Welcoming and Supporting International Students

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ABOUT US
UB is both big—the largest and most comprehensive campus in the 64-campus SUNY system—and bright, ranking among the top 2 percent of U.S. universities as a member of the Association of American Universities.
BY THE NUMBERS 2019-20

31,923 Students
- Top 25 in US hosting international students

268,000+ alumni in 150 countries

$402M
Research Expenditures

Member of Association of American Universities (AAU)
- Ranked among Top 2%
RANKINGS

#1 New York Public University

#31 Public University nationwide

#31 Public University nationwide
RANKINGS

Engineering Schools
• #5 in US, #12 Worldwide

Engineering Schools
• #2 of Public University Northeastern US
• #59 all Engineering Schools in US
AT A GLANCE:
2019-20 GRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE

- 2,175 Graduate Students
- 45 Countries
- 20 States
- 80% of Graduate Students International
- 36,000+ alumni in 50 states and 70 countries around the globe
- Full-time Faculty: 264
- Annual Research Expenditures: $78M
45 COUNTRIES

80% of Graduate Students International

2019-20 TOP 10 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COUNTRIES

- INDIA
- SOUTH KOREA
- CHINA
- TURKEY
- IRAN
- ECUADOR
- BANGLADESH
- EGYPT
- TAIWAN
- SAUDIA ARABIA
Centrally located

Buffalo is a 1-hour flight to:
NYC • Boston • Washington D.C.
• Chicago • Montreal • Quebec

1.5 hour drive to Toronto
20 minutes to Niagara Falls
Instructional Delivery Continuum

Place-Based

- 92% of student credit hours delivered in traditional seated format, AY2016-17 through AY2018-19

Distance

- 99% of student credit hours switched to distance format in Spring 2020
Scenarios

New Domestic UG
New International UG
New Domestic Grad
New International Grad
New Professional
Continuing

Place Based
Distance

UB Total

13
Is testing for virus and antibodies widely available?

Are physical distancing measures implemented and followed?

What is the shape of the infection curve?

At what point are we on the curve?

When does the population achieve herd immunity?

Do infected persons develop immunity? Temporary? Virus mutation?
Economic Impacts

- How soon does economic activity return?
- What are the structural changes to the economy?
- How soon do jobs come back?
- Can families afford college?
- What are the prospects for employment at graduation?
Travel Restrictions

- Are there changes/restrictions on students visas?
- Do international flights return?
- How do we ensure that all students feel welcome on campus?
- Are quarantine requirements imposed?
What is the probability of a mid-fall semester closure or other closures throughout the year?

How do we ensure that the student experience is excellent and of high value?

How do we evaluate student acceptance and perception of an distance learning versus seated experience?

How do we ensure physical distancing requirements do not devalue the college experience?

Do students and faculty feel comfortable being in close proximity to each other?
Executive Leadership sets direction and strategic priorities for the Campus Planning Committee. In addition, it is informed by a campus Strategic Financial Management Advisory Group and Screening, Testing and Contact Tracing Protocol Committee.

The Campus Planning Committee includes the chairs of each of the subcommittees as well as members of the faculty, staff, students and administration. This group debates and discusses alternative actions informed by the five subcommittees and makes recommendations to Executive Leadership.
Reduction in Density

- **890** students in in-person classes on North Campus at 10 a.m. on the first day (vs. 6,800 in Fall 2019)
- **87%** reduction of density in classrooms*
- **74%** decrease in students taking daily in-person classes*
- **40%** decrease in residence hall & campus apartment occupancy rates*

- **2,226** faculty teaching, Fall 2020
- **441** faculty teaching in-person only

*compared to Fall 2019
COVID-19 Return to Campus Plans

• **In planning for the Spring 2021 class schedule,** UB will assume that protocols for physical distancing will remain in place and plan to offer courses as a mix of in-person, remote, hybrid, and HyFlex classes. Planning for some scenarios to continue potentially to **Fall 2021.**

• **UB’s determinations about the Fall 2020, Spring 2021 and Fall 2021** will continue to align with the Governor’s Executive Orders—including Western New York’s progress pursuant to the state’s Phase 1-4 regional benchmarks, which may change as the COVID-19 situation evolves.
SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
The Interdependency of Recruitment and Retention Practices

RECRUIT

POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT

RETAIN

Impacts Magnified with International Students and COVID-19!
Integrated Interdependence Models of Student Support

360º Student Support Structure

- Critical for Internationalization and Student Support
Welcoming and Supporting International Students
Virtual platform presents both barriers AND opportunities…
COMMUNICATION

Do not make assumptions!

- Students
  - Parents/Families
- Faculty
- Staff
  - International student support meetings
    - What is working... what is not?
- Alumni
- Community
ONBOARDING

• Checklists of expectations and requirements
• Calendar of important dates
• Power of simplicity
• Bridging the gap to recruitment/admissions
ORIENTATION

- Symbolic transition
- Acclimate to cultural transitions/right of passage; pageantry, a time to inspire and engage, ritualistic
- Provide introduction to others - Socialization
- Orientation should not be about filling out forms; time to inspire, engage; cover what needs to be covered, but don’t overwhelm
- Timeframe, mandatory vs. non-mandatory
- Create an online version to support all participants
- Program specific segments (breakouts, etc.)
- Extension of topics from orientation
- Enhance development
CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

• Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
• Oral/Written Communications
• Teamwork Collaboration
• Digital Technology Leadership
• Professionalism/Work Ethic
• Career Management
• Global/Intercultural Fluency
IELETS USA is proud to announce the SEAS 360° program at the University at Buffalo (UB), The State University of New York’s (SUNY) School of Engineering and Applied Sciences as the 2020 recipient of the Best Practices in International Enrollment Management Award.

