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I, Jonathan D Weller, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies.

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Improving the Cultural Acclimation of International Students Enrolled in American Colleges and Universities

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Cincinnati

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Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

In the Department of Educational Studies College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services

Committee Chair: Dr. Mary Brydon-Miller

April 2012

By

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Abstract

This study addresses the importance of helping international students acclimate to their American campus culture in order to meet the aspirations of international education. The study includes a comprehensive overview of international student enrollment in American colleges and universities. It also identifies the many benefits, including economic, educational, and political, that are achieved by ensuring that international students find positive ways of participating in campus culture. The study also identifies challenges that enrolling large numbers of international students can have on U.S. universities.

The study utilizes a mixed methods approach to analyze international student input focusing particularly on the experience of Chinese undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Cincinnati (UC), a prominent, public, research university with over 2,300 international students enrolled.

The study analyzes three sets of quantitative data: demographic enrollment data, the results of the 2010 International Student Barometer (ISB), and a comprehensive survey administered by the university’s International Admissions Office. A qualitative study was performed to allow students to voice concerns and offer recommendations to university leadership. This qualitative approach included two separate on-line discussion forums. One forum was conducted with Chinese undergraduate students and one was conducted with Chinese graduate students.

The findings identified a rapidly increasing international student population whose members have not been able to acclimate to campus culture. The primary limitations for Chinese students included feeling that they did not understand American culture, generally possessed
weak to moderate English language communication abilities, and had a natural tendency to associate primarily with other Chinese students.

Recommendations to university leaders based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis are provided and range from updating bureaucratic university procedures to forming a new campus identity. Though designed as recommendations for UC, these recommendations – and the methods utilized to create these recommendations - may benefit a number of American universities experiencing similar international enrollment growth, challenges and opportunities.

This study has many implications for international education. First, it provides a comprehensive overview of the implications of enrolling international students on American campuses. Second, it provides many recommendations that can assist students at other American universities. Third, it serves as a template that can be replicated at other universities wishing to better understand the academic and social issues facing their international students. The study also provides a template for other research related to international education, such as encouraging American students to engage with international students enrolled on their campuses or for better understanding the experiences of American students who participate in study abroad programs.
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Jonathan D. Weller
For:

Sarah Weller
Acknowledgments

The past four years have been an incredible journey complete with many achievements, challenges, and surprises. There have been many long days followed by even longer nights of classes, reading, and writing. It is difficult to believe that this journey is so close to completion. As I dare to dream of weekends and evenings without assignments and seemingly never-ending dissertation work, I am reminded of the sense of accomplishment that I will feel as I cross the graduation stage in a few weeks. However, I also realize that this dissertation is not the last step of my academic journey, but rather a mile marker.

When I began writing the dissertation, I thought I would be able to answer all the questions and address all the issues that were so important to me. This was obviously a naïve assumption. As I prepare for what lies ahead in my academic career, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on all the support and encouragement that has led me to this point and will help me take the next steps in the journey ahead.

Family

I must first acknowledge my wife, Sarah. I simply would not have been able to complete this process without her love and support. She has been encouraging, patient, and supportive throughout this entire process. The past four years of balancing a demanding professional career, daunting academic process, and wonderful, growing family with Jackson, Maya, and Lanie, have certainly had some rough spots. Sarah was with me every step of the way. She shared the highs and the lows and also volunteered to take on extra roles and undertake plenty of long days and short nights to ensure that I could complete this process.

I am fortunate to have a close, loving, and supportive extended family. Everyone has been patient and supportive over the past few years, whether it was prayers, motivational words,
or help with childcare, I never took that support for granted and will always appreciate it. My parents, in particular, have supported me throughout this process. My mom, Gerry, continually pushed me to pursue a doctorate degree well before I had the courage to start. A life-long educator with many years of service at the University of Cincinnati, she knew the importance of earning a doctorate as well as the tough sacrifices that it required. She and my dad, Sam, were always willing to help in whatever ways they could to ensure that I could complete this process while still being an active father and husband.

Professional Colleagues

I also would not have been able to complete this process without the tremendous support of many of my professional colleagues. I must acknowledge Dr. Tom Canepa, Associate Vice President for Admissions at UC. Tom has been supportive throughout this process, including continually asking for updates to ensure I was not slipping in my progress. I would not be at this point without his continued support, flexibility, and patience. I am very lucky to have a supervisor - and friend - who supports his staff members as much as Tom.

I must also recognize Ron Cushing, Director of UC International Services, for his support as well. Ron and I have also worked closely for many years. Ron was not only supportive of me in this process, but also offered significant help and guidance that contributed to this dissertation itself. Together we hope to not only enroll a growing international student population at UC, but also to help ensure that students feel welcomed and supported as important members of the UC community.

The International Admissions Office staff – Angel, Brandon, Charlie, Frank, and Nazanin – have bore the brunt of my attempts to balance work and school, particularly this last year as I frequently took vacation days to work in the library. Despite my hectic schedule, they have
remained patient, supportive, and understanding. I am fortunate to have such a supportive team that is not only doing great things for our students, but great things for each other as well.

I was fortunate to have worked closely with Dr. Mitch Leventhal when he served as UC’s first Vice Provost for International Affairs. Mitch and I developed a strong connection almost immediately as we began to build UC’s international enrollment efforts and I benefited tremendously from his leadership and mentorship. He was also very encouraging of me pursuing a Ph.D. and played an important role in the early stages of my doctoral studies as I began to formulate my areas of academic pursuit. Though he now serves as the Vice Chancellor of Global Affairs at SUNY, we remain close and will continue to work together on exciting projects related to international enrollment and supporting international students.

Academic Community

I obviously would not be where I am without the support of UC’s academic community. UC students are lucky to have such excellent, supportive faculty members willing to devote extra time and energy to help their students succeed. No greater example of this is Dr. Mary Brydon-Miller. I first met Mary while pursuing my Master’s Degree in Educational Studies. Little did I know then, what an important role she would play in my life. Mary began encouraging me to pursue my doctorate degree even before I had completed my Master’s degree and continued to do so for years after I had earned the Master’s. Just as importantly, Mary would not let me settle for viewing this process as a race to earn a piece of paper. She continually encouraged me to take advantage of this opportunity to be patient and challenge myself to write something that is worth reading. Our goal has been that this dissertation does not simply sit on a shelf collecting dust and I believe that it will be of great use to other students and professionals interested in international education.
I first met Dr. Tim White when I took his Comparative Politics class as a sophomore at Xavier University. Interestingly, this class included a significant emphasis on US-China relations. Though I enjoyed his classes, it was our involvement in Xavier’s service-learning programs that sparked a unique friendship. We began having periodic lunch meetings shortly after I graduated from Xavier to stay in touch and share experiences about service-learning. I was delighted that Tim agreed to serve on my committee and thankful that he has been such an inspirational committee member. I truly appreciate all of his support and encouragement and look forward to continuing our lunch tradition.

Dr. Mary Benedetti has also been an encouraging and committed committee member. She has offered insightful advice on a range of issues that have helped me focus my efforts. Even more interesting, her professional career and mine have become increasing connected as I work with university faculty and leadership to implement many of the recommendations detailed at the conclusion of this dissertation. Mary has always been an advocate for international students and we are developing some exciting academic support programs that will help in their acclimation to campus culture.

Dr. Miriam Raider-Roth has only been on the committee for a short time. However, her dedication to supporting students is widely known throughout the Educational Studies student family. I have appreciated her support and look forward to working together in the future.

The students

UC is fortunate to have a vibrant, talented student body. Perhaps my greatest enjoyment throughout this process was learning so much about our students from our students. The quantitative analysis offered much insight to our international population and helped me to better put their views into perspective. The on-line discussion forums were even more rewarding as
they gave voice to these statistics and reminded me of the sincerity of the students’ experiences, including what is working well and what is not, and has helped me recommit my energy and abilities to helping provide the university environment that they desire and deserve.
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Chapter One
Introduction and Literature Review

American universities have hosted international students for almost 200 years (Bevis & Lucas, 2007) but the field of international student recruitment is changing rapidly as U.S. universities attempt to dramatically increase the number of international students on their campuses. Much attention has been paid to the changing recruitment practices of universities, particularly the practice of universities compensating third-party recruiters (agents) for enrollment assistance, and to university international enrollment success stories. However, a number of areas related to international enrollment have received less attention, such as the economic, educational, and political impact of enrolling large numbers of international students on American campuses. There has been relatively little attention devoted to the experiences of international students studying in degree seeking programs (such as students intending to earn a bachelors or master’s degree) on U.S. campuses. This study explores those experiences and identifies ways that universities can improve the experiences of their international students by encouraging them to acclimate to campus culture. The study will specifically explore issues related to Chinese students enrolled at the University of Cincinnati (UC) but the analysis and recommendations will be pertinent to other international student populations and other American universities.

The literature concerning international student enrollment is typically divided into two categories: 1) recruitment methods and results, and 2) philosophical and political views. Articles related to recruitment methods and results highlight the different techniques that American universities are implementing to meet international enrollment demand. These are often trade
articles relating directly to international enrollment, which has become a major issue in higher education over the past few years. Literature in the philosophical and political views category are drawn from a wider array of sources and address the larger implications of international student enrollment, such as its impact on American economic and foreign policy and the American education system. Before exploring these two categories, it is important to establish a foundational knowledge of the current trends and rationale in international education and enrollment. This foundation has two important areas: 1) an overview of student mobility in international education and, 2) reasons that American universities are recruiting more international students.

Overview of Student Mobility in International Education

The Institute of International Education (IIE) has published their Open Doors: Report on International Educational Exchange (Open Doors) annually for over 60 years. The report provides comprehensive statistics on international education mobility from the previous academic year. Summarizing key elements of the 2011 Open Doors report (Chow & Bhandari, 2011) will provide a helpful overview of the international student population studying in the U.S. and American students studying in foreign countries.

International Students Enrolled in the United States

The 2011 Open Doors statistics affirm that international education, both in terms of international student enrollment at American universities and American students participating in study abroad programs, is on the rise. There were 723,277 international students studying or working in the U.S. during the 2010-2011 academic year. (Most international students are
allowed to participate in “optional practical training” or “OPT” which is one year of full-time employment immediately after graduation while still being classified as international students.)

This 4.7 percent increase from the previous academic year constitutes a new record for international student enrollment in the U.S. and marks five years of consistent international enrollment growth. There was a 5.7 percent increase in the number of new international students studying in 2010-2011 (compared to only a 1.3 percent increase in 2009-2010).

Students’ countries of origin are highly concentrated with Asia remaining the overwhelmingly largest region of origin; Asia sends over four times the number of students as the second largest sending region, Europe. The top three countries for sending students to the U.S. are China (157,558 students), India (103,895), and South Korea (73,351). These three countries account for 46 percent of the international student population in the U.S. The number of Chinese students studying in the U.S. has skyrocketed over the past few years, almost doubling from the 2007-2008 (81,127) to the 2010-2011 (157,558) academic year (Chow & Bhandari, 2011).

International student enrollment is highly geographically concentrated in the United States. The top three destination states are California (96,535), New York (78,888), and Texas (61,636) which account for one third of the total international student population in the U.S.

Sixty two percent of international students are enrolled in doctorate institutions and seventy six percent of international students are enrolled in American institutions with total enrollments of 10,000 or more. The preference for doctorate institutions is primarily due to the fact that most international students enroll in graduate programs. However, the gap between graduate and undergraduate is narrowing; international undergraduate enrollment is at an all time high of 291,439 and now comprises forty percent of the international student population.
International undergraduate enrollments have grown significantly over the past five years increasing by 53,389 students compared to graduate student growth of 32,286.

International students contributed over $21 billion to the U.S. economy in the 2010-2011 academic year making higher education one of the United States’ top service sector exports. Given the geographic concentration of the international student population, the financial impact to states is also highly concentrated. The top three destination states economically benefiting from international student enrollment are California ($2.99 billion), New York ($2.43 billion), and Massachusetts ($1.39 billion) comprising 32 percent of the total financial impact of international students enrolled in the U.S. More than sixty percent of international students fund their education through personal and family funds and over seventy percent of all international students’ primary funding comes from outside the U.S. However, the percentage of students relying on personal and family funds for their education varies significantly by degree level. For example, 81 percent of undergraduate international students rely on their personal and family funds compared to only 49 percent of international graduate students.

U.S. international enrollment growth has been led primarily by China with a nearly six fold increase from 9,998 Chinese undergraduate students in the 2006-2007 academic year compared to 56,976 in the 2010-2011 academic year (Chow & Bhandari, 2011). This growth is expected to continue at high levels. To put such numbers into perspective, Kansas State University had one undergraduate Chinese student in fall 2004; it had 534 in fall 2009. Ohio State University admitted 547 more Chinese undergraduate students in fall 2009 than fall 2008. Iowa State University’s enrollment of Chinese undergraduate students rose from 55 in fall 2006 to 876 in fall 2009. This is particularly relevant in the agent discussion detailed further in this paper because Chinese students extensively use agents in their enrollment process. It is estimated
that more than two-thirds of Chinese high school students use educational agents (Redden, 2010c).

*American Students Participating in Study Abroad Programs*

There are three main differences when comparing American students who study abroad to international students enrolled in American universities: 1) a significant difference the number of students in each category, 2) substantially different durations of study for each type of student, and 3) an obvious dichotomy between where American students choose to study and where international students studying in the U.S. originate. The number of U.S. students participating in study abroad programs for academic credit in the 2010-2011 academic year increased by 3.9 percent over 2009-2010 to a record high of 270,604. This represents an 88 percent increase in the number of Americans studying abroad over the past decade. This is the culmination of a consistent two decade upward trend in U.S. students participating in study abroad programs reflecting “the growing recognition by students and educators that an international experience is not only personally enriching but also valuable in the increasingly competitive job market, where language and cultural skills can help an applicant stand out to prospective employers” (Bhandari & Chow, 2009, p. 18).

American students are primarily participating in short-term study abroad programs as 56.6 percent select short-term programs (ranging from one week to slightly less than a semester), 39.4 percent select semester abroad programs, and only 3.9 percent select full academic or calendar year abroad programs. (Bhandari & Chow, 2009) The number and percentage of students studying abroad also varies by institutional type as large institutions tend to send larger number of students abroad while smaller institutions tend to send a higher percentage of their students abroad.
Americans have concentrated destination choices. Europe continues to be the largest destination region attracting 53.5 percent of American students and six of the top ten study abroad destinations are in Europe. However, the number of students studying in Europe is growing slightly while other regions, such as Africa, Asia, and the Middle East are seeing more significant growth. The top four destination countries are the United Kingdom (32,683 students), Italy (27,940 students), Spain (25,411 students), and France (17,161) accounting for nearly 40 percent of all study abroad students. China, ranked 5th with 13,910 students, is the only Asian country in the top ten list of study abroad destinations. India and Israel experienced dramatic increases in hosting study abroad students, with increases of 44.4 percent and 60.7 percent, respectively.

More International Students in U.S. Universities But Decreased Market Share

Despite these impressive statistics, the U.S. has lost substantial market share of overall international enrollment over the past several years. The U.S. enrolled 39 percent of the international student market in 1982 (McMurtrie, 2001) but currently only accounts for 20 percent of the market today. Almost half of this market share has been lost during the past decade as the U.S. went from controlling 28 percent of the international student population in 2001 to 20 percent in 2010 while countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom increased their market share during this same time period. Australia, for example, has seen substantial growth during this period, almost doubling its market share from four percent in 2001 to seven percent in 2010 (Atlas, 2011).

The U.S. serving as the most popular destination for international students is eroding while many foreign governments are investing heavily in their educational infrastructure and international student recruitment methods (Fischer, 2009b). For example, Australia and Canada
have both announced attempts to increase their stake in the international enrollment market. Australia has created the International Education Advisor Council to develop a five-year international recruitment strategy for the nation (Ross, 2011). Similarly, Canada has created an expert advisory council to make recommendations on improving international enrollment efforts as part of Canada’s Economic Action Plan (Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, 2011). If the U.S. hopes to maintain its place as the country of choice for international students, it may have to enact international recruitment efforts of comparable size and scope as its foreign competitors.

*International Student Migration Is Not New*

International student migration has occurred for thousands of years. Nalanda University, for example, was perhaps the world’s first residential university (Rajghatta, 2008). Nalanda University was located in the state of Bihar in Northeastern India, near the Nepal border. The exact founding date of this Buddhist university is unknown, ranging from as early as 500 B.C., when many believe that Buddha made several visits to the university, to as late as 500 A.D. At its peak, it housed 10,000 students and 2,000 professors including a strong international student and scholar population drawing from Korea, Japan, China, Tibet, Indonesia, Persia and Turkey (Gartner, 2006).

Students continued to seek education beyond their own borders throughout history. Bevis and Lucas (2007) provide one of the few comprehensive histories of international student enrollment in their *International Students in American Colleges and Universities: A History*. This history of international student migration spans from hundreds of foreign students enrolling annually in Ancient Greece in the second century B.C. to highly mobile Medieval students searching for enlightenment in the sixth century to European universities establishing themselves
as *stadium generales* to assert their ability to attract large numbers of international students and scholars during the High Middle Ages.

The first significant number of international students enrolled in the U.S. in the mid-1800s when American universities had begun to gain international prestige and while the U.S. had open immigration policies. However, international enrollment growth was moderate between the 1880s and the early twentieth century due to America’s restrictive immigration policies and view of international enrollment serving primarily diplomatic and cultural purposes. International enrollment began to grow dramatically in the World War II era, which also saw some of the largest migrations of immigrants to the U.S. However, it was not until the early twenty-first century, that American universities turned to aggressive international recruitment efforts in hopes of enrolling larger numbers of fee-paying students.

*International Student Migration is Increasing and Will Continue to Rise*

As *Open Doors 2011* demonstrates, the U.S. has seen consistent growth in its international student population over the past few years. One important reason for this growth is that the total number of students studying outside their home countries is rising and is predicted to continue increasingly rapidly. Therefore, a primary factor for America’s success in enrolling more international students could simply be that there is a much larger international student population throughout the world. The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) annually produces *Education at a Glance*. The *Education at a Glance 2011* report suggests that international student migration has grown rapidly and will continue to grow in the foreseeable future. For example, the number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship has grown from 800,000 in 1975 to 3.7 million in 2009 (a 460 percent increase in 30 years). This growth has gained considerable momentum since 2000. International
enrollment grew by 1.3 million students in the 25 years between 1975 and 2000. However, international enrollment increased by 1.6 million students in the nine years between 2000 and 2009 (OECD, 2011). In fact, international enrollment grew by 400,000 students in one year alone, from 2008 (3.3 million students) to 2009 (3.7 million students). This rapidly increasing number of international students throughout the world explains why US international enrollment can increase while it simultaneously faces substantial market share loss. (OECD, 2010; 2011)

Reasons for this growth, and for assuming that international student migration will continue to grow rapidly in the future, range from improvements in global transportation, changes in monetary policy simplifying the transfer of funds across borders, rising economies and populations in key countries, a globalized economy requiring the internationalization of labor, wider dissemination of information about international study, and active recruitment efforts from universities throughout the world. Philosophical and political changes have also played a role in these developments. Until relatively recently, international education was mainly conducted to promote academic and cultural ties between countries. This changed as many countries, including Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States have also included economic considerations in their support for international education. The emergence of English as the global business language has also helped attract foreign students to English-speaking countries ensuring that such countries will continue to receive significant international student populations in the near future (OECD, 2011).

Universities Are Recruiting

Historically, traveling abroad to study was limited to a small number of students, often the academically or financially elite. However, this is changing quickly as universities in a
number of countries, such as Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (beginning recently) are aggressively recruiting larger numbers of foreign students to their campuses. These nations view education as an export, a service that is sold to foreign investors. This has resulted in a shift from thinking of international education as a privilege limited to a small number of students to international education serving large quantities of students and providing a significant financial impact to the host nation. Australia is generally considered the world leader in this export approach, beginning in 1986 when the government moved from viewing the education of international students as a development program paid by taxpayer subsidies to an export industry established to increase revenue to the universities and the nation (Adams, 2007).

Many foreign governments use education as an extension of immigration policy, such as allowing easier pathways to citizenship for students who earn degrees in specific fields. In these countries, the economic impact of international education is also commonly calculated in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) and is compared to other exports. Australia, for example, recently announced that international education has overtaken tourism as their third largest export. Such announcements are reported widely in Australian press and read more like business headlines than enrollment reports. A 2009 report, for example, warned that a five percent drop in international students studying at Australian universities would cause an economic loss of $600 million (Australian dollars) resulting in 6,300 Australians losing their jobs (Slattery, 2009).

Australia’s success in international student enrollment has been widely explored. However, Australia has faced, and is facing, a number of social, political and educational issues related to its international student growth. Among the chief concerns are an over-dependence on tuition revenue from international students (Slattery, 2009), growing perceptions that Australian
universities have sacrificed academic standards to enroll large numbers of international students (Slattery, 2007), social tension between native Australians and rapidly arriving international students, and growing concerns regarding the relationships of university officials and the educational agents hired to assist with international recruitment and enrollment. One highly publicized issue was a number of targeted attacks against Indian students, many of whom enrolled in substandard private institutions with the help of unscrupulous institutional staff and educational agents (Hodge, 2009; Neelakantan, 2009.) Virginia Pattingdale also identified key areas of concern in the business relationship between Australian universities and their agents, such as universities not adhering to National Code standards, agents fraudulently charging universities commission payments, and conflict of interest between university employees and the agents they sign to represent the university (Pattingdale, 2007).

Despite these legitimate issues, other nations hope to duplicate Australia’s international enrollment success. For example, in 1999 the Blair administration of the U.K. announced a goal to increase international student enrollment by 75,000 students in six years. The success of this international program allowed the British government to set a new target of 100,000 additional students by 2011 and the government committed $48 million towards this goal (Douglass & Edelstein, 2009).

America has only recently begun actively recruiting international students. As Josep Rota, Ohio University’s associate provost for international programs, said, “we just waited for the world to come to our doorstep” (Haller, 2009, p. 56). America’s unique relationship between academic autonomy and limited government make it unlikely to embrace a comprehensive national effort to recruit international students. It is not likely, for example, that the U.S. federal government will issue international recruitment goals for the more than 3,000 American
universities in the same manner as the British government. The U.S. has taken limited efforts to attract international students, such as establishing a network of EducationUSA offices that will be discussed later in this paper. In an effort to solidify the federal government’s interest and role in attracting foreign students, Representative Russ Holt of New Jersey proposed the International Education Leadership Act of 2008 (H.R. No. 5179, 2008) that would have, for the first time, created the position of Assistant Secretary of International and Foreign Language Programs within the Department of Education. However, the proposal did not make it out of committee.

Though behind countries such as Australia, Canada, and the U.K. in concerted recruitment efforts, the U.S. is in an admirable position as it is the destination of choice for international students, contains the largest number of prominent universities in the world, the number of international students studying outside their home country is expected to increase rapidly for some time, and, perhaps most importantly, the U.S. has only recently begun to engage in aggressive international student recruitment efforts that are generating enrollment success (Labi, 2008).

Impact of September 11, 2001 on International Enrollment in the U.S.

The tidal change in American universities’ view of international student recruitment occurred in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The devastation from these attacks prompted U.S. officials to dramatically tighten visa regulations for international students, including increased visa application fees and high rates of visa denials. The combination of these efforts resulted in international students feeling unwelcome by the American people and discriminated against by the U.S. government. Other nations, particularly Australia and the U.K., took competitive advantage of this situation by increasing international student recruitment efforts, including less stringent visa processes and easier paths to citizenship upon graduation.
(Altbach & Bassett, 2004; Douglass & Edelstein, 2009). This was simply too much for U.S. universities to overcome and international student enrollment slowed significantly in 2002-2003 and ultimately declined for the first time in over 30 years in 2003-2004. International enrollment declined for two more years before it began to rebound in 2006-2007 (Bhandari & Chow, 2009).

**International Students and U.S. National Security**

The American government had legitimate concern in allowing international students to enter the country given the vital roles international students (and international visitors) played in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The mastermind of the “planes operation” was Khalid Sheik Mohammed, who earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering in the U.S. in 1986. Three of the four pilots entered the U.S. on student visas to participate in flight training programs. The fourth pilot was already studying in an intensive English program in the U.S. but was recruited to join in the attack. The remaining “muscle highjackers,” the men who stormed the cockpits and held passengers hostage while the terrorist pilots flew the planes, entered the U.S. on tourist visas. Interestingly, three of the pilots met as students in Germany, nicknamed the “Hamburg Contingent,” and yet were able to be recruited to attack the U.S. (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004).

**Declining High School Graduates and Budget Cuts at U.S. Universities**

The international student enrollment decline was coupled with many states projecting slowing, or even reversing, growth in their number of high school graduates. Declines in the number of high school graduates places significant challenges to universities that need to maintain enrollment thresholds to survive financially. Small declines in state-wide high school graduation numbers can lead to major enrollment problems at universities. State universities, which often enroll a large number of high school graduates from their own states, are most
susceptible to such declines. They are also the same institutions that tend to have larger international enrollment as foreign students are attracted to their research facilities and graduate programs.

Two commonly cited sources for high school graduation projections are the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). WICHE released its “Knocking at the College Door” report in March 2008 with comprehensive projections for all 50 states. NCES data are more frequently updated. The two organizations have different projections and methodologies but have similar findings. In the next decade, the number of high school students graduating in the South and West will rise substantially while the number graduating in the Midwest and Northeast will rise minimally due to population changes. Within the regions, some states will experience much higher gains than others and conversely, some states may experience much sharper declines than others. (NCES, 2010; WICHE, 2008) States that experience increased birth rates coupled with increased migration from people of other states will experience the largest population and graduation increases; states with declining birth rates and increased exodus of its people will experience the sharpest population and graduation declines. Compounding this further was the beginning of the seemingly relentless cycle of budget cuts to state universities by state governments (Keller, 2008).

Benefits of Enrolling International Students

Many universities faced a common set of problems; their international student population had shrunk, their states (and many neighboring states) were projecting declining numbers of high school graduates in the near future, and universities were searching for new sources of revenue to offset state funding cuts. One response was to increase out-of-state recruitment efforts. However,
there are limits to out-of-state recruitment as universities are competing for a finite number of students and confronting creative measures designed to keep students enrolled in their home state. Many universities realized that recruiting fee-paying, largely undergraduate, international students could address all three issues: 1) proactively recruiting international students should help rebuild the international student population, 2) increasing international student enrollment equates to increasing overall enrollment, and 3) international undergraduate students tend to pay much higher tuition than in-state students since states usually do not subsidize international undergraduate students’ tuition. It is also important to note that whereas over 3,000 universities and colleges are battling over a relatively small number of U.S. high school graduates, international markets provided unchartered waters where universities could enroll a large number of students quickly.

Universities have not acted alone; many states, such as Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, Texas, and West Virginia have developed state-wide consortia to promote internationalization, including collaboration on study abroad programs and student recruitment efforts. These consortia allow universities with limited budgets to pool their resources to reach new markets (Redden, 2010b).

Major Reasons Opposing International Student Recruitment

Before discussing the manner in which universities recruit international students, it is important to stress that aggressive international enrollment efforts are not endorsed by all. There are many valid concerns regarding international enrollment that are worth exploring, including:
1) a concern that universities will dilute academic curriculum and admission standards and become too dependent on tuition from foreign students, 2) enrolling international students from developing countries causes “brain drain” that reinforces the poverty of those students’ home nations, and 3) increasing international enrollments will limit access of American students to their own universities.

Commercialization of Education

There is legitimate concern that viewing education as an export and aggressively recruiting international students can lead to a commercialization of education as universities look to academic programs to serve as sources of revenue rather than to prepare the future leaders of the academy. This could result in reducing the academic rigor of programs, lowering admissions requirements, and increasing class size in order to make programs more marketable and profitable. Aggressive recruitment efforts can also give the perception that a university, or one of its academic programs, is desperate for students, harming its academic reputation. A related concern is that even if a university maintains its standards but significantly increases its international population, especially if this is done in a short amount of time, there will be a perception that it has lowered its quality. Altbach (2010) shares this concern of educational quality decreasing in order to attract large numbers of international students and their tuition payments. He believes that the prestige of studying in the U.S. has diminished as opportunities have moved from diplomatic and cultural exchange programs limited to elite students to a mass phenomenon where any student with marginal academic accomplishments and significant personal finances can earn a U.S. degree. Additionally, he believes that international students are not being well-served as less prestigious universities are able to lure students away from prominent institutions.
The commercialization of education can also hurt the international students in other ways. First, the quality of education all students receive may be less due to lowered academic standards used to enroll a larger number of students. Second, international students are not perceived to be as unique if they are part of a larger group. For example, if a program enrolls one student from Nepal, that student may be viewed as truly unique and talented. If the program enrolls one hundred students from Nepal, the students may be viewed more as part of an outreach mission than as academically gifted individuals. Third, as American universities enroll larger number of international students, the exclusiveness of a U.S. degree is being diminished. Using a similar example, if a Nepalese corporation only receives one job application from a U.S.-educated Nepali, that applicant will stand out and will have benefited from his significant education investment. However, if the company receives one hundred applications from U.S.-educated Nepalis, each of the one hundred students will not stand out despite their significant education investment.

There are three compelling counterarguments concerning the commercialization of education. First, this theory unfairly targets international students. The commercialization of education is a much broader debate with multiple issues, such as encouraging high school students to take Advanced Placement or Post Secondary Enrollment Option courses in which they receive college credit and reduce the length of their university studies. Large numbers of students enter the university in such a manner despite concerns that transferring in substantial credit from high school diminishes the significance of university level coursework. Second, this theory assumes that lowering standards and quality is a pre-requisite to increasing student enrollment. This is not always the case as establishing more competitive admissions standards can lead to higher enrollment as students are attracted to selective universities. Third, the
commercialization of education is a direct result of the funding structures that exist in the U.S. The lack of government support necessitates universities to make such financially driven decisions and makes the commercialization of education unavoidable.

