disabilities

Sources



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