The SEAS 360° Certificate of Professional Development at the University at Buffalo highlights the critical role that collaboration plays in the successful recruitment and retention of international students. The variety of internal and external stakeholders demonstrates the importance of working in unison to foster an environment where international students have equal and equitable opportunities to take full advantage of their education. The collaborators represent various touchpoints throughout the student lifecycle supporting SEAS 360° success in identifying and connecting stakeholders committed to international students. Newly developed relationships with UB’s International Student Services, Alumni Relations, and Career Services allows the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences to employ a strategic approach to international enrollment management and demonstrate its value for career preparation.

According to John Wood, Ph.D., Interim Vice Provost for International Education at the University at Buffalo, “SEAS 360° powerfully leverages the skill sets and programming of multiple units within the School and beyond” and relied on existing but underutilized resources to offer a cost-free 25-hour certificate program. Participants are offered eight areas of training to develop and improve high demand “power skills,” as identified by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). The SEAS 360° Certificate of Professional Development is in direct response to challenges surrounding intercultural assimilation for international graduate
NAVIGATING LOGISTICS

- COVID-19 Safety Protocols
- Language
- Cultural
- Community
- Immigration
- Online
YOUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT NETWORKS

- Offices (who is responsible for what?)
  - Campus roadmap for Student Services and Student Life
- Staff
- Faculty
- Students
- Community
STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- Health and wellness
- Student interaction
- Cultural celebration/inclusion activities
- Civic engagement
- Community service
- Volunteerism
- Networking activities
- Interdisciplinary opportunities
• Virtual Meet and Greet Sessions
  o Student to Student
    ▪ Mentoring/Shadow programs (zoom, teams, etc.)
    ▪ Cultural coffees, potlucks (virtual)
    ▪ Facilitating Whats App Groups, etc.
  o Staff to Student
    o Standing virtual time
  o Faculty to Student
    o Standing virtual time

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT
MICROSURVEYS

- Climate Assessment
  - Quantitative and Qualitative
• Monitoring Academic Performance
  o Attendance (online, seated)
  o Microsurveys (weekly)
• Tutoring Assistance
RETENTION ANALYSIS

- Drill down to individual students
- Analyse trends
  - Academic progress
    - Courses
    - Load
  - Academic background
  - Language proficiency
  - Feeder schools
OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

Unnecessary Obstacles?
- Pre-COVID-19
- COVID-19
OUTCOMES

- Student Success: Transparency of placement data
  - Internships
  - Jobs
- Transition from student to employment
  - Economic volatility
1. Institutional Policies
   - Challenging

2. Governmental Policies
   - VERY challenging

CHANGE ADVOCACY
ACADEMIC PROGRAM ALIGNMENT WITH LABOUR MARKET
NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
CURRICULAR REFRAMING
INDUSTRY AND ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Alumni Engagement
- Exit surveys
- Opportunities for engagement
- Mentorship, ambassadorship

Corporate Partnerships
- Employer in residence programs
- Advisory councils
- Sponsorships in experiential activities
- Co-curricular or curricular development
International Student Retention Formula

- **Retention** = Early identification of potential for failure + Identification of (universal + immigration-specific + culture-specific + individual) needs + (early, intensive and continuous) interventions
International Student Success

Student Retention

- Student Support Services
- Expectations, Self-Motivation
- New Student Socialization and Identity
- Academic Programming

External Influences

- Stop in/Stop Out
- Time to Degree
- Completion
- Persistence

Attrition

- Withdraw
- Dismissal

Progression

- Time to Degree
- Completion
Key Elements of International Student Support

- Student expectations and developmental perceptions, **interactions with others**, and their overall experience impact the quality of academic work. These perceptions also impact their effort investment.” (Golde, 2000)

- Student Experiences and Success is linked to Academic, **Personal and Professional Identity Development**, Personal Satisfaction, Finances and Support resources, **social support**, peer relationships and community, and overall well-being (Gansemr-Topf et al, 2004, Hardre & Chen, 2005, 2006, Offstein et al, 2004, Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001)
Additional Elements for International Student Support

• Pre-Entry Attributes
• Language Proficiency
• Relationship with Faculty
• Expectation of Classroom Participation
• Source of financial sponsorship
• Mindfulness of Political Issues (both global and country specific)
Intervention and Support Services

- Assessment tools, continuous feedback loops
- Faculty engagement/support
  - Faculty work balance, evaluation tied to retention
  - Professional mentorship and advising
  - Collaboration on research
- Student support services
- Academic planning
- Retention focused programs
- Mitigating external influences
- Learning communities
- Counseling during admissions and orientation programs
- Institutional behavior and graduate retention

"We are not doing right by our students if we don’t help them to earn the degrees they came for.” (Bowles-Terry, 2015)