*Brain Drain*

“Brain drain” has been a standard argument against the recruitment of international students for many years. The primary concern is that the brightest students in developing countries will be recruited to universities in the developed world. The foreign universities will benefit from the students’ academic contributions and the students will most likely not return to the home country. This exodus of top students can occur on a massive scale which will hinder the home countries’ development because its best students leave and do not return. Though mentioned in regard to international education, most research on brain drain has been conducted in regards to human capital. The argument is basically the same, but scholars on human capital typically talk in terms of skilled laborers than students. Beoku-Betts (2008) provides an excellent summary of brain drain in her literature review:

Brain drain is described as “the loss of highly skilled professionals from a source country to a recipient country” (Sako, 2002: 25). . . Such movement usually takes place from poor countries in the global South to highly developed and wealthy countries in the global North, as a result of trends in the global economy (i.e., new developments in research and development of technology, marketing and production, and increased levels of labor migration.) Other important factors are increasing political and economic instabilities in the source countries, manifested in ethnic and religious conflicts, and the debilitating effects of neo-liberal economic policies. (p. 346)
**Brain Drain versus Brain Gain**

The brain drain debate began decades ago and still provides a compelling argument against enrolling large numbers of international students from developing countries. However, it has been significantly challenged by suggestions of “brain gain” or “brain circulation.” These closely related theories argue that both the sending and receiving countries benefit from international student mobility. The theories contend that education should be viewed in a free trade construct and that free trade benefits everyone. As Florida (2007) explains:

> Open flows of people to and from the United States benefit all, increasing the economic opportunities open to foreign-born people, creating wealth in U.S. communities, and contributing to the much-needed economic development and cultural change in countries on both sides of the exchange. (p. 109)

Brain gain proponents argue that trade restrictions, such as setting quotas on the number of qualified international students allowed to enroll in a program, hurt both the academic program, which could have received more talented students, and the international students, who were limited in their educational options. These restrictions can harm students in three important ways. First, they can force qualified students from poor countries to remain in their home country and be limited to the minimal educational resources at their disposal. Second, they can limit students study options to less prestigious institutions that do not share this ethical concern. Third, students may not be able to study fields that are politically or socially sensitive in their home society. For example, an Iranian student wanting to study sexually transmitted diseases within a homosexual population would most likely have much more support and resources at an American university than an Iranian university.

Brain gain proponents also highlight that trade restrictions hurt not only students, but
society in general. This can be exemplified by the Jewish scientists forced to flee Nazi Germany and made astonishing accomplishments in the U.S, including Edward Teller (father of the hydrogen bomb), John von Neuman (co-creator of game theory), Leo Szilard (conceiver of the nuclear chain reaction), and Albert Einstein (Chua, 2009). These scientists were a brain drain on Nazi Germany (not that Nazi Germany was interested in supporting them), but their academic accomplishments were considered a brain gain not only to the U.S., but the entire world.

The reasons students pursue international study vary but can be divided into two categories: push and pull. Push factors exist in the student’s home country and encourage the student to leave the country for education, such as peer pressure from family and friends, lack of educational opportunity in the home country, or low perceived value of an education available in the home country. Pull factors are those that attract the student to the host university and/or country, such as scholarship assistance, political and cultural ties between the two countries, and marketing of host country universities in the home country (Pimpa, 2004). These categories are closely related making it difficult to distinguish between push and pull factors. For example, imagine that a brilliant student wants to study advanced fields of Aerospace Engineering. She knows that such academic programs either do not exist in her home country, or those that do exist are of marginal quality, and therefore joins a prestigious program at an American university that offers full scholarships to any students able to gain admission. It is difficult to distinguish between the pull factors, such as the university’s reputation and scholarship opportunities that are available to all, and the push factors, such as such academic programs lacking or only existing of marginal quality in her home country. For example, did push factors, such as lack of opportunity, cause pull factors, such as attraction to a foreign university?

Though people are often quick to blame brain drain on the glamour of academic
programs and institutions in the developed world, it must also be admitted that poor leadership and prioritization in many - but not all - developing countries have caused their educational plights. Until nations are willing and able to invest the needed resources to improve their academic institutions, they will continue to see their students leave for other countries (Altbach, 2006). These students don’t simply vanish from their home countries; their governments and academic institutions are aware of the exodus. Acknowledging this reality can cause governments, business leaders, and educational institutions to change policies and procedures in order to retain their students. Zakaria (2008) provides an interesting summary of such a situation:

The term often used to describe Indians leaving their home country is “brain drain”. But it has been more like brain gain, for both sides. Indians abroad have played a crucial role in opening up the mother country. They return to India with money, investment ideas, global standards, and, most important, a sense that Indians can achieve anything. An Indian parliamentarian once famously asked the then prime minister Indira Gandhi, “Why is it that Indians seem to succeed everywhere except in their own country?” Stories of Indians scaling the highest peaks in America have generated pride and emulation in India. Americans, for their part, have more readily embraced India because they have had a positive experience with Indians in America. (p. 151)

There is still no clear winner in the brain drain versus brain gain debate (Pellegrino, 2001; Skeldon, 2008). The brain gain debate has earned substantial momentum, but the concerns of brain drain grow stronger as the divide between rich and poor nations continues to grow. Due to a variety of factors, such as a lack of universal data, substantial variations within the populations that migrate, an increasingly integrated world economy, and continually changing national and international politics, this debate will most likely continue for years to come. We cannot
overlook, however, that even if one side is declared a winner of a lengthy academic debate, it is unlikely to significantly impact the movement of people across borders. Students will continue to leave for foreign universities and skilled laborers will continue to leave for better jobs until their local realities change. What is needed, however, is continued study of the causes and effects of such migration to assist policy makers in receiving countries to both understand the true impacts of their actions and find ways to ensure the most “gain” is being achieved for all parties involved.

*International Enrollment May Limit Space for U.S. Students*

The goal of aggressive international recruitment is to enroll more students. This can cause an obvious problem - increasing international student enrollment can reduce the number of classroom seats available to American students. This has not been a major issue to date because most universities have low international enrollment – often less than a few percentage points. International students also tend to be graduate students concentrated in a handful of disciplines where there seems to be relatively little interest from American students. However, as universities change their recruitment practices and enroll a growing number of international students, it is possible that international students and American students may compete for limited admission spots. Strategic enrollment growth, however, could help minimize such competition by targeting international and domestic enrollments in different programs and expanding on-line course/degree offerings to all students. Additionally, the shrinking state and regional populations discussed previously may also result in fewer American students. Therefore some academic programs may simply have too few domestic students to warrant concerns over losing spots to international students.

Competition is both good and bad. It can harm American students by losing admission
spaces to international students. However, competition can also benefit American students. It can help motivate American students to work harder and earn better grades in order to gain admission to their desired program. Competitive admission policies can help universities increase their reputational rankings to attract top American students. This in turn helps the university attract not only the best and brightest talent from the world, but from the U.S.

Despite legitimate concerns such as those previously discussed, there seems to be strong support in many universities to increase international enrollment dramatically. University leaders who can balance key aspects of international enrollment, such as enrolling qualified, diverse, international students while providing an environment that encourages interaction and cross-cultural learning between its foreign and American students will be best served to maximize the benefits of increasing international enrollment. Universities that do not properly manage international enrollment are most at risk for experiencing its harmful effects.

Australia provides an important cautionary tale for universities hoping to replicate its enrollment success. As we have seen, Australia is touted as one of the most significant success stories in international student enrollment given its market share of students. However, the international education sector is in crisis as a combination of racial attacks against Indian students and government restrictions on immigration, fueled by an Australian public feeling overwhelmed by the international student boom, have damaged Australia as a global education destination. For example, the number of new international students enrolling in 2010 was 22 percent below the same time the previous year and new student enrollments from India had dropped by 80 percent (Marginson, 2011). American universities should not only hope to emulate Australia’s recruitment techniques; they should also learn from its mistakes.
The Agent Debate

As the years passed after the September 11 Terrorist Attacks, it became apparent that international enrollment declines could not solely be blamed on unfriendly visa processes; the processes improved but student enrollment did not increase significantly. After all, many U.S. allies in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, such as Australia and the U.K., continued to see strong international enrollment increases during this time (Leventhal, 2008). Additionally, the U.S. State Department tripled its international student recruitment and advising budget from $3.5 million in 2001-2002 to $10.67 million in 2006-2007, including enhancing services provided by EducationUSA offices, a network of over 400 offices that helps recruit international students to the U.S. Despite these efforts, international enrollment gains remained unimpressive. As Michael Basile, director of Murray State University’s Institute for International Studies, clearly states, “we had to do some institutional soul searching because we couldn’t keep blaming it [international enrollment declines] on 9/11 and all the other measures taken by the government.” he said. “It was really us” (McMurtrie, 2008a). This “soul searching” resulted in a number of universities embracing proactive, and controversial, methods to recruit international students.

Considerable attention has been paid to these increased recruitment practices, especially whether universities should work with agents to recruit students. The “agent debate” continues to be one of the most prominent issues in international education. A comprehensive overview of this debate is important to this study as it provides an important level of understanding for readers to interpret the accompanying qualitative and quantitative data. This is a study of the experiences and insight of Chinese students on American campuses; it is not a study of the role of agents in the admissions process. However, the recruitment avenues that lead students to a
particular institution can have a profound impact on their experiences. For example, many college students question their college choice decision shortly after they enroll at their institution. These feelings often pass as students settle into campus life. However, some international students may experience not only the typical bout of “buyer’s remorse” after enrolling but also feel that they had been intentionally misled during the recruitment process. Such feelings may significantly impact their experience at a university and will be reflected in the quantitative and qualitative data that they provide. Chinese students are also amongst the largest users of agents. Therefore the experience that Chinese students had with agents, particularly in ways that agents helped influence student expectations of the university, are important aspects to consider in collecting and analyzing the data for this study.

Traditional recruitment methods include participating in college fairs held throughout the world, developing relationships with key international high schools and universities, leveraging international alumni networks to promote the university, and working with EducationUSA centers. However, the high cost and slow return on investment from these efforts has prompted many universities to move past traditional approaches and more commonly joining forces with the private sector to recruit international students with the help of educational agents. Many such efforts are new to U.S. universities but have been underway in Australian and British universities for well over a decade (Fischer, 2010; Marklein, 2011).

*EducationUSA versus Agents*

There are over 400 EducationUSA centers funded by the State Department to provide unbiased, free advice to international students interested in studying in the U.S. (http://www.educationusa.state.gov/, retrieved April 4, 2012). The centers commonly run resource libraries that include university brochures and offer computer and internet access to
their students. Counselors are often American, or at least American educated, and use their insights on American education to assist prospective students. Many U.S. universities have worked with EducationUSA centers for years, including visiting the centers on recruitment trips, participating in their college fairs, and hosting EducationUSA counselors on their campus for training.

EducationUSA centers do not dominate the student advising market. Their chief competition is from educational agents who provide many of the same services to potential students. Until recently, most U.S. universities did not work with agents (at least publically) who often are paid a fee by their students and/or a fee by their partner universities. However, as competition for international students has continued to intensify, a growing number of universities have begun working with agents – and a firestorm of debate has quickly followed. As Fischer (2009a) explains:

The use of paid recruiting agents is one of the most controversial issues in international education today. Universities in Australia, Britain, and elsewhere commonly use overseas recruiters to attract foreign students, but the practice is not widespread among American institutions. Critics worry that agents may take advantage of students. But some U.S. educators argue that the only way in which American colleges can compete globally for students is to use agents, and that it is crucial to regulate this increasingly complex field, as other countries have done. (A24)

Overview of Agents

“Agents” range from individuals working out of their apartments to multinational corporations with hundreds of employees operating throughout dozens of countries (De Luca, 2008). Despite their size, agents typically offer similar services to students, including counseling
students on potential universities, assisting with application and enrollment processes, preparing for the visa interview, and arranging pre-departure sessions to prepare students for life in their new country (Pimpa, 2004). Despite common misperceptions, agencies typically represent a range of universities from a variety of countries, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and United Kingdom, and the United States.

Agencies have three compensation models: the agent collects revenue solely through student fees (no compensation from the university), the agent collects revenue solely from the university (no compensation from the student), or the agency collects fees from both the student and the university. The exact number of agencies is unknown, but it is assumed that there are thousands of agents throughout the world, with the largest concentration in Asia, particularly in China and India.

*Australia’s History of Agent Use*

Australian universities have the longest history with agents and are seen as the industry leader in their ability to balance the needs of university enrollment, agent desires for placement and compensation, and student interests. Krasocki authored a 2002 report for the British Council entitled “Education UK: Developing the U.K.’s International Education Agent Network” to assist in its development of a U.K. agent network. The report provides helpful insight and understanding related to how agents operate, which countries use agents, and efforts that can be taken to standardize the agent industry. Krasocki’s description of the importance of agents for Australian, British, and American universities is quite telling:

The use of agents by Australian institutions is almost universal. . . Not surprisingly therefore, Australia is perceived as the clear leader in its effective use of agents, with UK and the US in a distant second and third place respectively. This view is borne out by
recent research into international undergraduate students studying in the UK, Australia and the USA. This found that 60% of students studying in Australia had used the services of agents, but only 15% of the students studying in the UK and 10% of those in the US had done so. Importantly, the same research revealed that 80% of students who had used agents found them useful. (2002, Appendix III, p. 3)

Australia’s initial relationship with agents was not perfect. As incidents of abuse by agencies arose, the Australian government responded by assigning quality standards to recruitment practices and holding universities legally accountable to meet those standard, which forced universities to closely monitor their agent network. This resulted in the Education Services for Overseas Students Act of 2000 (ESOS Act) that provides consumer protection for students, guards the academic reputation of Australian universities, and calls for strict penalties against university officials taking unscrupulous efforts to enroll international students, particularly in regard to universities working with unethical agents. The ESOS Act also created the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (National Code) which holds universities responsible for monitoring their agents. The National Code has fifteen standards addressing issues ranging from marketing to course credit. Standard four deals specifically with the manner in which Australian universities must work with educational agents. ESOS criminal penalties can be severe and clearly place the responsibility of managing agent actions on the university. For example, the maximum penalty is for the university “Chancellor” (the equivalent of a U.S. university president) to be imprisoned for two years (Leventhal, 2008). These efforts have helped protect students and universities in Australia. As we shall see, however, there continues to be cases of abuse and many concerns over Australian universities’ close relationships with agents.
Standards Begin to Emerge for American Universities and Their Agents

Three commonly referenced reasons American universities did not work with agents (or worked with agents secretly), are: 1) a widely held view that all agents are unethical and exploit students, 2) the National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC), the professional organization that oversees the admissions industry, bans universities compensating agents (or counselors) for the recruitment of students to a university, and 3) the misconception that working with agencies is illegal.

As international recruitment became a growing priority universities reexamined the general anti-agent stance and began working with agents (Dessoff, 2009). Universities found that not all agents were unethical but what was lacking was an industry standard distinguishing good agents from the unscrupulous. This void has attempted to be filled by a variety of organizations including ICEF, a private organization that provides popular workshops throughout the world that introduce universities to ICEF-screened agents, and the American International Recruitment Council (AIRC) a non-profit, professional organization devoted to “certifying” agents who meet certain qualification “standards.” The momentum towards agents is simply remarkable:

In higher education, change rarely happens quickly. Not so when it comes to hiring overseas agencies – paid by the college in the form of per-student commissions – to recruit international students. Two years ago the topic was taboo, and few colleges would publicly admit to the practice, which is illegal under U.S. law when it comes to recruiting American students. Today, while ethical qualms persist, and the debate over the payment of per-student commissions still simmers, it’s nonetheless remarkable the number of colleges that have embraced the recruitment strategy – and also that are now willing to at least consider it (Redden, 2010a).
AIRC has received the most significant media attention in the agent-debate, particularly for its certification process of agents (Baty, 2009; Dessoff, 2009; Gill, 2008; McMurtrie, 2008b; Morgan, 2010; Redden, 2009a). Modeled from academic accreditation procedures, the agent certification process includes agencies submitting a detailed self-evaluation, undergoing a thorough third-party background check of the organization and its primary leadership members, and receiving a site visit from an AIRC-certified external reviewer.

**NACAC’s Stance on Agents**

Though NACAC’s Statement of Principles of Good Practice (SPGP) does not allow members to “offer or accept any reward or remuneration from a secondary school, college, university, agency, or organization for placement or recruitment of students” (Section 1.A.3) and NACAC has provided statements disbarring the use of agents, NACAC has not penalized universities that openly work with agents (Redden, 2010c). However, NACAC proposed changing its SPGP to its membership in the spring of 2011 that would have banned universities from compensating agents on a “per head” basis. Universities could still work with agents but not compensate them directly for each student that they sent to the university. This proposed ban received substantial media attention with strong support and animosity from many institutions. Given the conflicting views on the policy, NACAC assembled a committee to explore the agent debate from all sides. The committee will have two years to complete its work and NACAC will not implement any sanctions against universities for compensating agents during this time (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2011; Fisher, 2011; Fisher and Hoover, 2011; Hoover, 2011; Jaschik, 2011; Jaschik & Kiley, 2011; Leventhal, 2011; Reisberg & Altbach, 2011; Scott, 2011).

**Legal Issues**

The third major impediment to American universities working with agents came in the
legal language of Title IV of the Higher Education Act (HEA). This legislation is of critical importance to universities because universities must abide by it to be eligible for federal funds, such as Stafford Loans and Pell Grants. University officials were drawn to the act’s wording that clearly prohibits universities from paying fees in order to receive students, as Title IV of the HEA states “[the university] will not provide any commission, bonus, or other incentive payment based directly or indirectly upon success in securing enrollments or financial aid to any person or entity engaged in any student recruiting or admission activities or in making decisions regarding the awarding of title IV, HEA program funds.” University officials concluded that paying such fees to recruit any kind of student is illegal. However, the next few sentences of this clause illustrate that the act clearly distinguishes between international and American students, “except that this limitation [of universities providing incentives in exchange for enrollments] does not apply to the recruitment of foreign students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive title IV, HEA program funds” (Leventhal, 2008).

The U.S. move towards agents has not gone unnoticed by its competitors; many other nations are threatened by the new efforts of American universities. The recruitment landscape has changed significantly. A 2008 article in the The Economist, entitled “The Americans Are Coming” sounded the alarm bells that U.S. universities are beginning to embrace agents. This awakened America threatens its foreign competitors who have enjoyed a monopoly on the agent industry. Dr. Mitch Leventhal, perhaps the most prominent U.S. leader in promoting agent-based recruitment, summarizes their concern: “Their hair is on fire,” he says. “They’re saying, ‘Oh my God, the Americans have finally figured it out, they’re going to kill us’” (Economist, 2009).
Abhorrence of Agents

Not everyone has embraced the U.S. agent movement. Perhaps the most influential critics against the use of agents are the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) and NACAC, EducationUSA in conjunction with the Institute for International Education (IIE), and Dr. Philip Altbach, an influential voice in international higher education.

The most commonly cited concern is the influence that financial compensation can have over guidance provided by an agent. The general belief is that agents are headhunters who will send their students to the highest bidder rather than helping students find the university that best fits their needs, desires, and interests.

AACRAO and NACAC

The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers’ (AACRAO) website explains that it is “a nonprofit, voluntary, professional association of more than 11,000 higher education admissions and registration professionals who represent more than 2,600 institutions and agencies in the United States and in 40 countries around the world” (retrieved from http://www.aacrao.org/About-AACRAO.aspx#.T3sb_tUzCSo, April 4, 2012). Despite universities fears of NACAC sanctions for working with agents, AACRAO was the early leader in voicing opposition to the agent movement (Lewin, 2008; Redden, 2009b) and on March 12, 2010 circulated a proposed version of its updated Professional Practices and Ethical Standards that included the new requirement that AACRAO member institutions shall, “avoid practices in the recruitment and enrollment of international students that would not be ethical or legal in the recruitment or enrollment of domestic students.” Just as occurred with NACAC two years later, AACROA received significant backlash from its university members and was forced
not to include the provision in its Professional Practices and Ethical Standards (Redden, 2010b). However, AACROA still remains one of the most outspoken critics of agents.

*EducationUSA and IIE*

As mentioned previously, there are over 400 EducationUSA centers around the world to assist international students interested in studying in the United States. The EducationUSA centers are funded by the U.S. State Department. IIE is most well-known for its annual “Open Doors” report that was previously discussed as well as offering insight to international education issues.

EducationUSA and IIE have been amongst the most outspoken organizations against the use of agents (Fischer, 2009a; Goodman, 2008). Though EducationUSA centers cannot stop universities from working with agents, they are able to prevent agents from entering their offices and participating in their recruitment fairs.

*Dr. Philip Altbach*

Dr. Philip Altbach is the Monan University Professor and director of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College. He is a prolific author on international and comparative education. Though he has called for the U.S. government and U.S. universities to increase recruitment efforts for international students (Altbach & Basset, 2004; Naidoo, 2007), he has been a staunch critic of U.S. universities working with agents (Altbach, 2010; 2011). However, he grudgingly admits that there is a place for agents in the international recruitment industry: “In a globalized world, where some people need a lot of guidance to get here, there may be a legitimate place for responsible middlemen, although I really hate it” (Lewin, 2008). His major concern is that agents will be blinded by payments and will not work in the best interest of their students. He also believes that agencies are inherently untrustworthy and that
professional organizations, such as AIRC, are incapable of managing the agency industry. He argues that agencies should be “banned” and universities should work with EducationUSA or directly with students (Altbach, 2011).

*The Debate Continues*

The agent debate continues with no end in the foreseeable future. A recent Bloomberg article entitled “China Rush to U.S. Colleges Reveals Predatory Fees for Recruits” provides a compelling example of differences of opinion. The article details questionable services agents provide Chinese students, such as agents writing students’ essays and charging students extra fees if they receive a university scholarship. Those in the anti-agent camp could point to such services as reasons that universities should not work with agents who have questionable ethical standards. However, pro-agent advocates could also point to the same article and argue that it in fact supports the role of commission-based agents rather than the preferred model of students paying agents directly because universities that have commission-based relationships can use those relationships to enforce industry standards. It appears that the agent debate will continue to wage on for some time and will receive significant media attention.

*Philosophical and Political Views*

*A Nation of Immigrants*

The U.S. has long considered itself a “nation of immigrants” because the vast majority of its population did not originate here as “more than 95 percent of Americans today descend from someone who crossed an ocean to get here” (Chua, 2009, p. 234). Not only has the U.S. accepted
immigrants; it has proactively recruited them in order to fill needs the current population could not meet. For example, when the newly established U.S. had a severe shortage of skilled workers, it began actively recruiting migrant workers to help build the American economy. Towns advertised in British newspapers promising free land to immigrants willing to build and operate a mill and industries hired recruiting agents to recruit skilled laborers from Europe. For example, in 1784 Connecticut’s Wardsworth and Colt persuaded one hundred English textile workers to move to Hartford (Chua, 2009).

America certainly has not been perfect at practicing tolerance and integrating its foreigners (or its Native Americans) into American society, but it has been able to provide enough tolerance to attract immigrants from around the world. This societal strength brought practical advantages as America has had tremendous success in importing the skilled workers and students needed to build its economy and culture:

This much is clear: Immigration is the lifeblood of the creative economy. The key to America’s success has been the same thing all along: openness to new ideas and new people from all over the world. Our ability to take in immigrants and utilize their talents has had a huge impact on creativity and American economic growth from the dawn of the Industrial Revolution to the high-tech growth engine of Silicon Valley. And just as they shaped the American Dream of the twentieth century, so will immigrants play an ever-increasing part in the new dream of the twenty-first. (Florida, 2007, p. 86)

Admittedly, America’s openness to immigrants and its questionable recruitment practices for foreign laborers should not be over-glorified. Nonetheless, the combination of America’s willingness to proactively recruit the foreign people needed to fill key labor shortages and ability to provide an attractive environment to immigrant communities helps the U.S. maintain its place
as the top destination for international students.

*International Education and Economic Development*

The economic impact of international students goes beyond collecting tuition payments as international students have a significant economic impact on the local, regional, and national levels. As previously stated, the estimated financial impact of international students studying in the U.S. from 2010-2011 was over $21 billion dollars (Chow & Bhandari, 2011). This impact is felt on all levels: international students typically pay higher tuition than their American counterparts subsidizing university budgets and tuition rates of domestic students, international students typically do not receive state assistance thereby conserving state budgets, and international students are also ineligible for federal financial assistance thereby saving federal funds. Additionally, international students buy clothes, purchase groceries, and pay rent just like other students who help their local economy (Lewin, 2009). Therefore, recruiting international students is not only in the interest of a university budget but also in the interest of the local, regional, and national economies as well.

International students also provide significant intangible assets. Their discoveries can benefit the U.S. just as they can benefit other countries. Their mere presence can help a university transform from a primarily local entity to an international destination for education allowing local students to gain cross-cultural knowledge and experiences that prepare them to enter the global economy. The connections between the students and universities can even foster business partnerships as alumni may look to reinvest in the city in which they studied. Of course, hosting a large international population can also provide challenges, such as the human and financial resources need to provide support courses (such as ESL courses and cultural adjustment courses) to international students, cultural training for a variety of staff (such as academic
advisors and resident hall advisors), and encouraging the current faculty and student population to provide a welcoming environment for international students that will allow cross-cultural learning to occur. Despite these issues, universities are increasing looking to expand their international, fee paying student population.

These important characteristics are not lost on state leaders. The State of Ohio, for example, established aggressive international enrollment targets in its 2008 – 2017 Strategic Plan for Higher Education that would increase the number of international students enrolled in Ohio institutions from 13,538 annually to 35,134 annually, where they would comprise five percent of Ohio’s higher education enrollment (Fingerhut, 2008).

The importance of international education is felt in virtually all economic sectors:

As world economies become increasingly interconnected, the international skills needed to operate on a global scale have become increasingly important. Globally oriented firms seek internationally-competent workers who speak foreign languages and have the intercultural skills needed to successfully interact with international partners. Governments as well as individuals are looking to higher education to broaden students’ horizons and help them to better understand the world’s languages, cultures, and business methods. (OECD, 2010, p. 310)

Education’s important connection to development has been understood for decades in many countries. What is relatively new, however, is that nations are focusing specific efforts on international education, including attracting top students, scholars, and faculty from anywhere in the world. For example, several Asian governments, such as China, Korea, and Singapore that are traditionally major student sending countries are investing heavily in their universities to spur economic development. They are hoping to replicate the American economic boom experienced
in the post World War II era when the U.S. was able to attract top minds from throughout the world and dramatically increased higher education opportunities for American students, such as creating the GI Bill (Hvistendahl, 2009).

**International Enrollment and Immigration Policy**

The active recruitment of international students can serve as an extension of a country’s immigration policy. Several governments, such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, have enacted immigration policies that encourage international students to study in their countries and then gain permanent residency or citizenship quickly upon graduation. Such immigration policies are significant factors for enrolling international students (OECD, 2010). The U.S. does not view student recruitment in this manner. If it did, the role of international student recruitment would be seen as a critical component of the nation’s immigration policy and would serve the nation’s strategic interests by recruiting the best and brightest students from throughout the world into specific academic fields where the U.S. is underserved. This happens to a limited extent now, but it is left to the discretion of individual American universities rather than a comprehensive national plan.

**Education and Competition in the “Flat World”**

Thomas Friedman’s *The World Is Flat* argues that several factors, such as the invention of the personal computer, the prevalence of the internet, and the rise of outsourcing of American jobs to foreign countries, have made the world incredibly, and irreversibly, interconnected. This interconnectedness has empowered technology to “flatten” the globe as people can become fully integrated into a foreign society from almost anywhere in the world. This flat world allows for never-before-imagined interconnectivity allowing individuals to collaborate quickly, easily, and inexpensively across borders. The flat world also causes tremendous competition, particularly in
the development of ideas, as individuals are increasingly empowered to innovate with little financial resources, such as by communicating virtually for free on services such as Skype, avoid printing and shipping costs by electronically sending documents and accessing free open source software. These advantages reduce many of the financial barriers that previously prevented individuals from pursuing personal and professional interests.

Education is a critical component in the flat world because educated citizens are most prepared to engage in such a world. However, the education needed to contribute in the 21st century economy is quite different than the education needed to contribute to the 20th century economy. In order for the U.S. to maintain its role as the economic and political leader of the 21st century, it will need to dramatically change its educational approaches. Friedman (2007) provides countless insights into the connection between education, development, and international education. He is deeply concerned about how all these factors will impact the U.S., especially if America is unable to keep pace with its competition:

Essentially, before the world started getting flattened, the United States was an island – an island of innovation and safety and growing incomes. And therefore it became a magnet for the world’s capital and the world’s talent. When your currency is the world’s currency and every brain wants to come over and work in your backyard, you start to take things for granted. (p. 357)

It is important to stress the importance of competition. This is not simply a competition for talent between the developed world and the developing world. For many in the developing world, it is a competition for survival to overcome the extreme poverty that still engulfs their nation. It is also a race for respect. Those in the developing world want to meet their most basic needs, such as food, water, shelter, and healthcare but they also commonly want to see their
nation emerge as a world leader. As Friedman (2007) explains, they want to help make their countries great, often by upstaging the most powerful nations:

One cannot stress enough: Young Chinese, Indians, and Poles are not racing us to the bottom. They are racing us to the top. They do not want to work for us; they don’t even want to be us. They want to dominate us – in the sense that they want to be creating companies of the future, ones that people all over the world will admire and clamor to work for. They are in no way content with where they have come so far. (p. 365)

*Education as Foreign Policy*

If one attended a major international education conference, such as the NAFSA annual conference, one would most likely hear advocates of international education argue that international education, both in students studying abroad and in attracting foreign students to a nation, is that international education assists the nation’s public diplomacy efforts. (Additionally, a similar argument for federally funding international education is that it benefits the nation, in addition to individual universities.) This basic logic can be best described in a case study format.

*Case Study in Student Exchange*

An American student studying French in a Parisian university will gain not only the educational experience of being immersed in a French-language environment, but the student will also gain the invaluable experience of living in French culture. Though this experience may be as short as a few weeks, it is a life-changing experience that will forever stay with the American student. She may feel a life-long connection to the Parisian university, the town where she studied, or the friends that she made. The student will most likely share these positive experiences with friends and family upon her return to the U.S. and these acquaintances may also come to appreciate the foreign culture of a people they have never met. By serving as an
informal ambassador to France, not only has the student gained an increased appreciation for French culture but so have her friends and family and those collective experiences can help improve relations between the two countries.

The French students will also benefit by having an American classmate. She can help them practice their English skills and better understand American culture. The French students can also learn more about their own culture and language by serving as ambassadors to the visiting student. As the French students learn more about the American student, they may realize that many of their preexisting assumptions of the student, and her culture, are not true. They will also share their experiences with their friends and family, which can help the French acquaintances gain a new respect for the American student and her home country.

This simplistic case study is highly flawed as it makes large generalizations about students’ experiences abroad and their ability to share those experiences with others. However, this line of logic is commonly applied to connect international student enrollment and foreign policy. In that scenario, international students come to the U.S., receive not only an excellent education, but also experience life in a free, modern society, and share those experiences at home, which can help promote American values and culture (and interest) in their home country. American students will also benefit from their interaction with the foreign students and share those experiences with their communities. Though simplistic, it is has been the basic logic supporting cultural exchange for decades (Bevis & Lucas, 2007). In fact, several current Middle Eastern governments, such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia, governments are using this logic to enact large scholarship programs that are currently funding thousands of students to study in the U.S. Their hope is that not only will these students receive the valuable education and training needed to modernize their economy, but that their experiences with American students will benefit both
the foreign and American student.

Despite this optimism, international education can also have negative consequence. For example, the American student described in the case study could have negative social experiences with her French classmates making her feel unwelcome and alienated resulting in her having a poor experience in France and sharing these negative experiences with her friends and family. Similarly, the American student may act in ways that negatively affect her French classmates, such as being socially or religiously intolerant or displaying offensive ethnocentrism, that result in the classmates generalizing negative attitudes towards all Americans, and sharing those experiences with their family and friends.

There is growing evidence that international education does not always have the positive educational and cultural impacts that are assumed. Two extreme cases are detailed in the 9/11 Commission Report and its discussion of al Qaeda. Sayyid Qutb was sent by the Egyptian government to study in the U.S. in the 1940s and returned with a deep-seeded hatred of American and Western culture and history. He became a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and was executed in 1966 on charges of attempting to overthrow the Egyptian government (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004). His works were commonly cited by Osama Bin Ladin and provided the philosophical framework of the al Qaeda terrorist network. Another infamous example is Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM), the principal architect of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. KSM was raised in Kuwait but earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering in 1986 in the U.S. KSM was able to find, train, and support the pilots needed to carry out his “planes operation” on September 11, 2001; three of the four pilots entered the U.S. on student visas to receive flight training and the forth was already studying in the U.S.
Education as Power

Joseph Nye argues that a nation’s power has two essential components: hard power and soft power. Power is “the ability to get the outcomes one wants” (2004, p. 1). Hard power is the traditional definition of a nation’s power, such as its economic or military strength that it can use to get what it wants. Nye defines soft power as, “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments” (p. x.). Though Nye is credited with the term “soft power,” he commonly refers to “smart power,” which is a nation’s strategic use of its hard and soft power resources. These are not new concepts. For example, Elizabeth Dickinson details a history of smart power that begins with Carl von Clausewitz’s 1832 work *On War* that “distinguishes two necessary ways to defeat an enemy: using ‘moral qualities and effects’ [soft power] and the ‘whole mass of military force’ [hard power]” (Dickinson, 2010).

The key element to soft power is that nation B does what nation A wants because nation B wants to do so - not because nation B feels threatened or is coerced. Nye believes that world powers in the 21st century should focus much more on developing their soft power resources rather than their traditional hard power arsenals. Traditionally strong nations, like the U.S., have often relied too heavily on their hard power. It is time for them to increase their soft power capabilities so that they can more effectively, and frequently, engage in smart power.

The enrollment of Chinese students in American universities provides an interesting opportunity to explore the role international education can play in creating soft power. The Chinese government is well known for tightly controlling almost all aspects of Chinese culture and media. Tensions between China and the U.S. over matters such as trade, currency regulation, human rights, and the state of Taiwan are also well known. Not surprisingly, these tensions can play out publicly and it is rather common for U.S. politicians and media to decry the politics and
policies of China and for Chinese politicians and media to do the same against America. However, U.S. education could play an interesting role in its soft power diplomacy with China.

Chinese politicians are generally wealthy and able to ensure high living standards for themselves and their families. As Zakaria describes, “the Communist Party of China – the party of workers and peasants – is actually one of the most elite organizations in the world. It is composed of 3 million largely urban educated men and women, a group that is thoroughly unrepresentative of the vast peasant society that it leads” (2008, p. 99). These benefits include their children having the academic and financial resources to enroll in American universities, which is a symbol of high status in China. An interesting phenomenon, however, is that as Chinese politicians rail against the U.S. in public, their children may actually be enjoying their time in the U.S. - while the parents are paying tuition to the U.S. university. As the children call home and tell their parents about their studies, social activities, and campus involvement, it may be quite clear to the parents that the U.S. is nothing like the image that they have been projecting. This issue could be exacerbated when tens of thousands of Chinese students graduate from American universities and return home to share their American experiences, and perhaps changed world view, with their friends, family, and co-workers.

Interestingly, the American government has not recognized its tremendous surplus of soft power in this case. Though President Obama has called for doubling the number of American students studying abroad in China by 2014 (Fisher, 2011a), no related target has been set for enrolling Chinese students in U.S. institutions. Therefore, any soft power gained from the experiences of Chinese students studying in the U.S. will be due to individual university efforts rather than strategic national efforts.
Americans Need to Understand the World in which They Live

The U.S. is the world’s only superpower in an increasingly flat world as it dominates the world militarily, politically, and economically, including serving as a center of global trade with American firms having significant foreign operations and foreign firms having significant operations in the U.S. In order to keep its dominant place in the world, American students not only need to acquire the academic skills to compete with students being in other countries, but they also need to learn the cross-cultural communication skills needed to interact in an increasing global economy. Correspondingly, the U.S. government has incredibly active foreign efforts, ranging from administrating the Peace Corps program to managing its military and intelligence needs. The U.S. government needs American employees who understand how the world works and how to work with people throughout the world.

Interestingly, despite such world dominance, Americans tend have a more domestic view as less than two percent of college students participate in study abroad programs (Bhandari & Chow, 2009) and few Americans speak a foreign language. This is a national security concern because the U.S. education system is not producing globally competent citizens that the U.S. will need to maintain its political and economic roles in the world. Jess T. Ford, Director of International Affairs and Trade at the Department of State, testified to this effect. Though his report did not comment on the state of U.S. higher education, it did illustrate the national security concerns of not having enough staff fluent in “supercritical” and “critical” languages:

[Department of] State has defined its need for staff proficient in some languages as “supercritical” or “critical,” based on criteria such as the difficulty of the language and the number of language-designated positions in that language, such as Arabic and Chinese, remain at 39 percent, despite efforts to recruit individuals with proficiency in
these languages. In addition, more than half of the 739 Foreign Service specialists – staff who perform security, technical, and other support functions – in language-designated positions do not meet the requirements. (Ford, 2009)

Enrolling international students from these key countries, which is already occurring to a great extent as China is the largest and Saudi Arabia is the sixth largest country for sending students to the U.S. (Chow & Bhandari, 2011), can help globalize university classrooms and encourage American students to study foreign languages and cultures.

The global lessons that are taught in U.S. institutions may also have unnoticed pro-American biases. Such biases negatively impact the education that Americans receive. Enrolling international students in American classrooms can help change this as the international students will bring their cultural experiences and understandings to the classroom and could provide compelling insight resulting in students (and perhaps faculty as well) rethinking many common historical or political beliefs. Zakaria provides an excellent example of this:

In many countries outside the Western world, there is a pent-up frustration with having had to accept an entirely Western or American narrative of world history – one in which they either are miscast or remain bit players. Russians have long chaffed at the standard narrative about World War II, in which Britain and the United States heroically defeat the forces of fascist Germany and Japan. . . In fact, the eastern front was the central arena of World War II. It involved more land combat than all other theaters of the war put together and resulted in thirty million deaths. It was where three-quarters of all German forces fought and where Germany incurred 70 percent of its casualties. The European front was in many ways a sideshow, but in the West it is treated as the main event. (2008, p. 34)
Following this example, if Russian students were class participants, they could address such issues in class discussions and assignments which could help educate students (and perhaps faculty) as to the vital role that Russia played in World War II and challenge their classmates to rethink their understanding of Russian people, American history, or current international affairs. This follows a key belief of multicultural education theorists (which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two); diverse classrooms improve the education experience of all students.

One complication in this case, however, is that it requires the Russian students to address such issues in class; if they sit quietly and go along with the lesson plan, their important role in the classroom is not being realized. Therefore, a key concern for this study is not how to enroll more international students but rather how to encourage the international students, particularly Chinese students, to actively participate in the campus culture. If international students simply segregate and sit quietly in class discussions, they are not receiving, or helping to provide, a truly global education.

Refocusing Attention on Students

The preceding pages attest that the field of international recruitment and enrollment has received substantial attention over the past few years. However, little attention has been devoted to the experiences of degree-seeking international students after they enroll on American campuses. This is beginning to change as articles are appearing on the subject. However, these articles are mainly snapshots of negative experiences of Chinese undergraduate students upon arrival as well as the challenges that they often bring to American universities, particularly in regard to weak English language skills, unfamiliarity with university administration, and
significant cultural differences from their American students. The articles often underplay the advantages that Chinese students, and international students in general, bring to American universities and American students.

These issues are exacerbated by the sheer upward velocity of Chinese enrollment in the U.S.; China is now the largest student-sending country to the U.S. and the Chinese undergraduate population in American universities has tripled in just three years (Bartlett and Fischer, 2011). In the following chapters, this dissertation will delve deeper into issues faced by Chinese students in American colleges and identify mechanisms that universities can implement to encourage their participation in campus culture, thereby improving not only their academic experiences, but that of the entire campus community.
Chapter Two
Theoretical Grounding

The previous chapter provided an overview of many of the practical issues surrounding international student enrollment in American colleges and universities. Many practical issues related to meeting the needs of international students will be addressed in upcoming chapters as well. It is appropriate to devote this chapter to providing a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundation of this dissertation.

This theoretical foundation is composed of three primary components: first, the legacy of Edward Said and his seminal work, Orientalism, in challenging what we think we know about the “Others”; second, the important roles of postcolonial and globalization theories in helping to prevent campus internationalization efforts from resulting in cultural colonization; and third, exploring the modern university as a “contact zone.” This framework will guide the analysis and recommendations following in the study allowing universities to build communities that welcome international students, empower them to become engaged in classroom and campus culture, and provide bridges for meaningful bonds between foreign and American students to ensure that each is receiving a truly international educational experience.

The Legacy of Edward Said

Edward Said is widely considered one of the most important intellectuals of the late 20th century and contributed to a variety of academic disciplines, including literary theory, music, international relations, and sociology (Bayoumi & Rubin, 2000; Eid & Ghazal, 2008; Mitchel,
Said was a controversial scholar because of his commitment to speaking for the marginalized, directly addressing his critics and those with whom he disagreed, and combining his scholarship with national and international politics. His supporters praised his commitment to the subalterns and outspokenness against those he felt were oppressing others. Said’s critics felt that his personal and political views biased his work, that he made broad generalizations based off limited information, and that he overlooked historical facts that conflicted with his academic arguments, such focusing almost exclusively on American, British and French imperialism and essentially ignoring other powerful empires throughout history including the Roman and Ottoman empires. His controversial stances riled many critics; the popular press gave him titles such as “professor of terror” and “Arafat’s man in New York” while his life was also threatened many times. (Bayoumi & Rubin, 2000, p. xii)

Said’s commitment to humanizing the “Others” and epistemological challenges for Westerners to re-examine what they think they know about the rest of the world has direct implications to the field of international student enrollment. Enrolling international students in American universities can provide global education experiences without American students leaving campus; it can create the space for diverse groups to interact and break down stereotypes each has of the other. However, simply enrolling international students does not mean this type of education will occur. If managed improperly, international student enrollment can divide students and harm campus culture, such as American students being overwhelmed by the quick rise in Chinese student enrollment resulting in Chinese students feeling unwelcome. This study will help identify techniques that universities can utilize to ensure this interaction is occurring.

*The Making of Edward Said*

Due to Said’s public persona and acclaimed memoir, *Out of Place*, we are able to explore
the personal experiences that helped shape his intellectual beliefs. Many of Said’s personal experiences are common to international students, such as feeling different (or inferior) from American classmates, and those experiences can greatly impact international students as they did Said. Therefore, understanding Said’s personal experiences provides unique insight into common issues faced by many international students. Before discussing his major intellectual beliefs, it will be helpful to address a few life experiences that helped shape them.

*Out of Place*

Edward Said was born in November 1935 in his family’s home located in Talbiyah, a section of West Jerusalem composed mainly of Palestinian Christians. Edward’s father, Wadie, owned and operated the successful Standard Stationary Company, the Egyptian branch of the family-owned Palestine Education Company (Bayoumi & Rubin, 2000). The Saids were an affluent family who traveled frequently. Though they lived in Cairo and spent their summers in the Lebanese resort town of Dhour el-Shweir (or “Dhour”), they felt that West Jerusalem was home. Edward was aware of his family’s wealth though Wadie was careful not to spoil his children. He believed strongly in education and the arts and ensured Edward had the appropriate tools at his disposal, such as piano lessons, tickets to the opera, and tuition to prestigious schools.

Said began his memoir, *Out of Place*, shortly after being diagnosed with Leukemia. As he came to terms with fighting a terminal illness, he also felt it “important to leave behind a subjective account of the life I lived in the Arab world, where I was born and spent my formative years, and in the United States, where I went to school, college, and university.” (1999, p. ix.) There are two consistent themes relevant to this dissertation throughout his memoir: 1) the importance of identity – or lack thereof, and 2) the importance of social experiences occurring within the contact zones of the formal educational process.
Importance of Identity

Perhaps the most consistent theme throughout *Out of Place* is Said’s struggle with identity and inability to “fit in.” He had a unique cultural makeup: he was an American (by birth only; he had no real connection to America until studying in the U.S. late in his high school years), frequently living between Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, and later the United States, fluent in Arabic, English, and French, and a Christian in an overwhelmingly Muslim region of the world.

His father was born in Jerusalem but became an American citizen after living in the United States for a decade and fighting for the U.S. in France during World War I. He was beckoned home by an ailing mother in Jerusalem and returned a changed man, including a U.S. passport, conversion to Protestantism, a devoted business man, and a new a last name of Said (instead of Ibrahim). Said’s Lebanese mother, Hilda, was the daughter of a Baptist minister who studied briefly in the United States. This complicated identity took a toll on Said, “I have retained this unsettled sense of many identities – mostly in conflict with each other – all of my life, together with an acute memory of the despairing feeling I wish we could have been all-Arab, or all-European and American, or all-Orthodox Christian, or all-Muslim, or all-Egyptian, and so on.” (Said, 1999, p. 5)

Said struggled throughout the first fifty years of his life to come to terms with his “foolishly English” given name of Edward connected to the undoubtedly Arabic family name of Said. He later researched his family name and could not find where Said originated. Continually shaping his identity in changing social circles, Said would stress either his name of “Edward” or “Said” to gain social acceptance.

One of Said’s most consistent criticisms is of academics who assigned universal “truths” and traits to people based on their most simplistic identifiers, such as their religion, gender or
ethnicity. Said strongly believed that people have unique identities and that attempts to reduce people to simple classifications, such as “Arab,” “Christian,” or “American” not only dehumanize people, but also allowed for these classifications to be used by the powerful (those assigning the classifications) to rule over the classified. For example, those assigning these truths and traits often assigned positive attributes to their own societies, such as Europeans being inherently intelligent and hard working, and negative attributes to the “Others,” such as Muslims being inherently violent or Indians being inherently lazy. Said’s complicated identity, and struggles to come to terms with that identify, helps explain his concern with such general classifications of individuals.

Impact of Educational Experiences

*Out of Place* is essentially a narrative of Said’s personal development throughout is educational career, ranging from elementary school to doctoral studies. Said details his educational experiences throughout the book. He provides in great detail memories of his circle of friends, agitators, teachers, and principals in each educational setting from primary school through university. Said routinely felt as an outsider wishing to be accepted into the dominant culture. These trials and tribulations provide unique and compelling insight to the powerful experiences, and lasting effects, students experience throughout their schooling years.

Said believed that the prestigious, foreign-run, schools he attended were a tool by the imperialists (mainly British or American) to replace students’ native culture with foreign culture. They required students to identify with the culture of the school’s home country, not the country where the students originated or where the schools resided. Therefore, students spend time memorizing and idealizing foreign folklore, history, and culture rather than their own. As Said explains of his time at Gezira Preparatory School (GPS):
Their world made little sense to me, except that I admired their creation of the language they used, which I, a little Arab boy, was learning something about. A disproportionate amount of attention was lavished on the Battle of Hastings along with lengthy explanations of Anglos, Saxons, and Normans. Edward the Confessor has ever since remained in my mind as an elderly bearded gentlemen in a white gown lying flat on his back, perhaps as a consequence of having confessed to something he shouldn’t have done. There was never to be any perceived connection between him and me, despite our identical first name. (1999, p. 39)

There are many factors contributing to one’s social experiences in school, such as academic success, athletic prowess, or the ability to fit in with the “in crowd.” Said did admit to having limited athletic and social skills, which certainly contributed to feeling “out of place” throughout most of his life. Nonetheless, Said could not ignore how different he felt from his classmates and could not ignore what the schools were “really” teaching their students. (He addresses this in more depth in Culture and Imperialism). More of Said’s social alienation resulted in being, and feeling, different than his classmates, despite significant international diversity in the class. Many of the situations that helped reinforce his social isolation in elementary school decades ago are faced by international students in the U.S. today. A particular lunchroom experience at the Cairo School for American Children (CSAC) provides a compelling anecdote to Said’s isolation from his classmates, and how international students on American campuses may also feel isolated from their classmates. It should be noted that CSAC was an American school founded “to accommodate the children of American oil company, business, and diplomatic personnel in Cairo’s newly expanded expatriate community.” (Said, 1999, p. 81)
Though technically an American citizen, Said felt no connection to America or American culture; this is easily symbolized in his daily lunchroom encounters:

Then at lunch, as they unwrapped the same neatly cut white-bread sandwiches of peanut butter and jelly – neither of which I had ever tasted – and I my more interesting cheese and prosciutto in Shami bread, I fell back into doubt and shame that I, an American child, ate a different food, which no one ever asked to taste, nor asked me to explain. (1999, p. 81)

Despite education being used as an imperialistic tool, it can also be used to liberate students on personal, academic, and/or social grounds. Said illustrates this by comparing the British-run GPS with the American-run CSAC. He found the British education method draconian, boring, and concerned primarily with developing student allegiance to Britain. By contrast, the American education was more informal, engaging, challenging, and concerned with addressing the needs of the local community, such as by requiring Arabic courses though the school followed an English medium of instruction. These differences can be summarized by Said’s comparison of copybooks and workbooks:

At [American-run] CSAC we were all given “workbooks,” in marked contrast to the [British-run] GPS’s “copybooks,” which were lined exercise books as anonymous as bus tickets; workbooks had charming, chatty questions, illustrations, pictures to be appreciated, enjoyed, and, when relevant, filled in. To write in one of our GPS textbooks was a serious misdemeanor; in American workbooks, the idea was to write in them. (1999, p. 84)

The life experiences detailed in Out of Place shaped Said as both a person and an intellectual. They provide clear insight in to his core beliefs and concerns, such as a rejection of
Orientalism

Said’s *Orientalism* is most known for propelling postcolonial theory to prominence. However, Orientalism was not designed as a book on postcolonial theory. Rather, the “politicizing framework” (Rice, 2000, p. 235) of *Orientalism* has been adopted by postcolonial theorists. *Orientalism* is more accurately described as a “form of critical analysis” (Khalid, 2011, p.15) encouraging intellectuals to take a dramatic, critical view of their academic discipline and question the most basic assumptions that their fields are built upon. This commitment to critical reflection was adapted in many academic disciplines and remains one of Said’s most notable accomplishments. Critical reflection is a continual process and Said’s *Orientalism* has been – and continues to be – a source of encouragement and empowerment for such reflections in a variety of academic disciplines (Dirlik, 2001; Rastegar & Corr, 2008).

*Orientalism*, originally written in 1978 but expanded in its 25th anniversary edition in 2003, has been translated in over 35 languages and continues to have a significant impact on many academic disciplines, including art history, cultural studies, literary studies and political science. Though it focused mainly on Europe and American dominance of the Near and Far
East, it has been used by African Americans, Native Americans, and Latin Americans in their efforts to overcome their colonization and dehumanization experiences (Bayoumi & Rubin, 2000).

Orientalism and “Orientalism”

Orientalism, the book, is a critique of “orientalism,” the discipline. Orientalism is a somewhat dated term referring to the study of the East (the Orient) by the West (the Occident). This discipline is now referred to more commonly as “area studies” and the East is commonly divided into smaller groups, such as the Near East, North Africa, and South Asia. Said’s primary focus was the academic field of orientalism, which was dominated by Europeans throughout much of the 18th and 19th centuries. This is not surprising as Europe also dominated the world via its colonial experiences during this time. Said also devoted significant attention to the Middle East in his discussion of the Orient.

Orientalism was published in 1978, when the United States was a relatively young hyper-power with limited experiences as a colonizer. Additionally, Orientalism frequently uses terms, such as “orientals,” that were appropriate at the time, but are less so today. For consistency and clarity, this work will use such terms for contextual purposes when appropriate.

Said’s Orientalism is essentially an epistemological work criticizing what academic Occidentals “know” about the Orient, Orientals as well as the Occident, and Occidentals. He believes that the Orient is not a physical place, as much as a representation of a place by Westerns who have used flawed (and often racist) logic and techniques to create their representation. Westerns created the Orient to conveniently place the “Others” but also to identify Westerns as non-Orientals. This allowed Westerns to assign negative qualities to Orientals, such as “lazy” or “incompetent” and positive qualities to themselves, such as “hard
To Said, orientalism was a “discursive strategy that manufactures, and hence (mis)represents the Oriental Other.” (Eid & Ghazal, 2008, p. 111) In other words, the perceptions that most Westerners had about the Orient did not reflect the reality of the Orient. These perceptions were based largely out of literary, as well as musical and theatrical, portrayals of the East by the West that established Western superiority over the East. This created a cultural manifestation where Westerns felt superior to the East and vindicated in their colonial quests to “save” the Orientals through imperialism that actually exploited them. Many societies are still attempting to overcome this exploitation long after the colonizers have left.

Said felt the academy’s lack of critical analysis in their discipline, including their textual canon, and attempts to find universal truths inherent in different ethnic groups resulted in their perpetuation of stereotypes that homogenized and dehumanized the colonized. He described several works and commentaries, such as those by Arthur James Balfour, Napoleon, Chaucer and Shakespeare, and criticized influential travel writings by authors such as Sir Richard Francis Burton, Chateaubriand, and Edward William Lane. Said focused most of his effort on analyzing these works, which were mainly British or French, and explained their role in developing a Western culture that felt superior to the Oriental “Others” by dehumanizing them and reducing them to simple, universal stereotypes. As Scott explains:

Orientalism is not about the underrepresented or the excluded, but rather about the ways in which diverse cultures were homogenised and simplified in perpetuity by acts of representation that left their actual objects concealed. His concerns were, he always insisted, far more to do with Western ways of thinking and imagining the self than anything specifically to do with the recovery of the actual imperial object. (2008, p. 66)
Not surprisingly, Said received significant criticism for his work, particularly from those in the orientalism discipline. The most consistent criticism was that he was “cherry picking” selected works and took them to task for their generalizations and promotion of cultural superiority while ignoring previous critical works that identified many of the same accusations that he made (Scott, 2008). A second criticism is that he became guilty of labeling the “Others” that he was criticizing. By painting all Orientalists with the same brush, he failed to differentiate individuals in the field or account for the diversity of the discipline. Other critiques include his omission of great Oriental empires, particularly the Ottoman Empire that were guilty of many of the same tactics used by European empires to suppress those deemed to be culturally inferior (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2007). Some also argued that he did not adequately address the role that Orientals played in assisting Occidentals in creating the Orient. Despite these criticisms, his general theories and beliefs are regularly studied, admired and continue to influence many academic disciplines.

The “Others”

Concern for the “Others” is an important, consistent theme in Said’s works. This term reflects a construct in how those in the privileged society view those outside their society. These labels are often oversimplifications and negative stereotypes that do not adequately reflect the people that are being labeled. There is an important sense of power in labeling “Others” because the connotation is that they are different, and inferior, to the person assigning this label. The stereotypes assigned to “the Others” are often cited to support the more powerful society’s aspirations for subjecting “the Others” to their rule. As Said explains:

The construction of identity – for identity, whether of Orient or Occident, France or Britain, while obviously a repository of distinct collective experiences, is finally a
construction in my opinion – involves the construction of opposites and “others” whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from “us.” Each age and society re-creates its “Others.” Far from a static thing then, identity of self or of “other” is a much worked-over historical, social, intellectual, and political process that takes place as a contest involving individuals and institutions in all societies. Debates today about the Frenchness and Englishness in France and Britain respectively, or about Islam in countries like Egypt and Pakistan, are part of the same interpretive process, which involves the identities of different “others,” whether they be outsiders and refugees, or apostates and infidels. (2003, p. 332)

*Overview of Orientalism*

Said believed that Orientalism began to flourish shortly after Napoleon’s occupation of Egypt in 1798 and flourished for much of the 18th and 19th centuries. Not surprisingly, the rise of orientalism grew during rapid colonial expansion. This colonization was led primarily by Britain and France and led to constant conflict between the two nations. However, the nations did share certain aspects of colonization, including a shared ideology that the West was superior to the East and therefore justified colonizing it. This ideology coupled with great military power resulted in the intellectual power of the Euro-American states to create the Orient. In this view, the developed, superior Western powers were capable of, perhaps even having the moral responsibility for, colonizing the inferior Orientals. It was not enough that the West had the physical ability (such as through its military or economic resources) to control the East; it also need the moral justification to do so. Orientalism’s ability to provide popular and academic support for the inferiority of the “Others” helped provide that justification. As Eid and Ghazal explain:
The European imperialist project in the non-Western world was consolidated by European high culture with the collusion of rarefied intellectuals who have rationalized and concealed the use of moral power to achieve what Said has called an “ideological pacification.” Functioning in exact conjunction with hegemony, Western imperial discourse corroborated the pretence that, because of European supremacy, the Europeans were destined to rule and the inferior races to yield to that rule. In this spirit, Said’s attempt to bring to the fore the subscription to the imperial enterprise of intellectuals embracing universalistic, humanistic ideals and egalitarianism is both instructive and illuminating. According to Said, these intellectuals had broken faith with their very own ideas when they committed themselves to the belief that there was a hierarchy of peoples.

(2008, p. 116)

*American Imperialism*

Most of *Orientalism* addresses European, mainly British and French, colonization experiences. This is not surprising given their colonization quests in recent history. America’s experience with colonization has been much different. It has also been much newer; America is still a relatively young superpower. America is not a typical empire in the sense that it colonizes foreign lands in the traditional manner. Rather, America has devoted its imperial quests generally through trade and aid that ultimately serves the interests of the United States. Aside from formally annexing foreign lands, the United States has utilized many of the same techniques as traditional empires, such as active (overt or covert) military campaigns to install U.S.-friendly governments as well as promoting American culture and ideals through development programs (i.e. schools, medicine, etc.) and the global media.
One-Way Interaction In The Orient

Holding such “knowledge” resulted in individuals in the West supporting political, economic, and militaristic efforts by their home government to control the East. As previously mentioned, Said strongly criticized the Orientalism discipline for perpetuating these truths and for lack of critical reflection in their academic discourse. However, what is more relevant to this study is one of the primary causes that allowed for these identifications to exist: lack of interaction between Occidentals and Orientals.

The West’s knowledge of the East was comprised primarily from information shared by a relatively small number of Westerns who traveled to the East. These Westerns shared their experiences via memoirs, travel journals, and academic studies with the West. Additionally, these works often referenced each other allowing for bias, racism, or falsehood in one work to replicate itself elsewhere. The academy, and the general public, in the West took these works at face value and did not question the assumptions that were presented, the analysis of the author, or the author’s intention for being in the East or publishing his work. Not only did a relatively few number of Westerns travel to the East, even fewer in the East traveled to the West. Therefore, Easterners easily fell victim to the binary identifications that were presented as they did not have the tools, such as the financial resources to journey West or expansive publishing resources, to confront such labels:

Leaving aside the fact that Western armies, consular corps, merchants, and scientific and archeological expeditions were always going East, the number of travelers from the Islamic East to Europe between 1800 and 1900 is minuscule when compared with the number in the other direction. . . . In addition, it has been estimated that around 60,000 books dealing with the Near Orient were written between 1800 and 1950; there is no
remotely comparable figure for Oriental books about the West. As a cultural apparatus, Orientalism is all aggression, activity, judgment, will-to-truth, and knowledge. The Orient existed for the West (Said, 2003, p. 204)

This remains a valid concern today and supports several of the arguments for international enrollment. Among other things, this diversity will help serve as a challenge to the perpetuation of casual stereotypes by the academe against the “Others” now sitting in their classrooms.

**Orientalism Today**

Much has changed throughout the past 30 years since Orientalism was written. However, many argue that the core features of colonialism are still prevalent today but are conducted in much more subtle forms, particularly in regard to foreign trade and aid. This process appears to be expanding rapidly as the world continues to shrink. However, Said himself pointed to this change over 30 years ago:

Much of the most compelling work on the new political and economic order has concerned what, in a recent article, Harry Magdoff has described as “globalization,” a system by which a small financial elite expanded its power over the whole globe, inflating commodity and services prices, redistributing wealth from lower income sectors (usually in the non-Western world) to the higher-income ones . . . there has emerged a new transnational order in which states no longer have borders, labor and income are subject only to global managers, and colonialism has reappeared in the subservience of the South to the North. (Said, 2003, p. 349)

A second significant change relates to terminology. As previously discussed, the term “orientalism” is rarely used today. Additionally, Said and others have expanded the issues of Orientalism beyond the Orient to include other formerly colonized societies, such as those in
Africa and Latin America. The notion of the West has also changed as Western societies have become incredibly diverse. However, Said argues that being “West” is a social construct rather than a physical trait; what makes people Western has less to do with their physical characteristics and more to do with their ideology:

This is especially true of the United States, which today cannot seriously be described except as an enormous palimpsest of different races and cultures sharing a problematic history of conquests, exterminations, and of course major cultural and political achievements. And this was one of the implied messages of Orientalism, that any attempt to force cultures and peoples into separate and distinct breeds or essences exposes not only the misrepresentations and falsifications that ensue, but also the way in which understanding is complicit with the power to produce such things as the “Orient” or the “West.” (Said, 2003, p. 347)

Some argue that orientalism is being redefined, or perhaps replaced, by globalization. As opposed to a handful of Western powers dominating the world in traditional colonization style, these powers dominate the world through global trade and culture. The net result is the same - a small number of Western countries dominate globalization and use trade and international relations to shape the world as they see fit; the connotations of “Oriental” and “Occidental” have simply switched to connotations of terms such as “Developed” and “Non-Developed” or “First World” and “Third World.” As we shall see, however, there is a changing of the guard for which countries dominate the world as America and European countries are losing their economic edge to Asian countries.

Culture and Imperialism

The fundamental issues of Orientalism are expanded upon in one of Said’s final works,
Culture and Imperialism. Whereas Orientalism studied the impact of intellectuals’ “understanding” of the Orient, Culture and Imperialism studied the role that society played in creating the Orient, the Occident, and the “Others” and the responses of the colonized who resisted imperialistic efforts.

Despite substantial improvements in communication and travel, Westerners still tend to know the “Others” by the generalizations assigned to them. Ironically, communication and travel improvements may have increased these stereotypes as complex issues are portrayed in thirty-second soundbytes to impatient and distracted audiences. Therefore, current connotations of Arabs or Muslims, for example, look remarkably similar to the ones detailed in Said’s literary review from decades earlier.

Culture plays a vital role in supporting imperialism and is unequivocally tied to academia. Culture is the lens through which we understand our place in the world – and the place of others in our world. It is what helps us identify what is “normal,” “right,” “civil,” or “moral.” Just as importantly, it is what allows us to identify what is “abnormal,” “wrong,” “uncivilized,” or “immoral” and powerful societies have the ability to assign values to less powerful societies. As societies become entrenched in such visions, they distance themselves from other societies and this isolation can lead to further objectification until the more powerful (often Western) society takes action that it views justified against the less powerful (non-Western) society.

There are four components of Culture and Imperialism that should be addressed here: the effects of literature on culture, the importance of schooling in forming culture, the interaction of power, knowledge and culture, and imperialism in its current form.
Literature and Culture

Said again focused on the empires of Britain, France, and the United States and the indispensable role that their culture played in supporting colonization:

The theory I advance in this book is that culture played a very important, indeed indispensable role. At the heart of European culture during the many decades of imperial expansion lay an undeterred and unrelenting Eurocentrism. This accumulated experiences, territories, peoples, histories; it studied them, it classified them, it verified them . . . but above all, it subordinated them by banishing their identities, except as a lower order of being, from the culture and indeed the very idea of white Christian Europe. This cultural process has to be seen as a vital, informing, and invigorating counterpoint to the economic and political machinery at the material center of imperialism. (Said, 1993 p. 221-222)

He believed that British novels in particular were instrumental to developing a culture in Britain and exporting those cultural views outside the United Kingdom. These novels helped citizens and government leaders understand the “Others” that Britain was colonizing via general and often racist stereotypes and oversimplifications leading to a British society that felt vindicated – perhaps even obliged – to advance its ideals, morals, and way of life in foreign lands that were deemed inherently uncivilized or backwards.

The novel has given way to the internet and television as tools of cultural exportation today. However, it is worth noting that despite significant improvements in communication, such as local events made viewable to world almost instantaneously through the internet, societies still remain quite distant from each other. These technologies, just as novels in the 19th century, are just as capable of connecting cultures as they are of dividing them. International exchange and
true cross-cultural learning can help humanize content that is shared in novels, posted on-line, or viewed on the nightly news.

*Power, Knowledge, and Culture*

Culture is a powerful tool, but novels and sheet music do not win battles. The West was (and to a large extent is) able to colonize because of the powerful tools and resources at its disposal, particularly advanced economies and superior militaries. Powerful societies are also able to create knowledge that helps maintain their status. Said addresses this through the Power-Knowledge construct in *Orientalism* where powerful societies create self-serving knowledge about other societies. As Dirlik explains:

The question of representation raised in Said’s *Orientalism* is not the correctness or erroneousness of orientalist representations, but the metonymic reductionism that led to the portrayal of these societies in terms of some cultural trait or other, that homogenized differences within individual societies, and froze them in history. . . Regardless of how individual orientalists may have responded to Asia, orientalism as discourse also implied a power relationship: Europeans, placed at the pinnacle of progress, were in a better position than the natives themselves to know what Asians were about, since they had the advantage of a more prodigious (and panoptical) historical hindsight. (2001, p. 111)

According to Said, society saw and heard what its academic and political leaders saw about the inferior “Others” and internalized its superiority over the “Others.” Since the powerful society has the advantage of superior intellectuals who have studied the inferior Others, they believe that they too are superior and the Others deserve the treatment that they receive.

*Education and Culture*

Said stresses the important role of education in forming culture. In *Cultural and*
Imperialism, he admits that schools, and related institutions, brought by the colonizers did provide some cultural advancement to the colonized society, such as improved literacy rates, living conditions, and healthcare. However, he also explains that schools were designed by the colonizer to reorient the colonized students away from their traditions and towards a Euro-American centered philosophy. In this view, students of the inferior class will not be able to achieve the status of European exceptionalism and schools therefore reinforce not only the superiority of European culture, but the inferiority of the local culture:

The great colonial schools, for example, taught generations of the native bourgeoisie important truths about history, science, culture. Out of that learning process millions grasped the fundamentals of modern life, yet remained subordinate dependents of an authority based elsewhere than in their lives. Since one of the purposes of colonial education was to promote the history of France and Britain, the same education also demoted the native history. Thus for the native, there were always the Englands, Frances, Germanys, Hollands as distant repositories of the Word, despite the affinities developed between native and “white man” during the years of productive collaboration. (Said, 1993, p. 223)

This Western-centered education has impacted Western students as well. Just as the schooling of the colonized reinforced their inferiority, the schooling of the colonizers reinforced their superiority. There are damaging effects for both types of student. The colonized may internalize his inferiority; the colonizer may become complacent in her Western biased education and not understand the world around her. This may work temporarily, but will eventually become detrimental to the powerful nation. The dominant society is not only guilty of
subjugating the youth of its colonies, but is also guilty of inadequately preparing its own youth to engage in the reality of the world, rather than the stereotypes of its classrooms:

The United States’ clash with Iraq and Iraq’s aggression against Kuwait concerning oil are obvious examples. The wonder of it is that the schooling for such relatively provincial thought and action is still prevalent, unchecked, uncritically accepted, recurrently replicated in the education of generation after generation. We are all taught to venerate our nations and admire our traditions: we are taught to pursue their interests with toughness and in disregard for other societies. . . . Little time is spent not so much in “learning about other cultures” – the phrase has an inane vagueness to it – but in studying the map of interactions, the actual and often productive traffic occurring on a day-by-day, and even minute-by-minute basis among states, societies, groups, and identities. (Said, 1993, p. 20)

*Imperialism Today*

Said addressed current imperialism – or what others generally refer to as post-colonialism, neocolonialism, or globalization – at length in *Culture and Imperialism*. He explained that colonization had not ended for most societies; it had simply been replaced by forcing formerly colonized societies to be reliant on their former colonizers for trade, aid, and political support. He also criticized the West for providing political support to ruthless regimes that impeded their countries’ progress while the West promoted itself as the beacon of freedom and liberty.

Said believed that though borders have changed, the Western mindset had not. The West continues to view itself in an imperial light with the rights and responsibilities to engage in military operations to protect its national interests. Western superpowers, particularly the United
States, continue to view themselves as the world’s police and guardians against evil, but only when those instances are in direct relation to their national goals and often while ignoring the unethical actions of partners deemed to be in their national interest. This mindset continues to view the West in its traditional roles of superiority – intellectually, culturally, materialistically, morally, and militarily while the “Others” are inferior, backward, and weak. The Western categorization of the “Others” today repeats the same mistakes as the colonial powers of the 1800s by the inability to see the “Others” as equals with legitimate issues and concerns. Western powers objectify them in an effort to dominate them. Said provides an interesting example of this mindset in the U.S. led invasion of Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait:

Rarely in the debate [within the U.S. to invade Iraq] was there mention of the Arabs as having something to do with the war, as its victims, for instance, or (equally convincingly) as its instigators. One had the impression that the crisis was entirely to be dealt with in petto, as an internal issue for Americans. The impending conflagration, with its unconcealed and certain likelihood of terrible destruction, was distant, and once again, except for the (very few) arriving body bags and bereaved families, Americans were largely spared. The abstract quality imparted coldness and cruelty to the situation. (Said, 1993, p. 293)

Said believes that the United States reaction to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait provides an excellent example of America’s imperial philosophy:

The entire premise was colonial: that a small Third World dictatorship, nurtured and supported by the West, did not have the right to challenge America, which was white and superior. Britain bombed Iraqi troops in the 1920s for daring to resist colonial rule; seventy years later the United States did it but with a more moralistic tone, which did
little to conceal the thesis that Middle East oil reserves were an *American* trust. (Said, 1993, p. 296)

If the British novel was vital to Britain’s cultural support for colonization in the nineteenth century, the importance of the American media to America’s twentieth century imperial aspirations could not be understated. Despite advancements in travel and communication, the media has been forced to release stories quickly and in easy-to-understand terms to meet the public’s interest. Unfortunately, this speed and ease comes with a price as sound bytes have become the modus operandi of politicians and intellectuals alike. This divisive approach reinforces Western, and usually American, superiority over the “Others” by reducing them to catchphrases and stereotypes. This is particularly relevant in the media’s depiction of those in the Middle East, who are often represented simply as “Muslims,” “extremists,” or “terrorists.” Said explains such media depictions:

> All roads lead to the bazaar; Arabs only understand force; brutality and violence are part of Arab civilization; Islam is an intolerant, segregationist, “medieval,” fanatic, cruel, anti- woman religion. The context, framework, setting of any discussion was limited, indeed frozen, by these ideas. (Said, 1993, p. 295)

This is not simply an American phenomenon. The powerful Western media has been able to shape what those in West see and believe about the “Others.” Joris Luyendijk, a Dutch journalist who was based in the Middle East for several years, wrote a compelling article urging change in the global media’s portrayal of Middle East. He admits that he has “internalized” Said and related intellectuals and that despite trying to apply such beliefs to his work, he still found himself portraying over-simplistic, dramatized, stories from “the ground” in the Middle East. He
provides a modern equivalent to Said’s work from thirty years ago that shows the clear Western bias in media coverage of Muslims and the Middle East:

Correspondents’ ideological outlooks are difficult to pinpoint but it was disheartening to discover the ease with which almost all of them employ an asymmetrical vocabulary. An Israeli Jew who claims that land is given to him by God is an ‘ultra-nationalist’ whereas a Muslim who does the same is a ‘fundamentalist’ . . . . Israeli politicians who say they believe in talks are doves. Palestinians with an equivalent political outlook are called ‘moderate’, implying that deep inside every Palestinian there is a violent core. While Hamas ‘hates’ Israel, no Israeli party or leader ever hates Palestinians, even if those leaders use their parliamentary positions to call for the expulsion of Palestinians. (2010, p. 10)

Connecting Said to International Enrollment

Several of Said’s theories can provide important insight to the field of international enrollment and offer guidance for American universities to use education as an empowerment tool for both their American and international students. Perhaps Said’s most pertinent lesson to this study is that cross-cultural education will not occur simply by universities enrolling large international students. If universities truly hope to provide a global education, they must take proactive, tangible steps to ensure that international students engage in campus culture while also ensuring that American students are also actively participating in this new campus culture. International education will not occur if international students only interact with each other, whether by choice (such as is in self-segregation) or by being excluded from the dominant culture. Likewise, American student will not receive a global education if they only interact with each other and are not forced to question what they think they know about the “Others.” If
handled appropriately, the steps that encourage international students to participate in campus culture will also encourage American students to engage with the international campus community.

Post-colonialism and Globalization

Said is perhaps best known for his contributions to the field of post-colonialism in *Orientalism*. Though, remarkably, he said nothing about post-colonialism in its original version (Martinez-San Miguel, 2009; Mishra & Hodge, 2005). Post-colonialism is primarily concerned with addressing the root causes of colonialism in order to avoid future colonization and to understand the lasting effects on a colonized society. This happens primarily by giving a voice to the subalterns – the local people marginalized and held powerless during colonization. The term itself is conflicting as “post” implies connotations in modern theoretical and philosophical discourse (such as “post-modern” and “post-deconstructionism”) while also signifying the end of an era. This sense of “post,” generally meaning “after,” is problematic as many argue that colonialism is prevalent today in societies that appear to have gained their independence from their colonizers. Additionally, post-colonialism is considered a process rather than an historical or modern phenomenon. Therefore, it is hard to observe and measure because it is continually changing as the relationships, both between and within, the former colonizers and colonized continue to change due to economic, political, and social issues of the day. However, the primary focus remains on the Western understanding, and misunderstanding, of their former colonies. As Tikly explains:
At the most general level the term “postcolonial” is used to describe a global “condition” or shift in the cultural, political and economic arrangements that arise from the experiences of European colonialism both in former colonised and colonising countries. Importantly, it is used not just to describe specific developments or events related to colonialism and its aftermath but also to signify an *epistemological* shift in the way that these events are described and interpreted. (p. 605, 1999)

Post-colonial scholars believe that societies liberated from colonialism are still essentially colonized by the West; colonialism has not ended, but rather evolved in to more subtle forms of control. As Martinez-San Miguel notes, “it turns out that postcolonialism has become the theoretical paradigm that many scholars have learned to love and hate in the process of rethinking the immediate and less-evident effects of epistemic, political, and economic subordination in the production of non-Western identities.” (2009, p. 190) Even liberated societies still grapple with the long term effects of a colonized past. The pains of colonization do not simply end when the colonizer leaves. These experiences remain important aspects of the identity of the colonized and largely influence their worldview.

Globalization theorists such as Dirlik acknowledge the importance of post-colonialism and postmodernism in epistemological and cultural understandings of the past. However, globalization addresses the more pressing, current entrenchment of the marginalized to a global financial system determined to ensure the prominence of wealthy societies and individuals at the expense of poor societies and individuals. Most alarming is the lack of resistance to this current form of colonization; fears of subordination to global capitalism by poor nations are outweighed by fears of being left out of global capitalism and development. This in turn leads to oppression
of the marginalized, formerly colonized to the betterment of the more powerful Euro-American states that have formed a common culture that reinforces their right to power and privilege:

Class oppression and exploitation have been compounded by a severe problem of marginalization of the majority of the world’s population, who are not deemed to be essential to either the production or the consumption needs of capital, deepening the spatial inequalities that are the legacies of colonialism. . . These inequalities have become global with the emergence of a transnational capitalist class that shares common interests and, increasingly a common culture. (Dirlik, 2007, p. 7)

Globalization is not limited to economic terms; it permeates a variety of academic arenas, including education. Nevertheless, education globalization theory often highlights the importance of education in economic development, such as through increasing human capital, and is often considered to be a universal goal which defines modernity. However, some share legitimate concern over the loss of cultural identity and academic curiosity that often accompanies the emphasis on education as a tool of development. Globalization theory also stresses the growing inter-connectedness of people in the modern world. As Rizvi explains:

Indeed, globalization is a name that is given to the social, economic, and political processes that have, taken together, produced the characteristic conditions of contemporary existence. It refers to the ways in which distant parts of the world have become connected in a historically unprecedented manner, such that events in one part of the world are now able to rapidly produce effects on distant localities. (2007, p. 258)

Despite incorporating such a broad view, globalization often limits itself to primarily economic concerns while undervaluing non-economic issues, such as race, gender and language that are critical issues in the development of economic, education, and political policies around the world
and are often significant factors in oppression and ethnic nationalism that plague many post-colonized societies (Tikly, 1999).

Just as described in *Orientalism*, globalization results in dominant societies “Othering” less-developed societies while perpetuating knowledge and teachings that ensure the traits of the powerful society are admired. In an ever-shrinking world, globalization significantly accelerates this knowledge and understanding as culture is transported continuously and quickly (primarily via the internet, satellite television, and smart phones) around the world. Though commonly accepted at face value, it is important to remember that the basis of these exports, including their expressions of that is deemed to be “right,” “wrong,” “normal,” “advanced,” or “backward” are essentially the same detailed in *Orientalism* and Post-colonialism:

And, it is significant that globalization will appear dissociated from its roots in the European projects of imperialism and colonialism, which continue to shape the lives of people within not only the developing but also the developed world, with a global geometry that is inherently unequal. (Rizvi, pp. 259-260, 2007)

*Limitations to the Theories*

There are four primary limitations to these theories. First, similar to the criticism of Said and *Orientalism*, these theories focus exclusively on Euro-American colonial and imperial efforts almost as if they were the only empires in history. Though they may be the most recent, they followed a long history of empires throughout the world and replicated many of the philosophies and practices of the empires before them. For example, at its apex, the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BCE), was the first world hyperpower governing over one third of the world’s population (Chua, 2009).
Second, Euro-American colonization spanned hundreds of years, millions of miles, and countless numbers of cultures and ethnic groups. Though there were common themes, such as colonizers feeling superior to their colonized citizens, each experience was different. Therefore, understanding the true impacts of colonization on a colony, its colonizer, and the global stage are quite complicated, making it difficult to authoritatively claim that colonization causes specific, universal effects.

Chua (2009) illustrates such complexity and contradictions within the British Empire. While it subjugated colonies to imperial rule, it did not treat all colonies in the same manner. For example, Britain tended to treat its “white colonies,” such as America, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand much more favorably than many of its non-white colonies, such as those in Africa and Asia. Additionally, as it applied repression and discrimination to many citizens in its foreign colonies, it simultaneously embraced progressive, modern concepts at home, such as welcoming some of the most unpopular ethnic groups in Europe, such as Jews, Huguenots, and Scots to British society. This inconsistency is perhaps most prevalent in its anti-slavery endeavors. The fruits of oppressive colonization efforts provided the material wealth to police international waters as the British Empire attempted to almost unilaterally end the slave trade between Africa and the Americas, yet Africans in British colonies continued to experience discrimination and alienation from their British rulers.

Third, these theories generally paint colonization as a zero sum game where the colonized lose and the colonizers win. Obviously, history has not been so kind to empires. Though colonization efforts may have benefited the motherland temporarily, they also have caused significant harm. Turning again to Chua’s (2009) discussion of the British Empire, the modern United Kingdom has nowhere near the influence as the British Empire at its peak, which
controlled 25 percent of the world’s land surface. Britain’s significant decline is due to many factors, including its inability to maintain control over rebellious colonies. Had it managed these colonies differently, such rebellions may have not occurred allowing Britain and its colonies to have experienced a significantly different decolonization process. For example, had it treated its non-white colonies as the same type of “equal partners” as its white colonies, it could have been possible to maintain mutually benefiting relationships with those colonies upon decolonization resulting in a vast federation of equal partners. Chua paints a compelling picture of what could have been had Britain managed colonization, and decolonization, differently:

It is impossible to know. But if imperial Britain had made different choices at critical junctures in dealing with its nonwhite subjects, decolonization might have taken place on terms far more advantageous to both Britain and its former colonies. The commonwealth, for example, might not have developed into what it is today: a largely symbolic entity known principally for its athletic competitions and literary prizes. Embracing nearly a third of the world’s citizens, spanning Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas, all linked by long-standing economic interrelationships, the commonwealth could conceivably have become a formidable trading bloc and political union – resembling the European Union, but with the advantage of a common language – with Britain at the hub.

Instead, having alienated its colonies and fomented intolerance within them, Great Britain fell from world-dominant empire to second-rate power while its former “nonwhite” colonial subjects descended into third world pathologies. (pp. 229-230, 2009)

A fourth significant limitation with these theories is that the emphasis on Euro-American superpowers and their dominance over the rest of the world dates these theories and may undermine their relevance in the twenty-first century. The pinnacle of postcolonial writings
appears to have ranged from the late 1970s to late 1990s (though much is still written today). Given the timeframe, the focus on Euro-American dominance over the recently liberated colonies is obvious. However, much has changed in the world over the past twenty years including the collapse of the Soviet Union, a technology revolution driven by the world wide web, the current economic crisis plaguing the United States and Europe, and the unfolding events of the “Arab Spring” which could significantly impact many Middle Eastern and Gulf countries, such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Israel and Palestine.

The emergence of Asian economic powers during this time is also significantly changing the Euro-American economic, political, and cultural influence in the world. The rise of China and India provide compelling examples of the change in world order over the past few decades. Some argue that the influence of the traditional Euro-American powers (the United Kingdom, France, and the United States) have diminished as Asian powers, such as China, India, and Japan have advanced. It is important to note that economic prosperity is not only occurring in Asia as several countries in Eastern Europe (many former states of the U.S.S.R had experiences very similar to colonization), Africa and Latin America are also experiencing significant growth and are elevating their place on the world stage. This economic growth allows these rising powers to influence other nations though economic, political, social, and educational means.

Despite these limitations, post-colonialism and globalization remain important theories today. They provide the much needed analysis and insight to understand the impacts of colonization and help us understand the challenges that former colonies confront through the daunting tasks of independence. Additionally, these theories remain vital to education by reminding educators, researchers, and students of the importance of reflection and criticism on what is widely assumed to be common sense. They challenge us to re-think our ever-evolving
beliefs not only about the “Others” but about ourselves as well.

Contact Zones

Mary Louise Pratt significantly contributed to the fields of post-colonialism and globalization in her book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* and is often credited for identifying and defining “contact zones” (Bizzell, 1994; Elmborg, 2005; Kim, 2009; Manathunga, 2009; Milligan, 2005; Singh & Doherty, 2004) as:

[The] social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – such as colonialism and slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today. (Pratt, 2008, p. 7)

These zones come in a variety of physical spaces and timeframes and focus on the relationship between the dominator and the dominated within the zone. Pratt’s primary attention was devoted to historical analysis of the interaction between the colonizer and the colonized within contact zones. However, contact zones have been used to analyze a broad range of contemporary issues, ranging from evaluating the role of subalterns in international conferences designed to address their own social injustice (Conway, 2011) to redefining libraries to meet the needs of current students (Elmborg, 2005) to empowering teachers to dissect their course content and teaching approach (Milligan, 2005). Any dedicated place and time in which a majority maintains domination over a minority can be considered a contact zone. Additionally, the zones usually require tension between the majority and minority, be it as drastic as the violence between colonizers and the colonized of the nineteenth century or as simple as classroom discussions on a
university campus.

The notion of “transculturation” is important in studying contact zones as it explains how “subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture” (Pratt, 2008, p. 7). Transculturation, therefore, is the process of the subalterns selecting which traits and identities that they are willing to accept from the dominant culture and which ones they choose to resist. Despite the many negative aspects, there can also be a sense of empowerment as subalterns play an active role in defining their identity. It can also have positive aspects process for subalterns as they can select positive traits of the culture to accept and reject the negative traits being labeled against them.

Contact zones and transculturation are important contributions to the field of orientalism, where Said has been criticized for underplaying the role of local populations in assisting their colonizers, often for personal gain at society’s expense. As Dirlik explains:

Where orientalism as articulated by Said is wanting, I think, is in ignoring the “oriental’s participation in the unfolding of the discourse on the orient, which raises some questions both about the location of the discourse and, therefore, its implications for power. . .

Rather than view orientalism as an autochthonous product of a European modernity, therefore, it makes some sense to view it as a product of those “contact zones” in which Europeans encountered non-Europeans, where a European modernity produced and was also challenged by alternative modernities as the Others in their turn entered the discourse on modernity. . . The contact zone is not merely a zone of domination, but also a zone of exchange, even if unequal exchange. (2001, p. 112)

Pratt agreed with Said that literature played a vital role in the colonization process in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Whereas Said focused on academic writings, and music and
fine arts to a lesser extent, Pratt focused her attention on the travel writings of the scientists and explorers whose works greatly influenced their homeland’s understanding of these new and exotic lands. These writings are often riddled with, if not based largely upon, the interactions that occur between the Westerner and the non-Westerner within the contact zone.

Pratt’s most influential work, *Imperial Eyes*, is dedicated to both examining the postcolonial notions of contact zones but also to exploring the relatively little examined field of travel writing. She addresses both of these issues individually, as well as collectively, and provides a chronological order of travel writing genres to show not only the evolution of writing styles throughout history, but also the interconnected evolution of beliefs that shaped what authors wrote. Nature writings, for example, reiterated to Europeans not only their domination of nature, but also their domination of the less-developed societies that lived within these naturalistic (i.e. underdeveloped) areas. One such example occurs early in the book during the discussion of Europe’s “planetary consciousness” where natural scientists were trying not only to identify the world around them but also to understand their standing in that world. This resulted in the identification of seven categories of homo sapiens in 1758 summarized by Pratt:

a. Wild Man. Four-footed, mute, hairy.

b. American. Copper-colored, choleric, erect. Hair black, straight, thick; nostrils wide; face harsh; beard scanty; obstinate, content, free. Paints himself with fine red lines. Regulated by customs.

c. European. Fair, sanguine, brawny; hair yellow, brown, flowing; eyes blue; gentle, acute, inventive. Covered with close vestments. Governed by laws.


A final category of “monster” included dwarfs and giants (the giants of Patagonia were still a firm reality), as well as man-made “monsters” like eunuchs. The categorization of humans, you will notice, is explicitly comparative. One could hardly ask for a more explicit attempt to “naturalize” the myth of European superiority. (2008, p. 32)

The core issues addressed by Pratt, whether highlighted in examples of eighteenth century classifications of homo sapiens or in twenty-first century international trade, are that the more powerful colonies continue to create a world in which they maintain their dominant status at the expense of their former colonies and that their dominance is culturally accepted by both their local populations and their foreign subjects. However, Pratt’s emphasis on the conflict within the contact zone shows both the resistance of subalterns against their domination and, contradictory, the important roles that some subalterns play in aiding their colonizers.

Contact zone theorists often focus their efforts on exploring post-colonial relationships between societies, even if it is simply to place current trends or phenomena in cultural and historical contexts. As was evident in Said, there is a significant emphasis on the West’s (occasionally referred to as the North) domination of the East (and the South) (occasionally referred to as the South) and benefiting from its colonial and post-colonial relationships. As Conway explains:

By coloniality of power I am referring to the colonial character of the world system that persists in the present in the global hierarchies of knowledge and power that privilege the modern West. . . By ‘colonial difference’ I am referring to that which has been rendered
‘backward’ through the coloniality of power and therefore invalidated and suppressed through the global hegemony of discourses centered on Western modernity. It is through their claims to universality, and their discrediting of other forms and traditions of knowledge as unscientific, that Eurocentric forms of knowledge have silenced the colonial other. (2011, pp. 217-218)

Pratt concludes her book with addressing the current state of neocolonialism. Her example of Latin America’s current state of neocolonialism demonstrates that imperialism is alive and well in modern time as former colonies continue to be dependent on their former colonizers for survival:

At the same time Latin America’s economic and political relationships were largely neocolonial. That is, Latin America remained embedded in an international system whereby, though nominally independent, its nation-states had little control over their own destinies. . . Neocolonial status is a predicament. Politically, it brings to the state the obligations of a nation-state without the powers to chart its own course. While modernity imagines a progressive process that will eventually make all nations equally modern, neocolonialism acts to limit a state’s ability to develop itself. The fruits of productivity flow outward, towards the pockets of investors abroad. Culturally, something analogous happens. To be modern is to subscribe to the values of the metropole and seek to fulfill them. To be neocolonial is to be unable to do so, yet unable to exit the system and chart a separate course. (Pratt, 2008, p. 226)

*Multicultural Theory of Education*

Given the important role of multicultural education theory in contact zone discourse, a summary of its foundation is relevant here. The multicultural theory of education is a complex
theory devoted to reforming an education system believed to reinforce social stratifications. It proposes changes to school procedures and teaching methods to actively engage all students. Multicultural education theorists firmly believe that diversity in the classroom is instrumental to student learning and that changing school culture will result in creating a more fair and just society. “Students who are multiculturally literate have the skills, knowledge, and commitment to participate in personal, social, and civic action to make our society more democratic and just.” (Banks, 2002, p. 171) Nieto provides a comprehensive summary of multicultural education theory:

Multicultural Education is a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. . . . Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (praxis) as the basis for social change, multicultural education promotes democratic principles of social justice. (2004, p. 346)

Multicultural education is primarily concerned with addressing the needs of the poor and marginalized in elementary through high school and uses critical pedagogy to question the manner in which students are educated in hopes of preventing schools from reinforcing discrimination found in societies at large. Multicultural education also frequently references Freire, and particularly his theory of “praxis,” the connection of reflection with action, to support the notion that education should be used to promote social justice. Theorists believe that actively engaging students in social justice issues will give them the required insight to become more
knowledgeable citizens. Therefore, multicultural educators commonly engage students in service-learning projects that connect their academic coursework to the real world (Nieto, 2004).

This theory is primarily concerned with reforming the K-12 curriculum to empower U.S. minority groups, such as African American and Hispanic students, and believes all students benefit from being in classrooms with students from various cultural, religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. In this manner, classrooms will reflect the incredibly diverse culture in which students live thereby preparing students to engage in society both as students and as graduates. Diverse classrooms also allow teachers to undertake non-traditional teaching techniques that benefit all the students. As Banks describes:

Multicultural education assumes that race, ethnicity, culture, and social class are salient parts of U.S. society. It also assumes that ethnic and cultural diversity enriches the nation and increases the ways in which its citizens can perceive and solve personal and public problems. This diversity also enriches a society by providing all citizens with more opportunities to experience other cultures and thus to become more fulfilled as human beings. When individuals are able to participate in a variety of ethnic cultures, they are more able to benefit from the total human experience. (2002, p. 1.)

This emphasis on pluralism and the need for diverse classrooms is particularly important for supporting the argument that American universities should enroll international students to better prepare American students to engage in a global society. Just as American K-12 students benefit from multicultural classrooms, U.S. undergraduate and graduate students will also benefit from participating in multicultural classrooms (and laboratories).

Multicultural education theory is particularly concerned with the changing demographics
of the U.S. population and its K-12 classrooms. As Diaz (2001) explains, the U.S. population is changing:

What once was a country considered a microcosm of Europe is fast becoming a microcosm of the world. Already one in four Americans is either an Asian, Hispanic, or African American, and students of color make up approximately one-third of the nation’s public school students. (p.1)

Multicultural theorists point to this changing demographic as evidence that traditional education approaches need to be challenged in order to meet the demands of a more diverse society. They also believe America’s changing demographics reinforce that multicultural pedagogy is here to stay and that educators need to embrace it (Diaz, 2001).

Enrolling international students can easily be as an extension of this thought process. Just as American K-12 classrooms will continue to become more diverse, universities will continue to enroll growing numbers of international students leading to more diverse campuses and classrooms. Additionally, the importance of educating students able to communicate across cultures will be increasingly important as the world continues to become ever more interconnected.

**Contact Zones and Multiculturalism**

Though Pratt’s examples of contact zones often fall under more historical accounts or current social understandings based on analyzing culture and historical contexts (Bizzell, 1994; Conway, 2011), the study of contact zones has been used in a variety of arenas including both subjective spaces, such as academic disciplines, and physical spaces, such as classrooms. Authors discussing education-related contact zones frequently cite the importance of multiculturalism theory in education (Bizzell, 1994; Elmborg, 2005; Grobman, 1999;
Manathunga, 2009). As the world continues to shrink, classrooms will continue to become more multicultural and the potential for clashing between students will increase. Multicultural education theorists view notions such as clashing and tension positively as these are required in order to perform the critical analysis needed to address sensitive cultural issues. If there is no “clashing,” there is also no real debate or reflection occurring; students and faculty are simply complacent in the status quo.

This conflict can have positive outcomes as it requires critical reflection by students and teachers of the beliefs they hold of the “Others” with whom they are now face-to-face. This conflict also places significant responsibility on faculty members to observe what is happening in their classroom and challenges them to question not only what they are teaching to students, but how they are teaching it. Multiculturalism encourages teachers to teach in manners that meet their students’ needs and interests while empowering the students to become active participants and learners in the class. This includes providing a welcoming environment that supports the “Others,” whether they are non-traditional students (Milligan, 2005) or foreign students (Singh & Doherty, 2004) aspiring to acclimate to the classroom culture.

The University as a Contact Zone

There are seemingly limitless numbers of contact zones, ranging from a specific time and place in distant history, such as India in the early 19th century, or a modern classroom complete with diverse students grappling with cultural differences. A modern university can easily be considered a contact zone. More specifically for the purposes of this study, the University of Cincinnati will be considered a contact zone. University demographics have changed and will continue to change reflecting cultural, economic, and technological changes. For example, current economic, social, educational, and technological advances resulted in the University of
Cincinnati looking very different in 2012 than it did at its founding in 1819. These changes will continue to propel universities to adapt to their emerging identities – students from different countries, counties, cultures, economic statuses, academic achievements, and social expectations all meeting, clashing, and grappling with each other in places as different as residence hall rooms, dining halls, libraries, recreational facilities, and of course, classrooms.

Implications for International Enrollment

These theories provide significant individual theoretical contributions to the field of international enrollment. However, their cumulative impact is greater than the sum of their parts and provides relevant insight to the important issues addressed in this study. The primary implications for international education prevalent throughout this study are described below.

*Engaging with the “Others”*

The previous three sections devoted significant attention to understanding the “Others” and built upon Said’s criticism of how powerful societies create the “Others” in order to justify their own superiority. The university as a contact zone provides the space to confront this “Othering” process by creating multicultural classrooms and social space that encourages diverse students to engage each other and confront their cultural assumptions and stereotypes. Said’s approach of continuous critical reflection empowers professors and students to challenging what they “know” about others, and themselves, through a critical process of reflection and dialogue. This reflective process will help eliminate cultural barriers between students and allow them to truly benefit from the diverse campus community surrounding them.

As we have seen, creating global campuses is one of the most common arguments
supporting international enrollment. Proponents argue that American students will benefit from foreign students being on campus and learn cross-cultural communication skills while receiving a global education as foreign students contribute their unique cultural perspectives to classroom discussions. This study applies a post-colonialism approach to question where such assumptions are accurate.

**Globalization, Imperialism, and Enrollment**

There is little doubt that globalization will grow as the world continues to become interconnected at an exponential rate. Many believe that this globalization is led by the wealthiest societies disproportionately benefitting from modern day imperialism. One could argue that international enrollment could simply be another imperialistic tool used by wealthy societies to maintain their place in the world by attracting the best and brightest from poorer countries. Though there is truth in this logic, the importance of providing a global education for both American and international students cannot be understated. Providing that education, including creating the expectation of cross-cultural interaction and building an inclusive campus community, requires not only careful logistical planning, but also an appreciation for the complexity, and importance, of a global education community. Universities who apply the lessons learned from these theories will be able to provide an environment that not only welcomes international students but challenges international and American students to engage with each other and create a new campus culture. This environment will encourage international students to become campus leaders and feel that they are equal members of the American institution. Additionally, this will encourage the students to provide their own perspectives and insights to the institution allowing them to maintain their cultural identity while succeeding academically and socially. In other words, universities can, and should, allow international
students to flourish on campus without requiring international students to abandon their culture. This will also ensure that American students benefit from a truly global education, including encouraging American students to expand their own horizons by studying outside the U.S., and encouraging international students to return home to a culture that they still feel is theirs.

*Tension is Good*

There are consistent concerns for equality, justice, and empowering the oppressed throughout all of these theories. Interestingly, however, there is also consistent commitment to the positive aspects of tension, such as the societal tension between the colonized and the colonizers or the personal tension one feels in addressing the stereotypes and prejudices that he or she has held as truth for so long. Multicultural theorists believe that this tension is good as it means that students are confronting the “Others” either directly (such as in face-to-face interactions) or indirectly (such as through critically analyzing course content). Tension can be good because it means that people are questioning the world around them, particularly the inequality, injustice, and oppression in the world around them. Obviously, there are negative aspects of tension and too much tension can lead to conflict. However, diverse universities that allow students to confront the “Others” everywhere from classrooms to residence hall rooms can provide safe environments for students to experience the positive influence of addressing various avenues of tension to produce positive outcomes, such as new views of the world and one’s place in it.
Chapter Three
Methodology

About the Researcher

I first developed a passion for international education as an undergraduate student at Xavier University when I helped develop a service-learning course to El Salvador. This 12-day trip changed my life. Not only did I gain first-hand knowledge and witness the reality of lives for so many in this small, yet complicated, Central American country but I also developed a strong desire to learn about other cultures. This led me to co-create a university service trip to the Jemez Pueblo in New Mexico and allowed me to participate in Xavier’s first service-learning semester in Kathmandu, Nepal. In all of these amazing experiences, I routinely referenced the first trip to El Salvador as a turning point in my life; it was then that I realized that I wanted to forge a career in international education because I wanted to help other students have similar opportunities as I had.

This career choice has led to my current position of Director of International Admissions at the University of Cincinnati (UC). At first glance, this position is in contradiction to my original goals as my primary responsibility is to manage the recruitment of international students to our university, rather than to help UC students study abroad. However, as we have seen, very few American students participate in study abroad programs for a variety of reasons, such as lack of funding, limiting course load requirements, or not having the encouragement that many need to sign up for their first study abroad program. My current role is not to help recruit UC students to study abroad, but is to help create a global community on UC’s campus. This will provide an international education to students who never leave campus as well as an environment that
encourages our students to study abroad. For example, I have been fortunate to help a new student organization at the university create international service trips. This organization was formed by two freshmen roommates – one from rural Ohio and one from Sri Lanka. Shortly after move-in, these students quickly became best friends and the Ohio student, who had never travelled abroad previously, co-led a summer service trip to Sri Lanka and now serves as the Director of International Affairs for the university’s student government.

Many travel-related experiences have helped shape who I am today and have influenced this dissertation. A quote by Fr. Dean Brackley, a Jesuit priest who volunteered to serve in San Salvador after several Jesuit priests were murdered during the Salvador civil war, from my first trip to El Salvador rings especially true as he told our group, “I hope that you leave here ruined for life.” His point was not for us to leave El Salvador disheartened; instead, he wished us the opposite. He hoped that after witnessing the sobering reality that so many face on a daily basis, that we would never see the world the same again and that we would not hide behind the cloak of ignorance that so many in the developing world choose to do. This approach ties directly to Said as both want us to break down barriers that allows people to dehumanize, and oppress, each other. Both teach that the world is much more complicated than it may appear and that local interactions are instrumental to understanding global situations.

I have tried to maintain this view throughout my life and career, as well as this dissertation. Many in my career field measure their success by the number of international students they recruit to a university. I try to take things one step further and to ensure that not only are we enrolling a sizable international population, but that these students are benefiting from their university experience and are actively shaping campus culture so that our American students receive a truly global education on UC’s campus. For me, success stories are not told in
international enrollment reports, they are in student life experiences demonstrating that true international education is occurring, such as a student from rural Ohio developing a sincere interest in global education by being randomly assigned a Sri Lankan roommate freshmen year. Therefore, many concerns in my professional duties relate directly to this dissertation, such as measuring student satisfaction and encouraging positive interactions between American and foreign students. My professional role has also provided me with many intangible assets that influence this work, such as having substantial international travel experience, serving in a leadership role at the university that allows me to understand both student and administrative perspectives and propose and enact institutional policy changes, and having a network of international students that can be called upon for their input. I also frequently present at regional and national conferences which provides me a thorough understanding of how such issues are addressed at other universities across the U.S.

Appreciating the complexity of cultures, such as the culture of college students or the culture of a particular ethnic group, requires my research to follow a mixed methods approach of utilizing quantitative and qualitative techniques. This approach will be detailed in the following pages. To summarize here, however, the quantitative aspects will provide a important insight on a larger population while identifying major issues that affect a wide cross-section of international students. The qualitative aspects will allow students to share their personal experiences that helped shape their quantitative responses, and perhaps more importantly, will provide the students an opportunity to offer suggestions on things the university can do to provide to improve its international education mission.

Research Question

The previous chapters provided a comprehensive overview of the field of international
enrollment, its importance to American society and the theoretical framework that guides this study. International enrollment is a vast field deserving of significant academic investigation. This study will ask a seemingly simple question: what can American universities do to assist Chinese students’ acclimation to campus culture? To answer this research question, the study will use the University of Cincinnati as a contact zone for international student enrollment.

Why Only One Student Population?

There are students from hundreds of countries enrolled in the United States, including students from more than 100 countries enrolled at UC. These students represent tremendous academic, cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. Unfortunately, this diversity is commonly assigned to simplistic categories, such as “Asian” or “Muslim” students. Conducting a broad study that attempts to include all international student populations would most likely provide results that fall into convenient, simple categories rather than provide insight into the diversity within each student population. Following the theoretical framework detailed in Chapter Two, this study hopes to avoid such simplifications that will inevitably result in binary labeling of the “Others.” Focusing on one student population allows the researcher to delve more deeply into a student population and gain detailed insight into the issues students face collectively and individually by appreciating the diversity within a student population, such as differences between level of study, gender, ethnicity, and religious background.

Why Chinese Students?

If selecting only one student population to study, it is hard not to select the Chinese student population. Recapping from the Open Doors 2011 report, 157,558 Chinese students studied in the United States in the 2010-2011 academic year making China the largest student-sending country to the U.S. with Chinese students representing over 21 percent of all
international students. This represents a 23.3 percent increase in the number of Chinese students from the previous year and the Chinese student population in the U.S. has nearly tripled in only six years (Chow & Bhandari, 2011). Much of this growth has been fueled by undergraduate students – the primary students universities have been targeting. The number of Chinese undergraduate students in the U.S. has tripled in only three years (Bartlett and Fischer, 2011). Therefore, not only are there a large number of Chinese students in the U.S., but their enrollment is surging, and studying this population during this surge will provide timely analysis that will benefit a range of institutions.

Though only one student population, Chinese students represent the widest range of recruitment and support issues facing universities today. Chinese enrollment is rapidly increasing at the graduate and undergraduate levels, Chinese students tend to require significant English as a Second Language (ESL) training upon enrollment, Chinese students are amongst the most frequent users of educational agents for placement assistance, and many universities are struggling to grapple with issues related to one country making up such a large percentage of its international enrollment. Chinese students also enroll in a range of academic disciplines which ensures that a wider range of American students will have interaction with Chinese students. Like most international students, Chinese students are heavily concentrated in the fields of Business and Engineering. However, Chinese enrollment is divided across a range of academic programs, including: 27.5 percent in Business and Management, 19.2 percent in Engineering, 10.6 percent in Math/Computer Science, 11.5 percent in Physical/Life Sciences, and 7.0 percent in Social Sciences.

Therefore, the data that is collected from working with Chinese students will provide helpful insight on a number of areas not specifically limited to Chinese students helping this
dissertation serve as a useful resource to a large number of institutions. For example, a large percent of Chinese students require intensive (ESL) training upon arrival. Therefore, studying the Chinese student population will provide insight into realities faced by other student traditional intensive English markets that typically require significant ESL assistance. These countries are as diverse as Japan, Venezuela, and Saudi Arabia and those students face similar issues as their Chinese classmates.

We must not overlook that China is the most important market for most universities because it is the only market that sends a large number of undergraduate, fee-paying students - the exact target market of most international recruitment efforts. Therefore, though the findings will provide insight to issues that cross a spectrum of student populations, many universities will benefit from detailed analysis of their key demographic recruitment market and largest student population.

Funding levels are one area of significant difference for Chinese students. Chinese students are generally regarded as having the largest disposable income of major international student populations. This wealth is one of the primary reasons Chinese students can afford to pay undergraduate tuition and helps explain the undergraduate enrollment growth. Chinese students are not the only wealthy students in the world, but their level of wealth does distinguish them from other major sending countries that are more price sensitive, such as India and Vietnam, and other major markets that provide government funding for their students to study in the U.S., such as Saudi Arabia and many Gulf countries.

*Why the University of Cincinnati (UC)?*

The University of Cincinnati serves as an appropriate case study for this work. As with limiting the study to one student population, there are limitations to studying only one
educational institution. However, given the tremendous diversity of higher education institutions in the United States – large, urban public universities; small, private, rural universities; religious and non-religious universities; community colleges, etc. – the best approach is to use a university that is representative across a range of institutions. Other institutions can apply the results and analysis from this work to their own institution as they see fit.

UC was also chosen as it reflects many of the characteristics of universities enacting new, aggressive international enrollment campaigns and now facing the complex realities of enrolling increasingly larger international student bodies. International students are not new to institutions such as UC, but adjusting to the rapidly increasing number of international students across all academic programs and academic levels is new to institutions such as UC.

Overview of the University of Cincinnati

It is important to have a general understanding of UC in order to place institutional and student needs and issues in context. Many, if not most, educational institutions in the U.S. are facing similar concerns and issues as their international enrollment efforts begin to yield increased international students populations. Having a clear understanding of UC provides the framework for readers to interpret research results. Additionally, it will allow other researchers and administrators to put the findings into perspective and select information pertinent to their institutions.

UC is a large, public, urban research institution located in the Midwestern city of Cincinnati, Ohio with a total enrollment of over 43,000 students, including over 2,300 students from 100 different countries. UC is a comprehensive institution, including two regional campuses in addition to the main campus. It has hundreds of undergraduate and graduate programs, ranging from associate to doctorate degrees in a wide range of fields, including
architecture and design, business, education, engineering and technology, natural and social sciences, and the performing arts. UC has expensive out-of-state tuition (the tuition that is charged to international students) currently set at $25,816, which is almost 2.5 times in-state tuition of $10,784 (http://financialaid.uc.edu/fees/costs.html, collected April 4, 2012).

*US News* named UC an “up and coming” institution and placed it on its Best National Universities list in 2009-2010. UC has also been referred to as one of many “Wannabe” universities (Arnone, 2003). Wannabe universities are embracing aggressive measures to transcend from regional institutions to prominent national universities. Shortly after becoming UC’s 27th president, Dr. Gregory Williams announced the 2019 Academic Master Plan to escalate UC’s national prominence. This comprehensive plan included goals to nearly double the number of enrolled international students though the plan did not specify target international markets, academic programs, or academic levels.

UC undertook its first internationalization efforts in 2005 by creating the position of Vice Provost for International Affairs to lead campus internationalization efforts. It also created the International Admissions Offices in 2007 to lead its international recruitment and enrollment efforts. The IAO is housed in the Undergraduate Admissions Office and its primary goal is to increase undergraduate, fee-paying, international students. Like many comprehensive universities, UC’s undergraduate admissions process is centrally managed by the undergraduate admissions office but graduate programs admit students directly making graduate admissions extremely decentralized. UC also works closely with ELS, one of the largest intensive English training companies in the U.S. The Cincinnati ELS Center is operated by ELS but resides in a UC facility on the main campus. This center opened in 2008 and maintains an enrollment of around 250 students, many of whom transfer to UC upon completion of their English training.
Around half of UC’s incoming Chinese undergraduate students began their studies at the Cincinnati ELS Center prior to transitioning to UC.

*Chinese Student Enrollment at UC*

UC has held an international student enrollment of around 2,000 students for the past ten years. This enrollment was heavily concentrated in Chinese and Indian graduate students who made up over half of the university’s total international student population. In 2010, China overtook India as the largest international student population on campus. Similar to many other U.S. universities, UC’s Chinese enrollment, particularly at the undergraduate level, has risen dramatically over the past few years: UC’s total Chinese enrollment has almost doubled in four years, from 391 in 2007 to 742 in 2011. This growth has been lead by Chinese undergraduate students, climbing from 17 in 2007 to 252 in 2011 (https://ioffice.uc.edu/dashboard/index.cfm?graph=studentEnrollmentTrends&CFID=190542&CTOKEN=71565444&isLoaded=yes, collected April 4, 2012).

*Research Design*

This study will implement a mixed methods approach by utilizing quantitative and qualitative techniques to gain insight into the current academic and cultural experiences of its Chinese students. UC has significant quantitative data from its international student population providing a comprehensive overview of international student views on a range of issues. However, the university has not conducted qualitative studies, such as student interviews or focus groups, to provide insight into the quantitative data. This study will interpret the quantitative information currently available and combine that information with qualitative
information to create a comprehensive summary of the concerns and accomplishments of its Chinese student population in order to provide recommendations for changes that will help Chinese students integrate more fully into campus culture. Though some findings may appear to be localized to UC, they will be of use to other universities as well. For example, safety is a top concern for international students at UC and online discussion forum students are likely to address safety concerns in particular parts of the UC neighborhood. Though those unfamiliar with the UC neighborhood will not recognize such localized information, they are likely to appreciate the student input on the general topic of safety. For example, students may complain that an area of campus has poor lighting at night. A reader not familiar with UC’s campus may not recognize the exact area to which the students are referring but will appreciate that lighting is important for students to feel safe. To help make my research findings as transferrable as possible, I will also concentrate on general topics relevant to a range of institutions and will attempt to explain localized information as much as possible.

Institutional Data

UC has significant institutional data regarding its student populations. The data is primarily collected by the UC International Services Office and the Office of Institutional Research. This is useful for understanding campus demographics, changing populations, placing international student concerns in perspective.

The International Student Barometer

The International Student Barometer (ISB) is administered by a U.K.-based company named I-Graduate. The survey compares international student satisfaction in a wide range of categories of students at one institution against students attending other ISB universities. The ISB works with universities in three countries – Australia, the United States, and the United
Kingdom. UC was the first American institution to participate in the ISB and has comparative data from 2005 to 2010.

The Autumn 2010 ISB included 216 participating universities and 157,964 student responses. The UC International Services Office (UCIS) manages the university’s participation in the ISB including encouraging student participation, posts the final report on its website for an extended period of time, and relays key findings to UC faculty, staff and administration in efforts to improve areas of concern expressed by UC students. All enrolled international students are sent periodic emails in the fall (shortly after arrival) to complete the survey. UCIS estimates that the survey will take 20-25 minutes for each student to complete. UCIS offers modest financial compensation to a small number of randomly selected students who complete the ISB survey. In 2010, UCIS offered the following prizes to randomly selected students: two students selected for a $100 prize, four students selected for a $50 prize, and eight students selected for a $25 prize. Therefore, a total of 14 students, out of 998 UC student participants, received financial compensation.

*International Admissions Office (IAO) Survey*

In the spring of 2011, the International Admissions Office (IAO) created a more detailed, university-specific on-line survey to supplement the ISB. Invitations to participate in the survey were sent by UCIS and informed that the survey would take 45-60 minutes to complete. Twenty students were drawn at random by UCIS to receive a $50 gift card for participating in the survey. The introductory paragraph on the survey explained that information would be made available to UC faculty, staff, and administration and could be used by students engaging in research and academic writing.

ISB data provide helpful overviews of broad information that is comparable between
universities, such as benchmarking UC’s student satisfaction rates against satisfaction rates of all ISB institutions. This provides quantitative insight to areas where UC performs well, average, or poorly, as compared to other ISB institutions. This generality is helpful for benchmarking, but not for providing detailed insight into specific student populations, such as graduate Chinese students versus undergraduate Chinese students. The IAO survey addresses fewer areas but provides much more comprehensive insight about those areas than the ISB. Whereas the ISB may ask students to simply rate “safety,” the IAO survey asked a number of specific questions related to safety, such as questions comparing on-campus safety versus off-campus safety and safety perceptions versus reality. Therefore, the ISB data on safety identifies it as a top concern of UC students, but provides no insight into the issue, such as why students rate safety so poorly or what recommendations they have to improve safety. The IAO supplements the ISB by asking a large number of questions related to issues surrounding safety providing more insight into why and where students feel unsafe.

A second substantial difference with the IAO survey is that it included a far greater number of identifiers than the ISB survey. The ISB provides little identifiable information for respondents. Therefore, most comparisons in the ISB report simply compare UC international students to all other participating international students, such as comparing the UC average to the ISB average of all institutions. This does not allow for exploring individual populations, such as differences between Saudi Arabian and Chinese students. Therefore, where the ISB report can tell us that UC students rated safety at X percent, which is Y percent lower than the average ISB response, the IAO survey can tell us that Chinese students rated safety at A percent compared to the average international student response rate of B percent. This ability to “drill down” allows
for much more specific analysis within and across student populations, ultimately leading to
more efficient and effective measures to make improvements in a number of areas.

*On-line Discussion Forums*

After carefully analyzing the ISB and IAO survey results, I conducted two on-line forums
with Chinese students to discuss key areas of the two surveys. One forum was composed of
undergraduate students and the other of graduate students to determine if student perceptions
vary by degree level. It was assumed that there would be some areas of difference because the
two populations have significant differences. Some of these differences include many
undergraduate students living in on-campus residence halls while all graduate students are
required to live off campus. Undergraduate students also tend to study longer at the university
because undergraduate degrees typically take longer to complete. Undergraduate students are
also typically non-married whereas many graduate students live in Cincinnati with their spouse
and children.

Each forum consisted of six to twelve students. Though all the participants were Chinese,
the groups provided significant diversity – such as in gender, academic discipline, and length of
time studying at the university. I sent initial requests for volunteers to individual Chinese
students with whom I have already developed a working relationship, such as student workers in
the Office of Admissions or Chinese students who have volunteered to help with IAO and UCIS
programs. I also sent an email to all enrolled Chinese students though the UCIS listserv. I
expected a high response rate because there is a large number of Chinese students at UC and
because this was a unique opportunity for Chinese students to offer their experiences, and
suggestions for improvement, to a university official.

The forums were conducted through an on-line discussion board in Blackboard. Only
students selected for the focus group were able to log-in to the forum. Each focus group ran for one week and each day addressed a different topic. The topics began more generally to allow students to share their experiences. This also helped build trust between myself and participants as well as trust and between the students. The topics concentrated on issues relevant to a large number of students and I helped ensure conversation moved accordingly. For example, when a student voiced frustration and confusion with his academic progress, I offered to connect the student to an academic advisor for help. This not only helped the student find answers to his/her questions, but also prevented one student’s unique issues from dominating the entire discussion.

Hosting the forum on-line had many advantages. First, informed consent was gathered prior to students being able to participate in the discussion. Second, discussion sessions allowed students time to reflect on questions before issuing a statement or a response to someone else’s statement. Third, the on-line discussion session allowed students to participate at times convenient for them. Forth, the on-line forum allowed participation of students living outside Cincinnati, including a student who participated during an out-of-town Co-op placement. A significant drawback to the on-line forum, however, was difficulty in creating a sense of community when students were posting on-line rather than conversing face-to-face. However, the positive aspects of an on-line form substantially outweigh the negative aspects.

*Researcher Not Miracle Worker*

Given my public role at the university, I was careful to walk a delicate balance throughout these discussions. I needed to guide conversation and input, but could not squelch student contributions. For example, if a student were to say that the university should hire 100 more police officers to ensure campus safety, I would have to politely explain that hiring so many police officers is unlikely but ask if students would be interested in meeting with the police
department to learn more about what the department and students can do to ensure safety, such as developing a campus watch program or installing more surveillance cameras. It was important that the students had the ultimate say on the matters and took ownership of the issues. I could only guide the conversation, not dominate it.

I was also careful not to make promises that I do not have the authority to keep. Students could assume that I have more power than I do at the university. I was careful not to mislead students or offer false hope and was also clear that I could help them address some of their issues, but that they would have to play an active role in finding solutions.

Language Limitations

I do not speak Chinese and given the English struggles of Chinese students in American classrooms described in the literature review, it was easy to predict communication issues arising during the focus groups. As described previously, the on-line format could help address this issue but could not completely fix it. Thankfully, a Chinese doctoral student in the Educational Studies program, Ms. Juanjuan Zhou, volunteered to help facilitate the discussions. Juanjuan served as a co-moderator of the focus groups. She refrained from offering her personal thoughts on the topic discussions but was rather a resource for the students who may ask for help translating words or concepts from Chinese to English. Additionally, she could help ensure that my contributions are clear and coherent for the students as well. She was careful to respect student insight and not offer judgments, just communication guidance. This helped ensure that students are expressing themselves as they intended and resulted in more coherent on-line discussion.
Chapter Four
Quantitative Data

The University of Cincinnati provides three important sets of quantitative data for the purposes of this study: 1) institutional reports detailing international enrollment at the university, 2) annual participation the International Student Barometer (ISB), and 3) the International Admissions Office student survey (IAO survey). General information from each of these data sets was described in Chapter Three. This quantitative data provides helpful information for characterizing UC’s international student population and the issues they face. However, the qualitative data provided through the on-line discussion forums allows for greater understandings of these issues. This mixed methods research approach allows for more comprehensive, efficient recommendations that meet the needs of Chinese students (and international students in general). The quantitative data framed the topics of the on-line forums. Therefore, it is important to thoroughly review the key quantitative data provided.

Institutional Data

UC’s International Services Office (UCIS) provides an interactive quantitative data set on its home page (www.isso.uc.edu, retrieved March 13, 2012) powered by an external product called iStart resulting in general enrollment data that is easily displayed and analyzed. There is enough useful information to provide a helpful overview of international enrollment and enrollment trends at UC. Summaries of key quantitative data are below.

UC has 2,387 international students enrolled and international enrollment has increased significantly from 2007 to 2011. This enrollment growth has been lead primarily by undergraduate students.
Table 4.1 UC Data: International Population 2007 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Number Increase</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total International Students</td>
<td>1,845</td>
<td>2,387</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>29.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total International Undergrad.</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>161.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total International Master's</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>20.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total International Doctorate</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>-29</td>
<td>-3.49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International enrollment at UC is highly concentrated with Asian students. Five of the top eight international populations are from Asian countries and constitute 67 percent of UC’s international enrollment. However, the two primary student populations are from China (742 students) and India (571 students) and account for 55 percent of UC’s international student population.

Table 4.2 UC Data: Top Five Countries of Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Name</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percent of int'l Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>31.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>23.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2.72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chinese enrollment has fueled UC’s enrollment growth, particularly at the undergraduate level:

Table 4.3 UC Data: Chinese Enrollment 2007 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Number Increase</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Chinese Enrollment</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>89.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Undergrad</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>1382.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Master's</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>118.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Doctorate</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>-2.97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is helpful to compare Chinese enrollment against Indian enrollment to put the Chinese enrollment growth into perspective. India had been the top sending country for over a decade but
was surpassed by China in 2010. Despite aggressive recruitment and marketing efforts in India, Indian enrollment declined from 2007 to 2011:

Table 4.4 UC Data: Indian Enrollment 2007 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Number Increase</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Indian Enrollment</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>-1.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Undergrad</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Master's</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Doctorate</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>-23</td>
<td>-13.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These population changes generally reflect, but do not perfectly match, the one percent (1,002 students) decline of Indian students studying in the U.S. in 2010 with the 23.5 percent (29,930 students) increase in Chinese enrollment in the U.S. in 2010. The percentage fluctuations have been greatest at the undergraduate level with a decline of 7.8 percent (1,188 students) in Indian students compared to a 42.7 percent (17,055 students) increase in Chinese students (Chow & Bhandari, 2011).

It is important to acknowledge that international students represent only five percent of UC’s more than 43,000 students with a significant difference in the enrollment percentage of undergraduate and graduate populations. UC’s Office of Institutional Research annually publishes the *University of Cincinnati Student Fact Book*. The most recent available version is 2010 and provides helpful information to put these enrollment numbers into perspective. Please note that the UC Student Fact Book only distinguishes between undergraduate and graduate/professional level students. It does not distinguish between Master’s and Doctorate students so this chart looks slightly different than the previous charts. Additionally, the UC Student Fact Book data is not as current as the international student data available from UCIS. Nonetheless, the general trends reflect the current enrollment statuses:
Table 4.5 UC Data: UC Enrollment by Degree Level and Population Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>Int'l Students</th>
<th>Percent Int'l</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollment</td>
<td>41,357</td>
<td>2,097</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Enrollment</td>
<td>31,523</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate/Professional Enroll.</td>
<td>9,834</td>
<td>1,543</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understanding UC’s student population, and its changing demographics, is important as we begin to explore the views of international students. For example, the preceding chart shows that international undergraduate students constitute only two percent of total undergraduate enrollment while international graduate students constitute sixteen percent of total graduate enrollment. This is important to remember when reviewing international student opinions. For example, international graduate students may have different academic and social experiences that result in different responses than international undergraduate students.

2010 International Student Barometer

The International Student Barometer (ISB) survey compares international student satisfaction in a broad range of categories called “elements,” such as the Learning Element and the Living Element. These elements are then subdivided into smaller categories to generate comprehensive data. That data compares UC student responses to international students at other universities. This “benchmarking” helps universities identify areas of strength and weakness. The ISB works with universities in Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The Autumn 2010 ISB included 216 participating universities with 157,964 student responses. The UC ISB survey results were made available to the public by the UC International Services Office (UCIS).
ISB survey results are commonly presented in three categories for comparison: institution specific ("UC"), all U.S. universities that participated in the ISB ("US ISB") and all responses ("ISB"). Beginning in 2005, UC was the first American university to participate in the ISB. The ISB has comparable data in many, but not all, sections for UC responses between 2005 and 2010 allowing for helpful insight into the changing views of UC students. ISB results are reviewed by university administrators to identify institutional strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, many of its questions relate to topics such as quality of marketing materials, response time of offices, or student experiences with individual offices. The data described below is provided to demonstrate a general overview of how international students at UC feel about their institutions through comparisons with international students at other universities.

Limitations of ISB Data

The ISB data has three significant limitations. First, the data only provides cumulative information for responses, usually in the form of overall average response rates. The data is not useful for comparing ratings from different types of UC students. For example, the data does not distinguish between ethnicity, country of citizenships, academic program, degree level, or length of time the student has lived in Cincinnati for each question. Therefore, it is not possible to see how two populations, such as Chinese undergraduate students versus Chinese graduate students, answered the same question. A second limitation is that only summarized data is available for analysis. Though it provides much relevant data, the report does not include the questions that students answered. Having the actual question may provide insight into why students provided certain answers. Third, there is inconsistency in who takes the test every year. For example, some international students are only at UC for one year and take the test once while others are at UC for multiple years but do not take the test every year. This continually changing participation
limits the historical analysis in how UC students rate experiences in one year compared to another. Therefore, assumptions have to be made on what appear to be general trends.

Demographics of Respondents

UC had a high response rate of 59 percent (998 responses out of an estimated 1,700 students), compared to 37 percent for international students studying in the US (11,383 out of 30,630) and 31 percent for students attending ISB institutions (157,964 compared to 516,741). However, it is important to note that every respondent did not complete every question.

Twenty-nine percent of UC’s respondents were Indian students while 28 percent were Chinese students. The next largest student population for the survey was South Korea at six percent. Indian and Chinese responses accounted for 57 percent of all responses. These two populations accounting for over half the participants is not surprising given that these two populations make up over half of UC’s international student population.

UC’s response rate of Indian students was notably higher than US schools (29 percent at UC; 16 percent at other US schools). UC’s response rate of Chinese students was notably lower than US schools (28 percent at UC; 34 percent at US schools).

UC’s graduate students had much higher response rates than undergraduate students: 40 percent for Master’s students, 38 percent for doctorate students, and 21 percent for undergraduate students. This difference is also understandable as international graduate students comprising 72 percent of UC’s international student population.

The percentage of males participating in the survey was noticeably higher than females: 57 percent male and 43 percent female. However, this is consistent with the UC gender makeup that is 53 percent male and 46 percent female.

Students enrolled in three UC colleges represented 70 percent of respondents. The largest
response by college was the College of Engineering and Applied Science (36 percent) more than double the response rate of the next two colleges, Lindner College of Business and the McMicken College of Arts and Sciences, each at 17 percent. The remaining responses were fairly equally divided across UC colleges at 5 to 6 percent each.

The seven ISB elements are: Choice of Destination, Application, Expectations and Future Plans, Arrival, Learning, Living, and Support. Detailed summaries of each category go beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, relevant information from each element is summarized below.

Choice of Destination Element

The ISB asks a number of questions related to the recruitment and enrollment experience of international students. One interesting finding in this area is related to who has the most influence over international students’ college choices. According to the ISB, “friends” are the biggest influence over students’ college choice – 46 percent in US (45 percent Global ISB). Additionally, agents are used sparingly – used by only nine percent of students studying in the U.S. and 13 percent ISB. This information is helpful for putting the agent debate detailed at length previously into perspective.

An important question that provides insight to the students’ overall satisfaction simply asks if students would recommend their university to others. UC received fairly average results on this question suggesting that there is room for improvement in meeting student expectations:

Table 4.6 ISB Data: Encourage Others to Apply to UC?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Encourage Others to Apply to UC?</th>
<th>UC % that responded yes to the answer choices (UC)</th>
<th>UC % change from previous year</th>
<th>Average response for students from US-participating ISB universities (US ISB)</th>
<th>Overall ISB average response (ISB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would Encourage</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These numbers are then broken down by the academic levels of: Undergrad Bachelor’s, Graduate: Masters/Professional, and Graduate: Doctorate but remain fairly consistent across these categories. Students most likely to encourage students to apply are masters/professional level (81 percent); students most likely to discourage students from applying are undergraduate bachelor’s (six percent), followed closely by Graduate Doctorate (five percent).

Factors that Helped Students Choose Their Institution

“Friends” were the top factor that helped student choose their institution for both UC and USA respondents. However, having friends at the institution or in the institution’s country were two of the lowest factors influencing students. The university’s website and rankings were the next major factors, followed by parents and current university students. Interestingly, many of the common recruitment materials and techniques utilized by universities had little impact on students. The following each received influence factors of less than 10 percent for both UC and US ISB, compared to “friends” at 46 percent for UC and 45 percent for the US ISB:

* Institutional Visit
* Staff at a presentation
* Prospectus (university brochure)
* Staff at fair
* Agent
* EducationUSA Advising Center
Agents

Agents for UC students had a significance factor of only four percent while agents for all students in the U.S. had a factor of nine percent. This is surprising given that UC was the first major, public university to endorse the use of commission-based agents and has an extensive agent network of over 30 agents operating in over 40 countries with over 200 total offices that it actively promotes to international students, particularly to students in China and India. This low influence factor is also quite compelling given the heated agent debate in the U.S.

The most significant factor helping students to select an agent were “Agent was recommended by others” (presumably by friends, given the high influence factor of friends). Agents being certified by international students (such as AIRC certification) were secondary followed by the agent’s reputation and the agent being recommended by the university.

Pre-Arrival Information

UC and US ISB students rated pre-arrival advice and information from education agents, the host country government, and their institution very favorably. This helps assure that students have accurate expectations upon arrival in the U.S. and reduces the chance of students feeling misled post-enrollment.

Arrival Element

UC received mostly positive scores in the student arrival element, including a 90 percent average student satisfaction score. This score was five percent above both the ISB and US ISB averages. UC scored fairly strongly in all arrival benchmarks, including meeting or surpassing ISB and US ISB averages in 12 of 16 categories. Areas were UC fared slightly slower (between
one and five percent) than ISB and/or US ISB averages include student experiences with the “finance department” (most likely the office responsible for student bills), interactions with “other friends” and “home friends,” and meeting academic staff. UC has improved its 2005 rankings by 10 percent or more in four areas, most significantly “host friends,” “local orientation,” “welcome,” and “home friends.” It has decreased most significantly in two areas “study sense” and “university orientation.”

Learning Element

The ISB explores a number of areas related to the general topic of “learning.” These areas range from the quality of the on-line library to having “good teachers” to “employability upon graduation.” The learning element is divided into three subcategories: academic (with 20 questions), career development (with four questions), and language support (with two questions). UC fared well in this element, meeting or surpassing ISB and US ISB averages in 19 of the 26 questions. Of the 16 comparable questions between 2005 and 2010 (some new questions were added after 2005), UC improved by more than 10 percent in one area: opportunities for graduate students to teach. The most significant declines were in “course content,” “employability,” and “work experience,” with decreases of four percent, four percent, and six percent, respectively.

Living Element

UC fared poorest in the “living” element as UC students reported an 84 percent satisfaction in overall living, two percentage points below the ISB and US ISB averages. The topic of living is divided into eight subcategories containing two to five questions in each subcategory: culture, career development, recreation, environment and mobility, support services, living and accommodation, welfare services (worship facilities), and additional elements.
UC met or surpassed ISB and US ISB averages in only 11 of 22 questions. The “additional elements” subcategory contained only two questions: “communicating in American English,” with 92 percent satisfaction, and “receiving good medical care,” with 80 percent satisfaction. However, comparisons between ISB and USA were not available for these two questions.

UC performed well overall in four of the seven subcategories that contained comparisons between ISB and US ISB. UC met or surpassed the ISB and/or US ISB averages by at least 10 percent on six of the twenty-two questions. The differences between average ISB and US ISB scores (see below) may highlight the different living experiences at American, Australian, and British universities. For example, US universities often have more upscale residence halls and recreation centers than Australian and British and universities. However, the Australian and British governments have significantly less stringent restrictions on international student worker rights so international students in the Australia and U.K. typically have a much easier time finding employment than international students in the U.S.:

Table 4.7 ISB Data: Living Element – Finances, Facilities, and Visa Advice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Element</th>
<th>UC Satisfaction %</th>
<th>UC vs. ISB %</th>
<th>UC vs. US ISB %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earning Money</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>+11%</td>
<td>+5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation/Sports</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>+16%</td>
<td>+5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Support</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>+12%</td>
<td>+8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa Advice</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>+10%</td>
<td>+2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Cost</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>+10%</td>
<td>+9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Cost</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>+13%</td>
<td>+9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most alarmingly poor scores for UC were in the Environment and Mobility subcategory. UC had an average score of negative 15 percent compared to ISB and negative 11 percent compared to US ISB. The poorest scores are detailed below.
Table 4.8 ISB Data: Living Element – Environment and Mobility Subcategory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Element</th>
<th>UC Satisfaction %</th>
<th>UC vs. ISB %</th>
<th>UC vs. US ISB %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>-37%</td>
<td>-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Place to Be</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>-22%</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Transportation Links</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>-17%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are twenty living questions that allow for comparisons between UC scores in 2005 and UC scores in 2010. UC received improved scores on only nine of these twenty questions while it received declined scores in 11 of twenty questions. The two largest increases and three steepest declines are detailed in Table 4.9:

Table 4.9 ISB Data: Living Element – Comparing 2005 and 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Element</th>
<th>UC 2010 Satisfaction %</th>
<th>% Change from 2005 to 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreation/Sports Facilities</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>+12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship Facilities</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>+12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Support</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earning Money</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>-20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support Element

The ISB explored a number of areas related to the topic of support and UC received a 91 percent satisfaction score, exceeding the average ISB score by 3 percent and average US ISB score by 2 percent. This included the four subcategories of General Services, Support Services, Welfare Services, and Additional Elements. Each subcategory had between one and eight questions. (However, the eight questions contained in the Additional Elements subcategory did not have comparable data between the ISB and US ISB.) UC met or slightly surpassed ISB and US ISB averages on almost each question in all subcategories. It did not exceed ISB or US ISB averages by more than five percent in any question and only scored below ISB and/or US ISB averages on three questions:
Table 4.10 ISB Data: Support Topic – UC Below ISB or US ISB Averages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Element</th>
<th>UC Satisfaction %</th>
<th>UC vs. ISB %</th>
<th>UC vs. US ISB %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Office</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development Center</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling (Psychology) Center</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twelve Support questions were able to be compared between 2007 and 2010. Seven questions have seen no to moderate improvement since 2007. The largest increases and decreases are described in table 4.11.

Table 4.11 ISB Data: Support Topic – Largest Increases and Decreases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Element</th>
<th>UC 2010 Satisfaction %</th>
<th>% Change from 2007 to 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Development Center</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC Int’l Services Staff</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Office</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Building upon the ISB

As UC had become more successful at enrolling international students, concerns over those students’ experiences at the university began to mount. There were particular concerns in the English communication abilities of the undergraduate international students and their abilities to acclimate to campus culture. There was also genuine curiosity on what support services could be improved for the students. Additionally, university officials were particularly concerned about the low scores on some of questions in the living category, particularly in regards to safety and UC “being a good place to be.” The university realized that though the ISB provides a helpful snapshot of student satisfaction, it does not provide much tangible information on why students felt as they did, what kind of differences in opinion existed between student populations, or what kinds of suggestions students had for improvements. In May 2011, UCIS and the International Admissions Office (IAO) attempted to fill this knowledge gap, particularly in regards to
students’ academic experiences, social experiences, and concerns about safety, by creating a survey specifically designed for UC called “the IAO survey.”

The IAO Survey

The IAO survey yielded 428 responses from an estimated population of 2,300 for a response rate of about 19 percent. Chinese students had the highest participation rate and constituted 32 percent of the survey respondents followed closely by Indian students at 29 percent. As with the ISB, there were significantly more graduate responses than undergraduate, 76 percent and 22 percent, respectively.

The IAO survey had over 90 questions and took students an estimated 45-60 minutes to complete. The length of the survey resulted in a plethora of data that cannot all be detailed in this dissertation. Therefore, the most relevant data is provided below and was used to help shape the framework of the on-line discussions. It is important to note that students occasionally skipped questions and/or some questions may have been targeted towards small populations. For example, follow up questions to the small number of students who have been victims of crimes were not asked to students who had not been victims of crime. To prevent confusion and misinterpretation of data, the actual data is provided in addition to percentages. In some cases, percentages total 99 or 101 percent rather than 100 percent due to rounding.

Limitations of the Data

There are two significant limitations of the IAO survey. First, the survey’s length may have caused test burn out of participants, particularly for students with weaker English reading skills. The length could explain why 12 percent of participants did not complete the survey. Second, there is no comparison data for American students. Such data would identify areas
where international students have significantly different, or perhaps remarkably similar, opinions compared to the American student population.

Demographics – IAO Survey

To accurately interpret results and extrapolate conclusions from the data, it is important to understand the demographics of the population that participated in the survey. According to the table below, the most frequent responses are from graduate Chinese or Indian students studying in the College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS), McMicken College of Arts and Sciences (A&S), or Lindner College of Business (LCB, sometimes students refer to this as COB) and have been studying at the university for less than two years.

Since the focus of this dissertation is on Chinese students, each data set clearly displays Chinese student responses as compared to the total. This identifies areas where Chinese students feel similar to, or different from, the total international student population. For example, the first line of data below explains that 56 percent (240 of 428) of all respondents were male.

Additionally, Chinese males comprised 42% (137 of 428) of all respondents.

Table 4.12 IAO Data: Demographic Information
Note: Chinese responses in (bold)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Number of Total Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>56% (42%)</td>
<td>240 (58)</td>
<td>428 (137)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44% (58%)</td>
<td>188 (79)</td>
<td>428 (137)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Level</th>
<th>Total Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Number of Total Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>22% (36%)</td>
<td>93 (49)</td>
<td>420 (135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>76% (63%)</td>
<td>319 (85)</td>
<td>420 (135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2% (0)</td>
<td>8 (0)</td>
<td>420 (135)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 5 Student Populations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

121
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Enrollment %</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Top 5 Colleges Enrolled**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Enrollment %</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Eng. &amp; App. Science (CEAS)</td>
<td>42% (35%)</td>
<td>175 (47)</td>
<td>420 (135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McMicken College of Arts &amp; Science (A&amp;S)</td>
<td>19% (19%)</td>
<td>79 (26)</td>
<td>420 (135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindner College of Business (LCB or DAAP)</td>
<td>13% (22%)</td>
<td>54 (30)</td>
<td>420 (135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning (DAAP)</td>
<td>7% (10%)</td>
<td>28 (13)</td>
<td>420 (135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Medicine (MED)</td>
<td>6% (7%)</td>
<td>24 (9)</td>
<td>420 (135)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since UC is recognized as a leader in the commission-based agent model, it asked a number of questions related to students’ experiences with agents. IAO survey results reflect the low agent utilization rates of the ISB. Only 15 percent of all IAO survey respondents used agents and only 25 percent of Chinese respondents used agents. This is interesting for several reasons. First, it may show that the agent debate in higher education has received disproportionate attention. Second, it may also point to agents being more utilized by undergraduate students, who represent only 22 percent of the total, and 36 percent of the Chinese, responses.

The agent being officially recognized by the university and the university promoting the agent did not play a major factor in student’s choice of agency. The agent fees described below support claims that Chinese agents charge students high fees for their services. For example, Chinese students only account for six percent of the students who paid $500 or less but account for 76 percent of students who paid more than $500. Chinese students accounted for six of eight
students who paid an agent $2,000 - $3,000 and were the only students who paid an agent $3,001 or more.

Table 4.13 IAO Data: Use of Agents and Agent Fees  
Note: Chinese responses in (bold)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you use an agent/consultant in your home country to help with application and enrollment to UC:</th>
<th>Total Percentages (Chinese Percentage)</th>
<th>Total Responses (Chinese Responses)</th>
<th>Number Answered (Chinese Answered)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15% (25%)</td>
<td>62 (32)</td>
<td>404 (126)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>85% (75%)</td>
<td>342 (94)</td>
<td>404 (126)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you pay the agent?</th>
<th>(Chinese Percentage)</th>
<th>(Chinese Answered)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>74% (79%)</td>
<td>54 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>26% (21%)</td>
<td>19 (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much did you pay the agent?</th>
<th>(Chinese Percentage)</th>
<th>(Chinese Answered)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1 - $500</td>
<td>43% (12%)</td>
<td>29 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$501 - $2,000</td>
<td>27% (33%)</td>
<td>18 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,001 - $3,000</td>
<td>12% (18%)</td>
<td>8 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,001 - $4,000</td>
<td>10% (21%)</td>
<td>7 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4,001 or more</td>
<td>8% (15%)</td>
<td>5 (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Was the Agent Affiliated with UC?</th>
<th>(Chinese Percentage)</th>
<th>(Chinese Answered)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19% (24%)</td>
<td>13 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>48% (41%)</td>
<td>33 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>33% (35%)</td>
<td>23 (12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This survey allowed international student to express their feelings on a wide range of issues. The same scale was used for all such questions; students were asked to rate how strongly they disagreed or agreed with a statement on a scale of one to ten with one indicating strongly disagree, five indicating neutral feelings, and ten indicating strongly agree. For ease of reference, the scores were compiled into three categories: total responses for scores of one to four, total responses for scores of five, and total scores for responses of six to ten. Again, Chinese responses are reflected in the total international student population responses but also clearly identified as their own subset by being identified in bold. Therefore, the first line of data in table 4.14 explains that 50 percent (25 of the 50 students who used agents) agreed in the six to ten
range to the question “Agent was informed about US education system.” However, only 32 percent of Chinese students (10 of the 31 Chinese students who used agents and responded to the question) agreed at the same level. That is a difference of 18 percentage points.

Quality and Influence of Agents

The data shows mixed results on the agents’ knowledge and influence. Though the limited number of responses is important when interpreting the data, it appears that agents were fairly well informed about the U.S. education system and UC application process. They described UC fairly accurately, had relatively small influence in a student’s university choice, and some agents may have appeared aggressive towards students.

Table 4.14 IAO Data: Agent Knowledge and Influence
Note: This question was only asked to students who indicated that they had used an agent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>1-4 Disagree</th>
<th>5 Neutral</th>
<th>6-10 Agree</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agent was informed about US education system</td>
<td>14% (7)</td>
<td>36% (18)</td>
<td>50% (25)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23% (7)</td>
<td>45% (14)</td>
<td>32% (10)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent was knowledgeable about UC application process</td>
<td>16% (8)</td>
<td>28% (14)</td>
<td>56% (28)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23% (7)</td>
<td>32% (10)</td>
<td>45% (14)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent described UC accurately</td>
<td>18% (9)</td>
<td>38% (19)</td>
<td>44% (22)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26% (8)</td>
<td>42% (13)</td>
<td>32% (10)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent significantly influenced which university you chose to enroll in</td>
<td>16% (8)</td>
<td>39% (19)</td>
<td>45% (22)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19% (6)</td>
<td>39% (12)</td>
<td>42% (13)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent was pushy or forceful with you during the application and enrollment process</td>
<td>36% (18)</td>
<td>34% (17)</td>
<td>30% (15)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29% (9)</td>
<td>32% (10)</td>
<td>39% (12)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Value of Agent Services

Students had mixed feelings on the value of the services provided by agents as they were fairly equally divided between feeling the services were worth the amount paid, not worth amount the paid, or not sure if they were worth the amount paid. Students who used agents also had mixed feelings about whether they would recommend other students to use an agent, with
almost half of students saying “Yes, use an agent” and almost half saying “No, do not use an agent.”

Table 4.15 IAO Data: Value of Agent Services
Note: This question was only asked to students who indicated that they had used an agent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Not Sure (%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Services received from agent were worth amount you paid the agent?</td>
<td>32% (16)</td>
<td>48% (15)</td>
<td>34% (17)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19% (6)</td>
<td>34% (17)</td>
<td>32% (10)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you recommend other international students use an agent when applying to UC?</td>
<td>Yes, same agent</td>
<td>Yes, but a different agent</td>
<td>No, don’t use any agent</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50% (24)</td>
<td>10% (3)</td>
<td>44% (21)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40% (12)</td>
<td>6% (3)</td>
<td>50% (15)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**English Language and ESL Evaluation**

Concerns with the English language skills and abilities of Chinese students were detailed in the literature review. The primary concerns were that language limitations hinder international students’ ability to acclimate to campus culture and result in poor grades due to the importance of academic writing in many courses. The university has expanded its English as a Second Language (ESL) course offerings but is concerned that international students, particularly Chinese students, are not utilizing these courses to improve their English. There are also concerns that Chinese students are not actively engaging in the campus community due to weak English skills. Therefore, gaining insight to students’ perspectives of ESL courses and their own English language abilities can provide helpful guidance for university leadership.

**ESL Course Insight**

Only 17 percent (61 of 357) of survey participants have taken ESL courses at UC. Of these, 67 percent (41 of 61) are from China. Fifty-nine percent (38 of 64) of international students took ESL courses not because they were required, but because they wanted to improve their English skills. Sixty-eight percent (26 of 38) of these students were from China. However,
students generally do not take many ESL courses as 86 percent (54 of 63) only take 1-2 ESL courses.

Table 4.16 IAO Data: Overview of ESL Experiences
Note: This question was only asked of students who have taken ESL courses at UC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>1-4 Disagree</th>
<th>5 Neutral</th>
<th>6-10 Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ESL courses helped me significantly improve my English SPEAKING skills</td>
<td>15% (9)</td>
<td>31% (18)</td>
<td>54% (32)</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18% (7)</td>
<td>30% (12)</td>
<td>52% (20)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ESL courses helped me significantly improve my English WRITING skills</td>
<td>14% (8)</td>
<td>22% (13)</td>
<td>64% (38)</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18% (7)</td>
<td>28% (7)</td>
<td>65% (26)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ESL courses helped me understand American culture</td>
<td>19% (11)</td>
<td>25% (15)</td>
<td>56% (33)</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23% (9)</td>
<td>23% (9)</td>
<td>55% (22)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend other international students to take ESL courses</td>
<td>17% (10)</td>
<td>19% (11)</td>
<td>64% (37)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21% (8)</td>
<td>21% (8)</td>
<td>59% (23)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ESL courses helped me feel more confident participating in class discussions</td>
<td>17% (10)</td>
<td>21% (12)</td>
<td>62% (36)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in non-ESL courses</td>
<td>21% (8)</td>
<td>23% (9)</td>
<td>56% (22)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ESL courses helped me become a better student</td>
<td>17% (10)</td>
<td>36% (21)</td>
<td>47% (27)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21% (8)</td>
<td>33% (13)</td>
<td>46% (18)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How International Students Feel They Are Viewed by the Campus Community

The data below indicates that international students generally feel welcome and accepted in the campus culture. It would be interesting, however, to compare undergraduate students who are more likely to live with American roommates, take larger classes, pay more tuition, study longer at the university, and have less direct contact with faculty members to graduate students.

Table 4.17 IAO Data: Perceptions of International Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>1-4 Disagree</th>
<th>5 Neutral</th>
<th>6-10 Agree</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I participate regularly in class discussions</td>
<td>12% (42)</td>
<td>18% (61)</td>
<td>70% (245)</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16% (20)</td>
<td>22% (27)</td>
<td>62% (77)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel other students view me as an equal peer</td>
<td>11% (38)</td>
<td>15% (54)</td>
<td>74% (257)</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12% (15)</td>
<td>19% (24)</td>
<td>69% (85)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel my professors value my opinions</td>
<td>7% (25)</td>
<td>12% (43)</td>
<td>80% (279)</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9% (11)</td>
<td>16% (20)</td>
<td>75% (93)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel my professors are committed to supporting my educational needs</td>
<td>7% (25)</td>
<td>12% (40)</td>
<td>81% (282)</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9% (11)</td>
<td>15% (19)</td>
<td>76% (93)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel welcome and accepted by the university</td>
<td>7% (24)</td>
<td>13% (46)</td>
<td>80% (277)</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9% (11)</td>
<td>19% (23)</td>
<td>72% (89)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I feel other students appreciate my insights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-4 Disagree</th>
<th>5 Neutral</th>
<th>6-10 Agree</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9% (30)</td>
<td>14% (50)</td>
<td>77% (266)</td>
<td></td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11% (13)</td>
<td>18% (22)</td>
<td>72% (88)</td>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I feel I am receiving the type of education I expected to receive when choosing to enroll at UC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-4 Disagree</th>
<th>5 Neutral</th>
<th>6-10 Agree</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10% (34)</td>
<td>13% (44)</td>
<td>77% (269)</td>
<td></td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11% (14)</td>
<td>18% (22)</td>
<td>71% (87)</td>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Welcomed Versus Valued**

Though international students generally feel welcomed and accepted in campus culture, they do not feel as strongly that they are valued by university leadership and students.

**Table 4.18 IAO Data: Feelings of Committed Support by Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-4 Disagree</th>
<th>5 Neutral</th>
<th>6-10 Agree</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel the top leadership at the university is committed to supporting the needs of international students</td>
<td>17% (58)</td>
<td>27% (92)</td>
<td>56% (194)</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17% (21)</td>
<td>32% (39)</td>
<td>51% (63)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that faculty members are committed to supporting the needs of international students</td>
<td>15% (51)</td>
<td>20% (70)</td>
<td>65% (222)</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15% (19)</td>
<td>27% (33)</td>
<td>58% (71)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that university staff are committed to supporting the needs of international students</td>
<td>13% (44)</td>
<td>18% (62)</td>
<td>69% (239)</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13% (16)</td>
<td>22% (27)</td>
<td>65% (81)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that American students are committed to supporting the needs of international students</td>
<td>22% (76)</td>
<td>28% (95)</td>
<td>50% (172)</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23% (28)</td>
<td>31% (39)</td>
<td>46% (57)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Acclimation Assets and Limitations**

The tables below indicate that international students primarily maintain friendships and have roommates from their own country. However, a sizeable proportion – 22 percent – does indicate having a “fairly equal mix of American and international friends.” The classrooms of international students are fairly equally divided between having a majority of international students, a fairly equal mix of international and American students, or a small number of international students.
Table 4.19 IAO Data: Diversity of Friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most of my friends are:</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>China Percent</th>
<th>China Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From my home country</td>
<td>51% (178)</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>72% (90)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International students from countries other than mine</td>
<td>8% (27)</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>3% (4)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American students</td>
<td>7% (23)</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>2% (3)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a fairly equal mix of American and international friends</td>
<td>34% (119)</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>22% (28)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.20 IAO Data: Diversity of Classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most of my classes have:</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>China Percent</th>
<th>China Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A majority of international students</td>
<td>30% (103)</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>23% (28)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A fairly equal mix of international and American students</td>
<td>36% (125)</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>36% (44)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A very small number of international students</td>
<td>29% (101)</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>37% (46)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No other international students</td>
<td>5% (17)</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>5% (6)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.21 IAO Data: Who International Student Live With

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you currently live:</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>China Percent</th>
<th>China Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With roommates that are also UC students</td>
<td>57% (196)</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>62% (77)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With roommates that are not UC students</td>
<td>3% (11)</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>2% (2)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone (no roommate)</td>
<td>21% (73)</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>23% (29)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With my family</td>
<td>19% (67)</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>14% (17)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a host family</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.22 IAO Data: Diversity of Roommates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My roommates are:</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>China Percent</th>
<th>China Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainly from my home country</td>
<td>79% (243)</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>83% (100)</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly international students from countries other than mine</td>
<td>6% (17)</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>3% (3)</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a fairly equal mix of American and international roommates</td>
<td>6% (18)</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>6% (7)</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly American students</td>
<td>9% (28)</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>9% (11)</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Safety

Safety is perhaps the greatest issue identified by UC’s international students and UC has received the lowest scores for safety on the ISB every year that it has participated in the ISB. The
IAO survey, therefore, asked a number of specific questions to identify why international students give UC such low scores. The primary goals were to identify: 1) if safety concerns were based more on perception and rumors than actual experiences, 2) if international students felt that they were being targeted by criminals, 3) if there are particular efforts that UC could undertake to make students feel safer, 4) if there are differences of opinion between on-campus and off-campus safety, and 5) if student concerns of safety were significantly impacting their educational experience at UC.

The survey’s first efforts were to identify where students lived and found that 93 percent of respondents lived off campus. Of those that live off campus, 88 percent live within three kilometers (1.86 miles) of campus.

Table 4.23 IAO Data: Housing Distance from Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you live off campus?</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>China Percent</th>
<th>China Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes – live off campus</td>
<td>93% (323)</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>90% (112)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live 0-1 km (0-.6 miles)</td>
<td>52% (169)</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>57% (64)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live 1-2 km (.6 – 1.24 miles)</td>
<td>30% (97)</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>30% (33)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live 2-3 km (1.24 – 1.86 miles)</td>
<td>6% (20)</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>7% (8)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live more than 3km (1.86 miles)</td>
<td>12% (37)</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>6% (7)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most students walk or ride a bike to campus followed by utilizing the university’s transportation system. Few students drive to campus and very few take Cincinnati’s public transportation. Thirty percent (95 out of 320) stated that the UC campus shuttle system does not drive to their off campus housing. However, 88 percent of students live within three kilometers (1.86 miles) of campus. Further investigation is needed to determine if this belief is true. If the shuttle system does in fact cover this area, better communication with international students could help clarify such misunderstandings. If the shuttle system does not in fact reach this area, university officials may wish to consider extending the shuttle’s coverage area.
Table 4.24 IAO Data: Transportation to Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you most commonly:</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>China Percent</th>
<th>China Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walk or ride a bike to campus</td>
<td>58% (187)</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>59% (66)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive to campus</td>
<td>15% (49)</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>13% (15)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take the Bearcat Transportation System/Campus Shuttle to campus</td>
<td>25% (80)</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>26% (29)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take the Metro (Cincinnati public bus system) to campus</td>
<td>2% (6)</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>2% (2)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though 93 percent of students live off campus, the vast majority feel that their housing is in a safe location.

Table 4.25 IAO Data: Housing in a Safe Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel that my current off-campus housing is in a safe location</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>China Percent</th>
<th>China Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76% (243)</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>78% (87)</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21% (67)</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>19% (21)</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not live off-campus</td>
<td>3% (8)</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>3% (3)</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant trends emerged when students were asked about safety during the day and night and safety on-campus and off-campus. In general, students feel fairly safe on UC’s campus both during the day and at night. Interesting, though 88 percent of students live within 3 kilometers (1.86 miles) of campus and feel that their housing is in a safe location, a large percent of students feel that the neighborhood “immediately surrounding UC” is unsafe both during the day and at night. Students generally feel that safety at UC is comparable to safety at similar institutions and that criminals do not target international students.

Table 4.26 IAO Survey: Day/Night and On/Off Campus Safety Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>1-4 Disagree</th>
<th>5 Neutral</th>
<th>6-10 Agree</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe on UC’s campus during the day</td>
<td>7% (22)</td>
<td>9% (29)</td>
<td>85% (287)</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8% (10)</td>
<td>15% (19)</td>
<td>76% (94)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe on UC’s campus at night</td>
<td>30% (99)</td>
<td>17% (56)</td>
<td>54% (179)</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29% (35)</td>
<td>22% (26)</td>
<td>50% (59)</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe in the neighborhood immediately surrounding UC during the day</td>
<td>17% (58)</td>
<td>17% (58)</td>
<td>65% (220)</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17% (21)</td>
<td>23% (28)</td>
<td>60% (72)</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I feel safe in the neighborhood immediately surrounding UC at night

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>55% (186)</th>
<th>11% (38)</th>
<th>34% (114)</th>
<th>33% (40)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51% (63)</td>
<td>16% (20)</td>
<td>33% (40)</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I feel that safety at UC is comparable to safety at similar institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>20% (66)</th>
<th>40% (134)</th>
<th>40% (135)</th>
<th>335</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19% (23)</td>
<td>39% (47)</td>
<td>43% (52)</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I feel that criminals target international students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>23% (78)</th>
<th>31% (103)</th>
<th>46% (155)</th>
<th>336</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19% (23)</td>
<td>29% (35)</td>
<td>52% (64)</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact of Safety Concerns

Students clearly feel that UC could more to improve the safety of its students and that UC is not as committed to providing a safe neighborhood as they would like. These feelings could have implications elsewhere in the survey, such as in earlier questions about whether UC values its international student population. The connection between safety and academic experience is important as almost half of the students indicated that their safety concerns negatively impact their educational experience at UC.

Table 4.27 IAO Data: University Committed to Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>1-4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6-10</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that UC could do more to improve the safety of its students</td>
<td>8% (27)</td>
<td>18% (59)</td>
<td>74% (250)</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7% (9)</td>
<td>16% (20)</td>
<td>76% (93)</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that UC is committed to providing a safe campus</td>
<td>11% (36)</td>
<td>15% (52)</td>
<td>74% (250)</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12% (15)</td>
<td>16% (20)</td>
<td>72% (88)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that UC is committed to providing a safe neighborhood</td>
<td>20% (68)</td>
<td>20% (66)</td>
<td>60% (198)</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15% (18)</td>
<td>17% (21)</td>
<td>68% (82)</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My safety concerns negatively impact my educational experience at UC</td>
<td>27% (90)</td>
<td>26% (86)</td>
<td>48% (161)</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22% (27)</td>
<td>24% (29)</td>
<td>54% (67)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crime Alerts

Federal law requires universities to notify its campus community of a wide range of criminal activity on, or near, campus. There is variance in how universities provide this information. UC provides frequent communications and sends alerts about a range of criminal activity on and off campus. The data shows mixed results on whether these efforts make students feel more or less safe. Slightly more than half of students say the email campaigns make them feel safer, but 41 percent of all respondents feel the emails make them feel less safe. However,
the majority of students have altered some kind of behavior based off information provided in the emails.

Table 4.28 IAO Data: Impact of Crime Alert Emails

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>1-4 Disagree</th>
<th>5 Neutral</th>
<th>6-10 Agree</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the email notifications make me feel safer by keeping me informed of criminal activity</td>
<td>18% (62)</td>
<td>24% (79)</td>
<td>58% (195)</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19% (23)</td>
<td>26% (32)</td>
<td>55% (68)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the email notifications make me feel less safe by keeping me informed of criminal activity</td>
<td>41% (138)</td>
<td>30% (100)</td>
<td>29% (96)</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33% (40)</td>
<td>27% (33)</td>
<td>40% (48)</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have changed my personal behavior, such as not walking alone at night, locking my car, etc., because of the email notifications</td>
<td>12% (39)</td>
<td>23% (77)</td>
<td>65% (218)</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12% (14)</td>
<td>24% (29)</td>
<td>64% (78)</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Victims of Crime

Students were asked if they were victims of on campus or off campus crime to gain perspective on the amount of crime actually occurring. The results below are consistent with feelings of safety on campus versus off campus. Though a relatively small number of students (3 percent) had been victim on campus, a noteworthy percent (12 percent) had been victims of crime off campus.

Table 4.29 IAO Data: On Campus Crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you been a victim of a crime on-campuse:</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>China Percent</th>
<th>China Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3% (10)</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>4% (5)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>97% (331)</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>96% (119)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.30 IAO Data: Off Campus Crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you been a victim of a crime off-campus:</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>China Percent</th>
<th>China Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12% (5)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11% (2)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>88% (35)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>89% (16)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feelings regarding safety can be based on personal experiences but can also be derived from cultural surroundings. Students were asked if they had a close friend or family member that had been a victim of a crime to help determine the level of a perceived crime rate. This
allows for interesting comparisons between crime that students have experienced and crime that they have perceived. For example, though only three percent of respondents reported being victims of crime on campus, twenty percent of respondents said that they had a close friend or family member who had been a victim of on campus crime. Similarly, 12 percent of respondents reported being victims of crime off campus but 54 percent of respondents said they had a close friend or family member that was a victim of crime off campus.

Several factors could help explain these increases. First, as has been demonstrated above, international students tend to socialize primarily with other international students from their home country. This can result in a strongly connected culture where information is shared quickly. Therefore, one Chinese student’s experience with crime can spread quickly to the other 700 Chinese students. Second, international students may be more sensitive to crime based on their backgrounds. Crime rates tend to be low in China, for example, which could explain why a Chinese student may be significantly impacted when hearing of a friend’s experience with crime. Third, international graduate students may often bring spouses and children with them for their studies. It is possible that the close friends and family members are not UC students and therefore not reported in the data that only asked if UC students were victims of crime.

Table 4.31 IAO Data: Close Friend/Family Member and On Campus Crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you know a close friend or family member who has been a victim of a crime on-campus:</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>China Percent</th>
<th>China Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20% (69)</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>26% (32)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>80% (270)</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>74% (91)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.32 IAO Data: Close Friend/Family Member and Off Campus Crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you know a close friend or family member who has been a victim of a crime in the UC neighborhood:</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>China Percent</th>
<th>China Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54% (185)</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>60% (74)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>46% (156)</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>40% (50)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nightwalk is a volunteer program run by UC students that provides complimentary night transportation services for UC students requesting to be transported between campus and the surrounding area, such as taking a student from the library to their nearby off campus apartment. Nightwalk operates similar to a taxi service where students call to schedule a pick up and drop off, as opposed to the university’s shuttle system which operates scheduled routes primarily through the day. International students were asked about their familiarity with the Nightwalk program to determine if it was being adequately utilized by international students. The low user rate of 17 percent could provide an opportunity for Nightwalk to serve more international students and those students may feel more secure by being driven to their off campus destination rather than walking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever used the services of the Nightwalk program:</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>China Percent</th>
<th>China Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17% (57)</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>6% (7)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>79% (269)</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>86% (107)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know what the Nightwalk program is</td>
<td>4% (15)</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>8% (10)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summarizing the Data

There is a vast amount of quantitative data available to analyze. To remain consistent with the context of this dissertation, I have summarized information into four general categories: demographic, English language abilities, acclimation to campus culture, and safety.

*Demographic information*

The demographic makeup of the student body is changing, particularly in regards to the
rapidly increasing international undergraduate population. These new students are generally enrolling without the assistance of agents and are generally satisfied with their educational experience, aside from concerns of safety. This surge of international undergraduate students is changing the international student population as well. Until recently, the international student population was around 2,000 students, primarily graduate students, mainly from India, living off campus (since the on campus graduate housing facility was closed in 2007), receiving generous graduate scholarships, and only studying at the university for 1-3 years. If the undergraduate growth rates maintain (or even accelerates), the international student population could increase to 4,000 students within the next few years composed primarily of undergraduate students, mainly from China, with large numbers required to live on campus (at least their first year), paying tuition that this much higher the average Ohio students tuition, and studying at the university 4-6 years.

*English Language Abilities*

There are concerns with the English language abilities of this increasing international student population. However, the primary support for international students to improve their English skills are underutilized ESL courses that many graduate students are not required to take and many undergraduate students do not take even though they are required (more about this will be discussed in the next two chapters). Additionally, the ESL courses that do exist are focused on developing only speaking and writing skills and do not adequately prepare international students for traditional classroom experiences or acclimation to American culture.

*Acclimation to American Culture*

Increasing international student headcount does not ensure authentic international education. As we have seen, the international students largely socialize with, and live with, other
students from their home countries. This is a fairly natural occurrence; people often tend to socialize with others that are like them. However, this lack of acclimation can harm internationalization efforts because the international students may feel isolated from their American classmates. American students are not benefiting from the diverse insights and opinions that international students can provide. Equally important, the separation between the American and international student populations can reinforce the differences between the groups resulting in international enrollment efforts harming international education aspirations.

Safety Concerns

The safety concerns of international students are perhaps the most pressing matter in this dissertation. The poor ISB ratings, combined with the detailed information provided in the IAO survey, support that safety is a major, if not overwhelming, concern of UC’s international students. They not only feel unsafe, but many feel so unsafe that it negatively impacts their educational experience. The students expect the university to do more to improve safety and the university’s inability to meet such expectations could result in further dissatisfaction and alienation of international students. To complicate matters further, the students’ primary safety concerns are related to the off campus environment where the university has limited jurisdiction and resources to support.

The qualitative data in Chapter Five was derived from the two on-line discussion forums with Chinese students. The forums focused on the topics described above and allowed students to explain why they feel as they do and what they feel the university can do to assist their acclimation to campus culture. The comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data will allow for effective recommendations to the university that will help Chinese, and other international, students more fully acclimate to the university culture.
Chapter Five

Qualitative Data

To provide a more comprehensive understanding of the quantitative data detailed in Chapter Four, two on-line discussion forums were performed with Chinese students. One forum was with Chinese undergraduate students and the second was with Chinese graduate students. Discussions centered on the four main topics summarized in Chapter Four: demographics, English language abilities, safety, and acclimation to culture. The fifth topic of student recommendations was also added.

Students were told that their personal information would not be shared outside those participating in the forum. Therefore, undergraduate students have been assigned numbers, such as “Student 1,” and graduate students have been assigned letters, such as “Student B,” to protect their identity.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) identified this study as “not involving human subjects” and gave approval to proceed with the project. One factor for this designation was that the research was considered program improvement specifically for UC. Though this is true, much of the information gathered would be relevant to other universities hoping to improve acclimation of their international student population.
Discussion Process

To encourage a discussion format where students felt comfortable offering their opinions and responding to opinions expressed by others, each topic was presented in a broad, non-intrusive manner. The intent was to spark discussion rather than have students feel like they were being surveyed. This process worked well for the undergraduate students who often provided thorough information and engaged with other students throughout the discussion. However, the graduate students were much less responsive and less likely to provide detailed responses.

For undergraduate students, each topic was addressed on a different day and culminated in the fifth day being reserved for student recommendations. Students were asked to check in multiple times throughout the day. After completion of the discussion forum, undergraduate students were asked to provide opinions on the sixth topic of on-campus dining, particularly in regards to the dining halls that are included in their meals plans. Since the forum was closed, this question was emailed directly to participants. Graduate students were not asked this question because they do not have meal plans.

The graduate students participated after the undergraduate forum was completed and used the same Blackboard account as the undergraduate students. They could not see the responses from the undergraduate students but could see the questions asked. This resulted in some graduate students answering all the questions on the same day and few actively participated in discussions throughout the week.

Participation trends varied. Undergraduate students tended to be more responsive and verbose, but participation dwindled throughout the discussion period. Table 5.1 shows the number of undergraduate responses to each question:
Table 5.1 Undergraduate Discussion Participation by Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comfort with the English Language</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adjusting to Campus</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dining Halls (Undergrads only)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though six graduate students volunteered to participate, most students offered sporadic and concise contributions. Only one student participated in each discussion and offered detailed information for each topic. The Table 5.2 shows the number of responses to each question:

Table 5.2 Graduate Discussion Participation by Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comfort with the English Language</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adjusting to Campus</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To account for the low participation rate, I emailed students multiple times throughout the forum encouraging them to participate in the discussion, offered for students to email me their responses instead of posting them Blackboard, and extended the length of the forum so that students had more time to participate. Though participation rates were disappointing, enough information was provided to make positive contributions to this study.

These questions were asked for undergraduates, with slight variation when asked of graduate students:

*Day 1 – Introductions*

Let's start this process by getting to know each other a little bit. This will help us understand each other's perspectives for the rest of the week. Can everyone start by providing: 1) their preferred
name, 2) college, 3) length of time studying at UC, 4) gender, and 5) did you enroll directly at
UC or start at ELS before transitioning to UC?

Also, what are your general thoughts about how your experiences at UC are going? For example,
is studying at UC what you expected? It is better or worse than you expected? Are you happy to
be studying at UC?

Day 2 – Comfort with the English Language

Universities are always concerned with the English abilities of their international students (as
well as their American students). However, there seems to be significant concern at a number of
universities regarding the English abilities of their Chinese undergraduate students.

Additionally, a few students commented in yesterday's thread that having less familiarity with
the English language has negatively impacted them, such as in co-op interviews, meetings with
academic advisors, and in their ability to adapt to American culture.

Please share insight on your English abilities and concerns, such as: 1) do you feel that Chinese
undergraduate students struggle to communicate fluently in English? 2) now that you are here -
do you feel the university's TOEFL/IELTS requirements for undergrads are too low? too high?,
3) have you taken ESL classes at UC? If so, where they helpful?, 4) If you haven't taken ESL
classes, why haven't you taken them?, 5) do you think these concerns with the English abilities
of Chinese undergrads is over-exaggerated or do they deserve even more attention than they are
receiving?

Day 3 – Safety

Many of you have completed the International Student Barometer (ISB) that is sent every fall
and/or the International Admissions Office survey that was sent out last May. In both surveys,
international students seemed very concerned about safety. Safety also came up in our day one
discussion as a significant issue for several students.

Let’s take this opportunity to share your views on safety. Here are some questions to reflect upon but feel free to add any other information you feel is important: 1) do you feel that UC is a safe campus?, 2) do you feel that the UC neighborhood is safe?, 3) do you think international students tend to be more concerned about safety than their American classmates? Why or why not?, 4) Do you feel safety has been improving or getting worse at UC over the past few years?, 5) how important is a safe campus community to your academic and social experiences as a student?, 6) is the campus community as safe, more safe, or less safe than you were expecting?, and 7) are there particular places, times, etc. where you feel unsafe (for example, certain parts of campus at certain times of day or certain places off-campus at certain times of night)?

Due to the students’ significant concerns about safety, follow-up safety questions were added to the safety discussion topic:

Safety is obviously a major concern to several students participating in this forum. I was wondering if people would be willing to answer just a few more questions about safety to provide even more insight: 1) have you, or a close friend/relative, been a victim of crime while at UC?, 2) If so, can you provide a brief description?, 3) students often hear about the bad parts of safety through campus emails or from friends. However, there is actually some good news regarding safety - such as that crime on-campus has been down each year for several years in a row and that UC has fairly low crime rates when compared to comparable universities and cities. If UC were to share more of this good news, do you think it would help students feel more safe?, 4) If yes to #3, how would you suggest that UC share this information with international students?
Day 4 – Adjusting to Campus

One of the most important aspects of international education is that foreign students engage in their new home communities. However, it is quite common that international students - particularly those from large student-sending countries like China or India - are not fully engaged in their university community.

Here are some starter questions for this discussion: 1) Do you think Chinese undergraduate students are engaged in UC's campus community? Why or why not? 2) Do you feel that your orientation program helped you begin to feel like you are part of the UC family? 3) Do you feel that UC students are welcoming to international students? 4) Do you feel that UC faculty is welcoming to international students?, 5) Are there any particular things that have helped you feel part of the UC family?, 6) Are there any particular things that have made it difficult for you to feel like you are part of the UC family?

Day 5 – Your Recommendations

This has been a very informative and important discussion session. I truly appreciate everyone's honesty and insight. On our final discussion day, please reflect on what has been discussed the past few days and offer what you would believe are practical but important things that UC could do to help improve the experiences of international students.

As I recall, these were some of the major issues that you have mentioned (but it is possible that I missed something):

1) Problems with finding co-op employment
2) Struggles with the English language
3) Struggling to connect with American culture
4) Off-campus safety
5) Not feeling very connected to UC’s campus community

A separate question related to food and culture in the dining halls was asked only to undergraduate students after the completion of the discussion forum. Most incoming undergraduate students are required to live on-campus and purchase a meal plan for the dining halls (or “cafeterias”). There is no graduate housing available, therefore no graduate students have meal plans or eat in dining facilities frequently. They are more likely to eat at on-campus food retailers, such as Taco Bell or Kuma Neko Sushi, but many retailers do not operate late in the evening when many graduate students take classes. This question was only asked of undergraduate students to learn their experiences of both food and the social situations of eating in the dining halls. As recalled by Said, the experience of eating different food in dining halls can help students feel isolated from their peers. This question was asked after the completion of the discussion forums so it was emailed to students since they were no longer utilizing the Blackboard account:

Hello students,

I was wondering if everyone would be willing to answer a few more questions regarding food at UC:

1) do you have a meal plan,

2) do you feel the cafeteria/dining hall environment is welcoming to international students who may have food preferences different from Americans,

3) do you feel that the food offered in the cafeterias/dining halls (such as Center Court or Market Pointe) meets your needs,

4) do you feel that the food offered in on-campus restaurants (such as Taco Bell, Kuma Neko Sushi, etc.) meet your needs,
5) is there any kind of food you would like to see offered regularly in the cafeterias/dining halls, and
6) are there any kinds of restaurants that you would like to see added to the UC campus?

Thanks again for all the help!

Jon

Undergraduate Responses

Responses to Introductions (Demographics)

Ten undergraduate students participated in the discussion forums. Of the ten, five were female students, three were male, and two did not mention their gender. The students represented four colleges, the McMicken College of Arts and Sciences (A&S), Lindner College of Business (LCB or COB), College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS), and the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP) without over-representation in any one particular college.

Many Chinese undergraduate students start in the Cincinnati ELS Center, a private company that operates on UC’s campus to provide intensive English training to foreign students, prior to enrolling at UC. However, only two of these students began in ELS, seven enrolled directly at UC and one did not indicate whether he or she began at the Cincinnati ELS Center. The undergraduate students also had notable differences in length of study at UC, ranging from a student who had only been studying at UC for a few weeks to a student who had studied almost four years and was preparing to graduate.

The students displayed rather poor English writing skills. Almost every post included grammar mistakes and improper word choices. Such mistakes could be attributed to several factors, such as unfamiliarity with the English language or students feeling that the discussions
were being conducted in an informal setting and therefore not placing much emphasis on grammar. Regardless, all quotes assigned to students below are direct quotations. Changes, mainly to remove personal identity or for clarification (such as spelling out an acronym used by the students), are indicated in brackets.

The undergraduate students generally expressed feelings of overall satisfaction at the university aside from isolated complaints or concerns, such as Student 1 stating:

I like most of UC and especially the environment. I enjoy life here and study here. Not very big so I don't need to hurry up for classrooms' transition. I do hope there could be more grassland over school. No just around campus but in the middle. I mean, grassland that people can sitting on and enjoy the sunshine~

Student 3 provided the most positive experiences, including developing friendship with American students and successfully acclimating to campus:

I am [student 3], and I am a sophomore student majoring in Accounting. I lived on campus during my freshman year and now I live with another Chinese girl in an apartment near campus. It's a great time to live in the dorm with other three American girls. We did have some tiny conflicts, but we finally made it ok. Though we are not live together now, we are still good friends and meet up for lunch sometimes. For myself, it's really the best and fastest way to get involved in American life and make new friends. As for the academic part, [College name] has really awesome professors. Most of professor I had are really nice and helpful. I am currently applying for a co-op position too. Though it's not required for [college name] students and it's really hard to get one, I still want to have a shot.
UC invented Co-Operative Education, or “Co-Op,” in 1906. This system of education allows students in select, almost exclusively undergraduate, academic programs, such as those in Business, Design, and Engineering, the opportunity to earn over a year of paid, professional work experience as a student. UC’s Co-Op program is heavily touted by the university in recruitment efforts and can be a major influence in students deciding to enroll at UC. Concerns about Co-Op and the U.S. economy were surprisingly common during the introduction session. Six students expressed concerns about Co-Op, such as frustration at not having successful Co-Op interviews or disappointment in their academic program not providing a Co-Op option. The most articulate frustration at finding a Co-Op job was described by Student 9:

As [Student 10] said, finding a Co-op job is painful, and it is specially hard for an international student to make it. I failed for my fifth interview yesterday, and I came to think about if I can get one finally.

In my mind, the point is our identification-- most of the companies are unwilling to interview an international student, let alone giving an offer. The second reason might be our lack of communication skills, especially while being interviewed. We are easily to be stressful or sometimes we cannot catch the point(sometimes even some American style jokes) during communicating with employers.

I hope there could be a mechanism that UC could give international students some extra help for finding a Coop or just some special policies. For example, UC can create more on campus Coop opportunities that do not require the permanent residence identification or citizenship, which could help a lot.
Though most students expressed general satisfaction, Student 5 expressed primarily negative experiences and significant concerns in his/her introduction:

Hi guys,

I am [Student 5], a female freshman studying [academic program] from [college name] at UC and I enrolled directly at UC. Honestly speaking, studying at UC is worse than what I expected.

I would like to share some reasons. First, I have no sense of security at UC because the neighbor surrounding is not safe. There are many criminal offences. Actually I don't care much about whether Cincinnati is a safe city but I think students living in or close to campus should be protected well. However, it does not. I hope that UC could continuously strengthen our safeguard mechanism. It is just sooooo important.

Second, there are few specialized activities for international students. I know most of Chinese students are willing to get involved in American students but we often failed because of our communication skills and racial identity. We are also a big group of members at UC and we spend more on our tuition. Unfortunately, it is always unfair for us.

Third, the advising problems. I have changed two majors during the past four months. It is horrible or might be ridiculous. Sometimes I just miss a point due to my communiction skill or cannot exactly express what I am trying to say. If I miss some important information, I need to set up a new appointment with my adviser or sent an email. That is
really time consuming so why not setting up a special advising center for international students? I hope that advices could fit the best for my interests.

Anyway, I love REC center [campus recreation center] and classes in CCM [College-Conservatory of Music].

Responses to Comfort with the English Language

The undergraduate students generally admitted to having weak English communication skills and displayed frustration and concern with their ability to communicate. The three primary concerns were: 1) the inability to sustain a lengthy or fast-paced conversation with Americans, 2) not understanding American cultural references, and 3) limited interaction with American students causing an inability to acclimate to campus culture.

Students complained that even if their English language skills were strong, they struggled to keep pace with the American faculty members or students who spoke quickly. As Student 5 explains:

When I have already missed some points, they continued talking so I could not follow them. I really want to get involved but it just fails. That makes me feel freaking out all the time. I want to get good opportunities to talk to American students in order to improve my communication skills and I really need more explanations about something confused. However, do the most of American students really have patient to listen to me? They may think it is unnecessary to talk to me.

The students frequently referenced not understanding American culture but did not explicitly state what aspects of culture they were referencing. However, it can be inferred from their comments that aspects in which they particularly struggled to understand included idioms
(i.e. “kicked the bucket”), cultural references (i.e. “Black Friday shopping”), popular sports references (i.e. “everybody huddle up before our presentation starts”) or common sociopolitical understandings (i.e. “Constitutional rights”).

Perhaps most concerning is that the Chinese students feel that their language and cultural understanding limitations result in isolation from American faculty and students. Many students commented that their only interaction with American students is in the classroom where interactions varies greatly; there may be no interaction between students in some classes while other classes have extensive interaction, such as group projects, that exemplifies the Chinese students’ language difficulties and creates tension between the American and international students. As Student 3 explains:

What really cause the problems I think is the limited access to Americans or American culture. It's really weird to say limited access to Americans when we are in USA. However, that's the truth, for example, someone can never talk with an American in his class for a whole quarter. This may due the the conservative Chinese culture. There is nowhere for him to improve his English and get involved in campus life.

These feelings of isolation support the concerns detailed throughout this dissertation that simply enrolling large numbers of international students does not guarantee international education takes place on a university campus.

Responses to Safety

Students unanimously stated that UC’s campus is fairly safe but that the neighborhood around campus is very unsafe, particularly at night. These statements were consistent with the quantitative data described in Chapter Four. However, the discussion forums did identify three particularly interesting traits. First, students routinely referred to their distance from home, and
their parents, as increasing their apprehension. Second, the students’ unfamiliarity with the U.S. legal system increases their anxiety as many assume they do not have legal rights.

This fear of lack of legal protection, combined with the concerns of being far from parents, was mentioned frequently. As Student 5 states:

We don’t have as many rights as Americans so we cannot be protected well. There are few reliable organizations that we can dependent on. In addition, we are new here so we don’t know much about American law. Our parents are just so far from us. Every time when I called mum in China, safety is the most important thing she worries about.

Third, the students felt that China is incredibly safe so their unfamiliarity with crime at home intensifies their fear of safety on and around UC’s campus. Most students referenced combinations of these three concerns when explaining why they feel unsafe. Student 6 bests summarizes these concerns:

International students, especially those from my country [China], take safety issues very seriously. Despite that American students don't care less about safety, we have more to consider. We are on the other side of the planet, far far away from home, parents just don't feel safe send us to any unsecured places. Other reasons can be lifestyle conflicts (Hanging out at night is equally safe as at day in my city), fear of crime and things like that.

As described in Chapter Four, this fear is pervasive. Students frequently referenced a common sense of insecurity within the Chinese student population and had experienced, or had a close friend who experienced, crime in Cincinnati. One student stated that crime has not changed in his/her 1.5 years at UC while another student stated that it has improved. Another student, who expressed some of the most severe safety concerns, said that he/she had recently used
Nightwalk for the first time and that this helped reduce some of his/her safety concerns.

Responses to Adjusting to Campus

Four of the five students who responded to questions of acclimation stated that they feel Chinese undergraduate students are not engaged with the UC campus community. Similar to previous discussions, they frequently pointed to communication and cultural issues limiting their ability to connect to students. Most Chinese students said that UC’s American students were friendly or neutral towards Chinese students; only one student believed that UC students do not like international students.

A consistent theme regarding lack of continual socialization efforts emerged. Students felt that their initial orientation was helpful in preparing them for life at UC, and introduced them to some new friends, but that they would like on-going social activities to help create a more global campus culture, as Student 8 explains “Orientation program is good for new comers. If there are more follow-up orientation programs that would be perfect.”

Participants also explained that because their orientation program primarily included other international students, they not only met few Americans but it reinforced their relationships with other Chinese students. As student 9 explains, “I believe at least it is a good way to know some Chinese students...and finally get to be a Chinese community, but it is almost impossible to know any foreigners.” Ironically, the orientation program may reinforce segregation.

Responses to Dining

Students provided short, general insight to questions about dining. This included questions about the food options in the “all-you-care-to-eat” dining halls as well as on-campus chain restaurants, such as Taco Bell and Kuma Neko Sushi. The students did not have strong
comments on the food quality at either type of establishment. However, they did appreciate that
the dining halls provide stir fry stations where students can select their own vegetables and
meats. They also appreciated that chop sticks and fried rice are now available in the dinning
halls. The students made no comments of negative social experiences in the dining halls.

Student 8 had specific suggestions on food that could be offered in the dining halls to
meet the desires of Chinese students, such as dumplings, crab Rangoon, and Korean food. This
student also suggested providing hot, or at least non-cold, water throughout campus:

I wish there are some places on campus providing hot water. Because all water around
campus are cold with ice. People from China or some Asian countries prefer to drink hot
water. Sometimes I don't understand why people add ice to every drink even in winter.

Responses to Recommendations

Some students offered significantly more in-depth recommendations than others but all
recommendations generally aligned with the topics mentioned previously. However, students
frequently stated not having any recommendations for resolving the topics that were discussed.

Students confirmed that finding Co-Op employment is a significant issue. Student 3
suggested organizing a Co-Op job fair specifically targeting international students. Student 8 also
suggested UC initiate closer relationships with businesses that have global interests in hopes of
developing more Co-Op, or perhaps post-graduation, jobs for international students.

Students 2 and 6 stressed that UC should encourage, or require, more interaction between
American students and Chinese students to help Chinese students develop their English skills.
Student 8 also suggested that the university should expand its writing tutoring services.

All students explained that safety is a major concern but only Student 6 offered explicit
examples of things UC could do to improve off campus safety, this included developing a map of
high and low crime areas and doing a much better job preparing students before, or immediately upon, arrival for the safety issues surrounding UC’s campus.

Only three students offered suggestions to improve Chinese students connecting with campus or American culture. Students 5 and 9 expressed hope that a new Asian student organization will help develop social programs and recruit American students interested in Asian cultures. Student 5 offered suggestions for encouraging Chinese students to connect to American culture by the university helping Chinese students overcome their natural connection to other Chinese students and “Encourage and push us REALLY hard to take risks, present ourselves and make new friends.” Student 5 also suggested having more international students take leadership roles in orientation activities and supported the idea of creating courses designed to teach American culture to international students in interesting and engaging manners.

Student 5 encouraged the university to work with “the Church” to engage Chinese students. Many religious, often evangelical, organizations embrace newly arrived international students, such as organizing social activities, providing temporary housing, and picking up students at the airport. Student 5 was also very critical of the university requirement that students coming from more than 50 miles from campus be required to live on campus their freshmen year and recommended this policy be changed for international students who may have different living expectations than the American students that surround them. He described his freshmen year living on-campus as feeling like “hell” and “jail.”

Graduate Responses

As described previously, the graduate students generally participated sporadically and only provided short responses. This may have been partly due to the graduate students being able
to see all the questions at once rather than sequentially like the undergraduate students. Therefore, some graduate students simply answered each question as though participating in a survey and did not check in regularly for discussion. However, a small number did participate regularly and exchanged a number of detailed observations and insights.

*Responses to Introductions (Demographics)*

The six graduate students represented four UC colleges, including the McMicken College of Arts and Sciences (A&S), Lindner College of Business (LCB or COB), College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS), and the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP) without over-representation in any one particular college. Three students were studying at the Master’s level, two were studying at the doctoral level and one did not indicate his/her level of study. Only two students indicated their gender. None of the graduate students began at the Cincinnati ELS Center before enrolling at UC. Similar to the undergraduate students, the graduate students had various lengths of study at UC, ranging from less than one year to more than three years.

The students generally shared positive comments about their experiences at UC. However, financial concerns were more prevalent than with the undergraduate students. Student A was “depressed” that Co-Op was not available for his graduate major and that finding on-campus employment was very difficult while Student E was grateful to be participating in one of the few Graduate Co-Op programs. Student C was concerned about financial issues:

However, I feel increasingly harder to break even. The tuition of UC grows every year, the rents for apartments/houses near the campus grow every year, but our financial support (UGS) is reduced a couple of times. Our [academic] program began to charge a new program fee last year. Though I don't feel very comfortable to drive (I have to be
very careful behind the wheel rather than listening to music or reading a newspaper in a bus), given the safety conditions and the insufficient shuttle route/stop coverage, I bought a car. This incurs other expenditures like gas and insurance.

Student C was also the only student to mention safety concerns. While student D said that he/she was not expecting the campus to be so hilly or to participate in so many night classes, Student C expressed that safety was much worse than he/she expected:

However, I am not happy with the living conditions around the campus. Safety is a major concern. We frequently received reports on crimes happened very close to the campus. I knew a friend's roommates got robbed just outside of her apartment building. I also heard the home of a student (whoes office is just next door to mine) was broken-in and valuables taken twice. These are certainly not good. We generally don't dare to go outside at night (or even in the day) without a car, which is hard to imagine for college students studying in China.

Responses to Comfort with the English Language

Generally, the graduate students displayed stronger writing skills than the undergraduate students and felt that Chinese graduate students do not struggle as much with English communication as Chinese undergraduate students. This could be partly due to graduate students being enrolled in smaller academic programs, which tend to have higher rates of international enrollment, and have more direct interaction with faculty members. Student C explains that his/her communication problems occur more frequently off-campus than on-campus:

For me as a second-year PhD student, the regular communication with UC professors, staff members and students is ok. I have no problem in the class discussing academic
topics since I read relevant English materials for several years and I know the proper
terms and expressions. Most of my communication problems arose when I was off-
campus. Most people I’ve talked to are nice (such as landlords, cashiers, agents for some
companies, etc.), but some of them are very impatient. Sometimes I made people upset
because (1) I didn't understand the English or (2) I am unfamiliar with certain rules
and/or customs that local people took as granted. It is these hard times that made me feel
uncomfortable. I am always willing to take an English class, especially those introducing
American culture, customs and English idioms.

Student F also explained that English communication is more pressing of an issue at the
undergraduate level than the graduate level:

The only difference between undergrads and grad students is undergrads require more English in
their daily study since most of their classmates are American guys and most of graduate
students are international students.

Several students commented that English language abilities are closely related to personality and
background. They also felt that students from more urban backgrounds in China tend to have
more English exposure than those from rural backgrounds. Additionally, students who are more
extraverted often tend to develop stronger English skills because they interact more with
American students. This statement from Student D infers that he/she blames part of his/her
English communication issues on not being more outspoken with classmates:

I think language is still the biggest issue for Chinese students, no matter which level of
study they are engaged in. I did Business English for my undergraduate in China. I had a
satisfactory score for the IELTS test before I came here. Even thought, I still encounter
many difficulties in communicating with classmates academically. I have fewer problems
in daily conversation, but when it comes to the academic discussion, I feel less comfortable and confident to speak in English. As a result, I speak less and listen more. That also has something to do with my personal nature.

Responses to Safety

Only two students shared responses about the topic of safety. Student A had a friend who was robbed at gunpoint and Student D complained that the UC transportation is inadequate, especially a night. Student D offered specific recommendations regarding the campus transportation service area and also complained that the Nightwalk program was not effectively managed. As suggested in Chapter Four, Student D’s concerns about safety have led to frustration with university leadership, “I feel pretty safe in the campus. But outside the campus, especially in the south and east side, I am always worried when I am walking alone. I am not totally satisfied with the efforts from the university in terms of safety and convenience.”

Responses to Adjusting to Campus

Unlike undergraduate students, a thorough university orientation program is not provided to graduate students. The lack of such a program may harm graduate students’ ability to aclimate to campus culture. Traditional graduate students are often less motivated to engage fully in campus culture for a variety of reasons, such as having families at home, working full or part-time in addition to their studies, or being enrolled in short-duration degree programs. These factors can enhance the challenges of graduate international students to engage with their American graduate students. Student D provides relevant insight to the struggles of international graduate students engaging in campus culture:
It is hard for us to fully engaged in UC community with Americans, especially for graduate students. Unlike undergraduates, they don't live in or near campus, and they have their own activities besides study. In fact, a lot of my classmates are working either part-time or full-time, and they only attend classes in the evenings. Therefore we don't spend much time together, and don't know each other very well. Besides that, there are not many places or occasions for us to know many American students. Therefore I cannot tell whether we are welcomed or not by them. I guess their attitude is indifferent, because we are separate groups anyway. The faculty are welcoming, though, providing many advises in academic work.

Student E suggests that one way to bridge the gap between international students and American students is to build on their interests in each other’s culture. Focusing on the positive that one has to offer, such as the perspective of a Chinese student in a class discussion, rather than the negatives of what one person may bring, such as a heavy accent, will allow American and international students to engage with each other:

Secondly, as for how should we merge into the American students, language and culture may cause problems based upon the subjects we are talking about. I should say even today, I'm still confused about the rules of the American football, one that's so popular here. However, why don't we start to pick up what we don't know but are curious about?! I'm sure with the rapid progress of our own country, there are also lots of our American friends who are a lot curious about what it is like in China and how the young live like here. In this case, why don't we start with these subjects now, as a kind of way to join their communications? Some of my American friends used to ask me why I'm so quiet all
the time. I replied that I felt inconfident with my English. You guys know what the answers from them? Most of them told me that even though there might be accent issues, but they are all more confident with my English than I am. Later on, they would always try to invite me in their talks, "[Student E], so what's your opinion?" "How about you [Student E]?" Things like that. I'm so moved and started to join them from then on.

Responses to Your Recommendations

Three students provided recommendations for improving the acclimation of Chinese students to campus culture; only two of these responses were thorough. Student C had four recommendations. First, the Nightwalk program needed a website so that students could arrange transportation on-line rather than with a phone call. However, it is important to note that the Nightwalk program already has a website where this is possible. This may identify the need for Nightwalk to expand its marketing to ensure graduate students are aware of its services.

Student C also suggested building a pedestrian walkway between a particularly dangerous intersection near campus that was the site of a serious accident involving Chinese ELS students in the early days of the graduate discussion forum.

The third suggestion was to develop a lecture series of Chinese, or Chinese American students, who have acclimated into American culture but retained their Chinese cultural identity and language skills. These lecturers would provide motivational advice on how Chinese students can adapt to American culture.

Student C’s last recommendation was to build an effective and sustained communication campaign between international students and university leadership. This included a program modeled off Tsinghua University’s “President’s E-Mailbox” where students can email the President and receive a quick response, which often includes action to address the problem.
Student D also had four helpful recommendations. First, student D believed the university should provide significant assistance to graduate students needing off-campus graduate housing. This would include helping them identify suitable housing in a safe location as well as matching with other incoming graduate students in need of roommates.

Finding employment is also difficult for international students so Student D suggested building social programs, such as a “Recruit a Cat” program, to help match international students with on-campus and off-campus employers. Student D also recommended expanding programming at the library and through ESL to provide more support for international students who need assistance in learning how to navigate the library’s resources and write academic papers.

Student D’s final recommendation was to work with the City of Cincinnati to improve the signage and communication of its public bus system. Currently, the bus system provides minimal print material to students who can be confused by the routing systems. The buses also do not announce stops so students mistakenly miss their stops. These issues result in lower international student ridership, which limits the financial impact international students could have on the bussing system and also prevents international students from having a viable means of transportation to leave campus and explore the city.

Summary

The discussion forums provided valuable insight to help translate the quantitative statistics into personal experiences and perspectives. The forums also empowered these students
to voice their disappointment with issues they face at UC, as well as share what is working well.

In Chapter Six, I will outline a number of recommendations for realistic efforts that the university can implement to support the acclimation of international students to campus culture, which will significantly improve the learning experiences of all UC’s students. These recommendations will be based off the quantitative information details in Chapter Four as well as the important insight, and recommendations, provided directly by students who participated in the discussion forums described above.
Chapter Six
Recommendations

This dissertation has established that international education is integral to education in the twenty-first century and that international recruitment by American universities is likely to dramatically increase international student enrollment on American campuses for the foreseeable future. However, the connection between international enrollment increases and campus internationalization is not as direct as it may appear. Simply enrolling large numbers of international students does not mean that they will acclimate to campus culture. In fact, enrolling large numbers of international students can lead to more segregation and tension between international and American students. Therefore, universities engaging in aggressive international recruitment efforts have a responsibility to not only meet enrollment targets, but also to develop a truly global campus culture. Creating such a culture requires careful planning, and dedicating new financial resource to encourage international students to acclimate and encourage American students to welcome their new foreign classmates. The recommendations below will help ensure such processes occur. Though these recommendations are intended for the University of Cincinnati, many would be relevant at other American universities experiencing similar challenges with increasing international enrollment. It is also important to note that these recommendations have been derived by the quantitative and qualitative analyses in Chapters Four and Five, respectively, and are being made largely from direct student input. The process detailed in these chapters can serve as a model for other universities to replicate as they hope to improve their international students ability to acclimate to campus culture.
**Encouraging Internationalization Pre-Arrival**

UC communicates regularly with international undergraduate students throughout the enrollment process, including assigning each potential international undergraduate to a volunteer International Student Ambassador at the time that they apply. The International Student Ambassador serves as a peer advisor throughout the enrollment process. These ambassadors offer advice on issues ranging from how to Confirm Admission to what students should pack for move-in. However, the students could also be encouraged to provide personal testimony on how to learn from the issues they faced when enrolling at UC. Most importantly, they could stress the importance of international students acclimating to campus culture by encouraging international students to participate in the many events and programs designed to help in this area.

Additionally, this undergraduate model could be adapted by the Graduate School, which offers no such service. This would introduce current and incoming graduate international students and would ensure a smoother transition for the graduate students to campus while also encouraging them to arrive with intentions of engaging with the campus community.

The undergraduate admissions office provides similar peer counseling services through its “telecounselor” program to its incoming domestic students, such as reminders for upcoming deadlines and invitations to campus events. However, the undergraduate admissions office does not conduct significant interest inventories of potential or incoming students. Tracking student interests could lead to implementing communication campaigns encouraging the students to not only enroll at UC, but to participate in internationalization efforts that may interest them upon arrival. This could include efforts such as emailing applicants a short student interest survey to indicate if they are interested in things such as study abroad, learning a foreign language, or participating in student organizations that support internationalization goals and would allow the
international office to contact interested students and build positive relationships before they arrive on campus.

Contacting American students with internationalization interests is relatively easy; changing campus culture, including the expectations of American students, their parents, faculty, and staff is not. This can only be achieved through strategic efforts, such as highlighting internationalization in university marketing materials, holding cross-cultural training programs for student, faculty and staff, stressing the benefits of international students studying on campus to American families, and promoting internationalization success stories across campus. Placing internationalization at the core of the university’s identity will help change campus culture, but this will take time. However, if the university embraces and promotes internationalization it will eventually lead to a campus where American faculty and students expect, and ideally seek, interaction with international students.

Orientation and Social Programming

International undergraduate students are required to participate in international orientation activities that include mandatory check-in sessions, placement testing, advising sessions, and course registration. This orientation week typically occurs the week before classes begin. Students in the discussion forums stated that orientation was helpful but did not go far enough. Most concerning, several students indicated that because international orientation was so international student focused it reinforced international students feeling segregated from American students, and even from international students from other countries. Therefore, the undergraduate international orientation program should be expanded to provide not only the necessary academic requirements, such as placement testing and course registration, but also important social programming to help international students befriend American students and
meet current international students who can serve as models of acclimation.

American undergraduate students attend a two-day orientation program the summer before classes begin. Incoming international students rarely attend these sessions due to visa issues and expensive transportation costs for such a program. Though new international students are likely not attending these events, current international students may be available. These students could serve as guest speakers or facilitators of discussion groups with American students to reinforce the importance of American students engaging with their international classmates to receive the benefits of an international education that is available to them without having to step foot off campus. In turn, the American students will expect a vibrant international community when they arrive for classes.

Graduate students have no orientation program. Many international graduate students rely on help from their related cultural student organization, such as the Chinese Student and Scholar Association or the Indian Student Association. Though these student groups provide a tremendous service to incoming students and the university, the reliance of incoming international students on these organizations for basic assistance can reinforce cultural segregation. Establishing a graduate orientation program, open to both American and international students, that provides basic information, such as a campus tour and information sessions about university services while also encouraging interaction between American and international students would help all graduate students acclimate to university culture.

Several students also suggested developing more consistent social activities. These social activities could provide helpful areas for international students to meet with other international students and ideally meet with American students. Programming could include social events, such as international coffee hours or off-campus field trips, as well as providing convenient
services for students, such as frequent trips to ethnic grocery stores in the greater Cincinnati area. If developed and marketed properly, the programs could attract American students in addition to international students.

*Academic Planning*

UC only recently began providing English As a Second Language (ESL) courses to undergraduate students. The courses are divided into two primary areas – speaking and writing. These courses are helpful but students consistently complained that they are not enough to help them understand American culture. It is worth reiterating, however, the very poor writing skills students displayed in the discussion forums which could indicate that the students have over-confidence in their English communication abilities.

The ESL department could develop an American Culture course (or perhaps courses) to introduce foreign students to American culture, such as common idioms, expressions, and abbreviations that may not be familiar to non-American, and even non-Cincinnati, students. Additionally, the American Culture course could provide basic overviews of important social, religious, and political cultures that permeate campus and the U.S. Careful planning would ensure that these do not become indoctrination courses. They are not designed to shape social, religious, or political views but rather to provide a general level of understanding of such topics that will better prepare students for academic coursework while helping them understand the cultural references they will confront in everyday situations. For example, one subject may include a general overview of the two main political parties in the U.S. The intent is not to encourage students to join a political party, but to provide them a basic understanding of the differences between the parties that could help prepare them for political science courses or simply to better understand political issues that permeate American news and culture on a daily
The ESL department could also work with other academic departments to create parallel courses, or perhaps co-teach academic courses, tailored to the learning styles of international students. For example, the ESL department is creating an ESL writing course that is the equivalent of freshmen composition. The goal is that the ESL students and the English composition students will have the same set of writing skills at the completion of their relevant course, but the manners in which those concepts are taught will be tailored to their different needs. For example, ESL students may be given writing assignments that help expose them to American culture or history or may be required to participate in more group work that will prepare them for working in group settings of their traditional academic courses.

The university has a range of courses designed to introduce American students to foreign cultures, such as Introduction to Modern Africa, Introduction to Asian Studies, and Geography of Religions. Rather than create more courses encouraging American students to interact with international students, it may be more effective to creatively package existing courses. One example could be creating a learning community, or a series of related courses that students volunteer to take, that connects international students with American students. For example, the learning community may include all students taking the same math class, American students taking a foreign culture course while international students take the American Culture course, and culminate with all students taking a comparative politics course together. The students would each take two classes together (math and comparative politics) and each take a third course (a foreign culture course for the American students or American culture course for the international students) separately. This would provide significant international exposure to all students while also encouraging positive social and academic interactions between students. Also, keeping
participation voluntary would ensure that only students interested in receiving such an international experience would be allowed to participate. (Ideally, the efforts described previously would result in a large number of American students interested in such a learning community.)

As students mentioned in the discussion forums, one of the main issues in requiring students to take ESL courses is that they often do not align with their degree requirements and therefore are seen as burdensome courses that will increase course loads, tuition payments, and time to earn a degree. Very few students want to take courses that “don’t count” so ensuring that ESL courses count towards a degree is of primary importance. This can be done in two ways. First, most academic programs have a foreign language requirement but waive that requirement for students fluent in a foreign language, including international students. However, those students are required to replace those foreign language credits with other foreign culture courses but American culture courses are not counted as foreign culture courses. This could result in Chinese students being required to take courses about French culture rather than the American culture they flew half way around the world to experience because French culture is labeled as foreign culture but American culture is not. Therefore, closing this loophole and allowing international students to meet foreign language requirements with ESL courses (which, after all, are foreign language courses for international students) allows the ESL courses to count towards their degree and makes them a much more attractive option to students. A second issue is ensuring that appropriate ESL courses are cross-referenced with the appropriate discipline, so that they count towards students’ graduation requirements. This has already been done with ESL composition class that equates to English composition, but needs to be done if an ESL American Cultures course is created. For example, the American Cultures course should be on the list of
eligible courses meeting a social science requirement so that American culture courses “count” as foreign culture courses for international students.

These solutions may not be as relevant to graduate students because graduate programs have shorter duration and graduate students have limited course options. However, coding the courses as undergraduate or graduate courses could help this area (which is already done for ESL speaking and writing courses). Additionally, graduate academic departments could review their course requirements to decide if some of these new courses should be made available to international students in their graduate programs.

*Globalizing the Curriculum*

To encourage an atmosphere of global understanding and appreciation, the university could encourage its faculty to include global components in their courses. Faculty could be encouraged to follow this guideline in a number of ways. For example, the university could create a team of faculty members that have successfully globalized their curriculums that volunteer to work with other faculty members interested in globalizing theirs. The university could also do a much better job of recognizing faculty that globalize their curriculum, such as highlighting their achievements in the annual Diversity Conference or in marketing materials.

Another way that faculty could assist international students, with little effort on their part, is to have their lectures video-recorded and made immediately available to students. Many international students stated that they struggled to keep up with fast-paced (or perhaps to most Americans, normal-paced) discussions and presentations. Recording presentations would allow international (and all) students to the opportunity to review course lectures, presentations, and discussions and to ensure that the notes they took during class align with the information that was presented. Students could also review these video-recordings as part of their preparation for
giving class presentations. Faculty concerned that students would skip class and watch the videos could simply take attendance in class (which is becoming more commonly automated via student PRS transmitters that track attendance) and include class attendance in the grading process.

Course Registration Obstacles

As mentioned previously, international students often arrive just days before classes begin due to visa restrictions and travel expenses. The current undergraduate course registration process requires students to attend on-campus orientation prior to registering for courses and treats registration on a first-come, first-served basis. This inadvertently, but directly, places international students at a substantial course registration disadvantage for two reasons. First, the ESL program does not know until international students arrive how many ESL courses to offer at each level because students have not taken their placement tests. This often results in inefficient course planning and students not being able to take the ESL courses that they need. Second, international undergraduate freshmen are essentially required to take the courses that the 4,000 freshmen ahead of them did not want to take. This results in undesirable schedules and more importantly, in an over-concentration of international undergraduate students in the limited course sections that had room for more students.

To address these issues, the university could adopt an early registration process for international students resulting in international students being assigned their first semester courses prior to arrival. The positive aspects of such an approach are a smoother transition for international students to campus, ensuring that international students are not overly concentrated in certain course sections, and providing more time for academic units to plan course offerings to meet the needs of their students. The two negative aspects of this are concerns that students may complain that they are taking classes (and paying tuition) for courses they did not select and that
this approach could be misconstrued as giving international students priority registration. For example, one may complain that other student groups, veterans for example, are more deserving of such special privileges. Such comparisons may not be relevant as they appear because international students will more than likely enroll in two to three ESL courses their first semester and therefore compete with American students for only one to two classes the first semester. Additionally, careful academic planning can ensure the international students are not enrolling in overly-subscribed courses and taking courses that have seats available and meet their academic needs.

Graduate students tend not to have such registration issues as their courses do not often exceed capacity and they have less freedom to select courses. However, if graduate programs do face similar registration problems, this model could easily be extended to meet their needs.

**Co-Op and On Campus Employment**

Gaining U.S. work experience is a major concern to international students. First, students want the professional development opportunity of working for a U.S. corporation, or even simply working on campus, to add to their resume. Second, the obvious financial implications are helpful for students that are often paying much higher tuition expenses than their American classmates. Third, the social experience of working is also important as it provides another opportunity for engagement with Americans (such as colleagues or customers) allowing students to improve their English communication skills and expand their understanding of American culture.

Disappointment with Co-Op opportunities was prevalent in the undergraduate discussion forum; it was even prevalent in the graduate discussion forum despite Co-Op being an almost exclusively undergraduate program. As mentioned previously, UC has one of the most
prestigious Co-Op programs in the country that helps attract many students, including international students. The current U.S. economic issues have complicated Co-Op because firms simply are not hiring Co-Op students as they have previously. The fewer number of Co-Op jobs, combined with increased enrollment, means that more students are competing for less Co-Op positions. International students are often the most hurt by this competition because they usually do not have the previous work experiences or English communication skills as American students. They also require additional visa processes that can intimidate employers. Additionally, some corporations may feel social or political pressure not to hire international students at the expense of American students. Since Co-Op is required in many academic programs, such those in Architecture, Business, Design, and Engineering, students face academic scheduling complications if they are not able to find Co-Op employment at the appropriate time. Therefore, many international students are facing very real Co-Op concerns as voiced in the discussion forums.

Two relevant suggestions emerged from the undergraduate discussion forum. First, the university could leverage its relationships with local, national, and international businesses to help develop Co-Op opportunities for international students that are located within or outside the U.S. Second, the university could arrange a Co-Op fair for employers looking to hire international students. Given the complicated nature of international work visa issues and the time it may take to leverage such business relationships, the university could explore hiring a designated employee to coordinate these efforts. This would also require a significant travel budget to visit potential Co-Op employers and host them on-campus.

The federal Work Study program allows financially qualifying (usually low to middle income) American students to participate in subsidized work experiences on-campus. The
students are paid the going rate for their services, at least minimum wage, but the federal government subsidizes their salary to the university. As most departments face tight budgets, many departments (including the International Admissions Office) have resolved to only hire student workers that qualify for Work Study resulting in few on-campus jobs available for non-Work Study students. The university has also significantly increased its undergraduate enrollment, including a growing number of students qualifying for Work Study. Once again, there is more competition for fewer jobs and international student have significant disadvantages because they cannot be hired as Work Study students, but also are not legally allowed to work off campus. Therefore, their only chance for employment is on campus, but virtually all on campus jobs are reserved for a federal aid program in which international students are not qualified to participate. To address this issue, the university could develop its own program that subsidizes the international students’ salaries by directly paying the hiring department. Such a program could be expensive, and labor intensive to manage, but would also provide an important value to the university’s international population and hiring departments. It would also help international students build their resumes to improve their chances of achieving Co-Op employment, which would help the Co-Op program maintain its prominent reputation.

**Housing Assistance**

Incoming freshmen living more than 50 miles from campus are required to live on-campus their freshmen year. The housing office could do more to support the international students it requires to live on-campus. This could include training staff on issues related to American and international roommates who may have vastly different views of appropriate behavior inside a residence hall. As described previously, much more can be done to prepare international students for living in the U.S. However, much can also be done to prepare
American students for living with international students that may not share their social interests, cultural customs, and religious beliefs. One simple effort would be to ask incoming American students if they would like to live with an international student and match them accordingly. A more extensive effort would be to create an international house or international residence hall floor that housed a combination of international students and American students interested in living together.

No on-campus housing is available for graduate students. Despite the safety and low quality housing concerns in the area around campus, little help is given to assist international students searching for off-campus accommodations. Again, international students are placed at a disadvantage because high value housing is reserved prior to the international students arriving. Just as with course registration, international students are forced to pick from the housing that no one else wanted due to their late arrival. The university can do more to assist its students make the important decision of where to live. One option is to assign a dedicated staff member in the housing office to serve as a liaison between international students and off-campus housing providers. This could also include matching international students that require a roommate. Merely serving as a point of reference, managing a database of students in need of roommates, and providing relevant information about housing quality would be of great assistance to international students. Additionally, this person could also work with off-campus landlords in developing a reservation system where they would hold a certain number of housing units for international students thereby not punishing international students for late arrival.

Safety

Safety is the most pressing issue facing international students. However, it is also the most complicated to address since most of their safety concerns occur off campus where the
university has limited jurisdiction. The university also cannot afford to increase off campus safety efforts at the expense of on campus safety efforts without fear of escalated crime on campus. Some of the recommendations described previously, such as having a university liaison assist international students with finding suitable off campus housing and including an overview of international students’ legal rights and the judicial process in the American Culture course will help students feel more safe and make more informed decisions. However, their impact will be limited.

Lower cost efforts to improve safety could include expanding the marketing of the Nightwalk program, which many international students do not utilize, such as developing multi-lingual print materials that are distributed widely throughout campus, email campaigns explaining the Nightwalk program to students, and perhaps hiring international students on Nightwalk’s staff. Additionally, the university could offer on-going seminars on steps it is taking to keep students safe and to explain the legal, social, and transportation services available to students. University leadership could also encourage student organizations to work together on fundraising and awareness campaigns that could lead to improved safety.

Given the severity of the safety concerns, and student disappointment with university leadership regarding safety efforts, the university may wish to re-evaluate the priority that it has assigned to off campus safety matters. This could require increasing the Public Safety Office budget to provide more police officers and personnel to patrol the UC neighborhood, arrange for third party patrols of key university neighborhoods, co-fund safety and infrastructure projects with the City of Cincinnati that would have tangible effects, such as installing police video cameras in strategic locations, expanding Cincinnati police details, improving lighting in the neighborhood around campus, installing more secure pedestrian walkways (such as speed bumps
or walking bridges in high traffic areas), and working with taxi companies to provide subsidized rates for UC students requiring transportation beyond the hours or service area of Nightwalk.

**Paying for it All**

A lack of financial capital is often the biggest impediment to implementing recommendations such as those detailed above. UC, like most universities, seems to be in a consistent state of budget crisis, which is one of the main reasons it is investing in recruiting fee-paying international students. However, the university must also accept that fee-paying international students bring unique costs, such as ESL courses and support services, and have high expectations. Importantly, international students are aware of the tuition they pay compared to their fellow classmates and many expect the university to invest their tuition payments in the support services that they need. Despite the financial costs that international students incur, the university still generously profits from their international enrollment. For example, UC estimates that international students are providing over $10 million in net tuition, which is tuition paid minus UC funded scholarships and overhead for recruiting and supporting international students (Ramsey, 2012).

There are three models for financing campus internationalization efforts and it is possible to use combinations of any three of these models. One model is to charge international students a modest fee every semester. This fee would be used to fund support services exclusively tied to international students, such as the International Admissions Office or UC International Services Office. With a current international enrollment of over 2,300 students, UC could generate over $460,000 in new revenue if each student paid a $100 fee each semester. Dedicating those funds to current international operations would allow the university to reinvest in other related areas, such as increasing international recruitment efforts (which will result in more students, more
tuition, and more student fees) or in the recommendations above.

A second model for funding internationalization efforts is through directly reinvesting a percentage of international student net tuition into the internationalization efforts. For example, investing 20 percent of the net tuition of this year’s undergraduate students alone would generate over $2 million. By reinvesting directly into international efforts, the international leadership can effectively plan and invest resources to maximize efficiency and minimize costs.

A third manner to fund international efforts is through fundraising. Strategic fundraising efforts could target wealthy international alumni, recent international alumni and “international-minded” alumni, such as Americans who participated in study abroad programs. The fundraising potential of such efforts is impossible to calculate, but could provide new substantial financial investment to the university to implement many, if not all, of the recommendations above.

Implications

The preceding pages proposed a number of recommendations that would improve the educational experiences of both international and American students at the University of Cincinnati. Some recommendations are simple program improvements, others require considerable financial resources, and more importantly, proactive leadership committed to creating a new campus identity. Though these recommendations would serve UC well, the literature review suggests that many universities face similar challenges and could consider implementing similar recommendations to meet the needs of their students, faculty, and staff. However, we must remember that there are far greater issues at stake than simply improving student satisfaction. Enrolling international students is vital to university and national interests and has implications that go well beyond enrollment targets and graduation rates.
Destination of Choice

As mentioned previously, there were 723,377 international students studying in the U.S. last academic year. This population has steadily increased over the past several years and is projected to increase even more dramatically for the next few decades. These students represent a new reality—the demographics of U.S. campuses are changing. Those universities able to embrace this reality and respond by providing enriching academic and social opportunities to this population will be rewarded with increasingly enrolling academically talented, fee-paying, diverse, international students who make positive contributions to the university.

International enrollment is a competitive industry; international students will no longer simply show up on American university doorsteps. However, the significant attention devoted to the manners in which universities recruit students may not be as relevant as expected. The higher education community may be better served to focus less attention on recruiting techniques and more attention on identifying successful mechanisms to support international students’ acclimation to campus culture to ensure that cross-cultural learning is truly taking place on U.S. campuses.

The U.S. still serves as the destination of choice for international students, though this status is being threatened. Attracting the best talent the world has to offer is important not only to American universities, but to American society. If the U.S. hopes to maintain its role in the world, its universities must be able to prepare their students to work in the twenty-first century economy—an economy that is increasingly diverse and global. Currently, U.S. universities are facing international enrollment challenges alone and are unable to compete with the sophisticated, coordinated efforts of nations such as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom resulting in decreasing U.S. market share of international students. American universities will
not be able to combat such national strategies alone; they must work in conjunction with the American government to address financial resources issues and outdated immigration policies if they are going to remain competitive.

*International Education and International Influence*

Serving as the preferred destination of international students provides many benefits to American citizens. Perhaps no benefit is more obvious than in the ability to bring the world to its students. The presence of a large, diverse, global community on campus provides the opportunity for American students to better understand the world in which they live. Their experiences with these international students are likely to significantly shape their worldview, and the same is true of the international students’ interactions with Americans. As we have seen, however, even with large numbers of international students on U.S. campuses, these cross-cultural experiences are not occurring resulting in international students essentially operating within their own cultural clusters.

Assisting international students to acclimate by providing opportunities for cross-cultural experiences to take place should not simply be regarded as student retention efforts. Students do not stay students forever; eventually the students of today emerge as the leaders of tomorrow. We must ask ourselves, if our future business or government leaders are being educated right now on American campuses, are they being prepared to lead in the global world of the twenty-first century? Similarly, are the future leaders of foreign nations, as diverse as Brazil, China, India, and Iraq, currently studying in American universities receiving an educational experience that helps them understand and appreciate American ideals and culture?

*Potential of International Education*

The first two chapters of this work established the tremendous potential of international
education to impact students and society. Unfortunately, international education is not meeting this potential despite international enrollment increases. The disconnection between international student enrollment and international student cultural acclimation is palpable. International enrollment increases have not ended the “Othering” process described by post-colonial scholars. Failure to recognize this could lead to increased alienation of international students. Just as Said explained the colonizing aspects of the British schooling system in the Middle East, there is the possibility that if American universities do not help create the space for international students to acclimate to campus culture, the only international students who actively participate in campus culture may be those who have abandoned their cultural identity to assimilate. Such a process could not only harm international students who feel that they must align with the cultural stereotypes assigned to them, but also could also limit the learning potential of American students who do not benefit from true cross-cultural experiences. If universities are to serve as contact zones, they must encourage cross-cultural experiences to ensure that positive “clashes” between people of different cultural, ethnic, religious, and social backgrounds occur. In other words, they must assist students to confront the “Others” in effective and supportive ways. This will not occur unless international students are actively participating in the campus culture in authentic manners.

Connecting Theory to Practice

Universities have many unique opportunities to achieve the ideals of international education. However, it is unclear whether universities recognize this responsibility. The literature review confirms that many universities have embraced the responsibility of meeting enrollment targets and tuition quotas. These targets and quotas are important to university survival, but ensuring that students acclimate upon arrival and find themselves members of supportive and
welcoming campus communities is equally important. Failure to plan, and invest, accordingly could lead to further alienation of international students and greater tension within the campus community.

As the presence of international students continues to be felt on campuses throughout the U.S., universities will face important questions regarding the changing demographics of their student body, their commitment to the academic and social success of international students, and their ability to encourage American students to accept the new global reality. All the while, universities must accept that their actions have global implications and recognize their important role in shaping the future leaders of the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

UC is certainly not the only American university facing challenges associated with rapid international student enrollment growth. Many universities are also grappling with similar issues, such as meeting the academic and social needs of their international students and encouraging the traditional campus community to embrace such changes. This dissertation can assist universities facing such challenges. It has established the importance of international education in not only educating students but also its important role in foreign affairs and economic prosperity. Recognizing these important aspects are important for university leaders who often have to make tough prioritization and funding decisions. Internationalization cannot occur without the active support of university leadership and this dissertation can be a resource for faculty and staff to garner that support. This work also challenges universities to question their assumptions on how well they are meeting the ideals of international education. It cautions
universities to not simply define international education as international enrollment headcounts. They must take specific steps to ensure international education is actually occurring.

Though the student responses and recommendations are specific to the University of Cincinnati, the literature review proposed that many of these issues, particularly in regard to English language acquisition and segregation of international students from the campus at large, are faced by international students throughout the U.S. Therefore, universities are encouraged to explore the experiences of their international students and evaluate if they should invest in proactive efforts to encourage the cultural acclimation of their international students. The most important step is to ask students directly for their experiences and insights. Though this may seem obvious, in the era of managing complex university organizations with fewer and fewer financial resources, it is often easy to overlook the importance of student input. For example, universities can outsource much of this information gathering to external partners, such as the International Student Barometer, but only 216 universities in three countries actually utilize the ISB. The information provided by our students proved invaluable to our ability to not only meet the needs of our students, but to meet the potential of international education. Other universities can replicate this process, ultimately leading to a comprehensive network of American universities providing true international education to their American and foreign students.
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