

From the Vice Provost

With over 5,700 international students at Stony Brook University, recognizing and addressing factors that contribute to their academic success is imperative. Throughout the spring semester, the Office of Global Affairs (OGA) collaborated on several programs to define international student success and analyze Stony Brook's performance.



Internally, the International Student Success Task Force (ISSTF), co-chaired by the Division of Undergraduate Education, brought together administrators from a diverse set of departments and administrative units to determine what support we currently provide, assess the effectiveness of our programs, and propose innovative ideas. We also hosted a Thematic Forum sponsored by the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) to create an open forum on international student success for the purpose of learning ideas and best practices from peer institutions and the broader campus community. The ISSTF identified several areas of improvement through their meetings and the Thematic Forum, including four big picture initiatives that were presented to University leadership.

We are proud to announce that this summer saw the first outcomes from the ISSTF and AIEA Thematic Forum come to fruition. This June, Stony Brook hosted two pre-orientation sessions for incoming international students in China. Newly admitted students were able to interact with Stony Brook staff and current international students to learn what to expect academically and socially when they arrive in the fall. Additionally, the Global Summer Institute opened to newly admitted undergraduates looking to get a jump start on their studies and acclimate to Stony Brook.

OGA is excited to carry on with our commitment to international student success, and looks forward to implementing new strategies to support our international students and improve their Stony Brook experience!

Thematic Forum Studies International Student Success



In collaboration with the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), Stony Brook University hosted the AIEA Thematic Forum, *Far Beyond Recruitment: Understanding Chinese International Students and Helping Them Succeed*. Seventy-three participants from twenty-five higher education institutions attended the event held April 12-13, 2017 at the Charles B. Wang Center to learn about Chinese international students and develop innovative ideas

and interventions to increase their success.

The forum kicked off with welcoming remarks from Stony Brook University President Samuel L. Stanley Jr.; SUNY Vice Chancellor for Global Affairs, Sally Crimmins Villela; Darla Deardorff, Executive Director of AIEA; and Jun Liu, Vice Provost for Global Affairs at Stony Brook University, which were followed by morning plenary sessions on four different aspects of Chinese international student success: intercultural communication, the student lifecycle, Chinese heritage students, and classroom participation.

Darla Deardorff (AIEA) led an interactive discussion on the misconceptions, challenges, and opportunities for intercultural communication with Chinese international students. She concluded with some core strategies for communicating with students, such as "don't assume anything", "practice rephrasing (not repeating)", and "be aware of sociocultural context".

Karin Fischer (The Chronicle of Higher Education) encouraged participants to look at the Chinese student lifecycle from recruitment to the on-campus experience to post-graduate and work outcomes. Because universities tend to be siloed, many units only focus on a single slice of the Chinese international student experience. However, ultimate success is defined across the three parts and all the parts are interrelated.

Agnes He (Stony Brook University) broke down characteristics of Chinese heritage vs. Chinese international students. Although the subgroups share common values, they may also have different cultural views about education and learning that can affect academic success. Regarding various Chinese-background students as a homogeneous group can be problematic.

Jun Liu from Stony Brook University spoke about classroom interaction and the cognitive, pedagogical, affective, socio-cultural, and linguistic factors preventing Chinese international students from participating in class. It is important for faculty and administrators to have systems in place to help break the silence, like structured questions and discussions, teamwork that breaks up self-formed groups, and more multicultural activities and events.

[Read more](#)

Exchange Programs Let Students Go Far Beyond

International Academic Programs offers several different study abroad options for Stony Brook students. Exchange programs with Stony Brook's 160 partner universities worldwide give students the immersive experience of living on their own and experiencing another culture.

Picture: Ashley Olafsson visits Sydney during her semester exchange in Australia



Since 2002, Stony Brook has partnered with the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia to offer student exchanges. Queensland, one of Australia's top three universities, is consistently ranked in the top 100 worldwide and is a member of the prestigious Group of Eight (GO8) research intensive institutions.

Ashley Olafsson, a Psychology major, recently returned from a semester exchange at Queensland. Read on to learn more about her experience!

Why did you choose to study abroad?

I chose to study abroad because I wanted to expand my horizon and explore the world. I chose Queensland because being a citizen of the UK, I traveled to Europe frequently to visit family and I wanted to go somewhere totally out of my comfort zone. Australia was that place for me, a dream but also a huge leap forward, but I'm so glad I took that leap because it gave me the best 5 months of my life.

What do you remember most about your experience?

What I remember most about my experience was the people I met. Honestly, you get so close with other people in the program and you bond in a way that you never have with other friends with traveling and experience all of it together. They are the only ones who understand you upon your arrival home!

[Read more](#)

Pre-Orientation for Incoming International Students



session in Beijing, China

In an effort to increase international student success and reach out earlier to our incoming international student population, the Office of Global Affairs (OGA) test-piloted two pre-orientation sessions this June for incoming Chinese international students, our top country for international students.

Picture: Pre-orientation

The sessions, co-organized by Student Orientation and Family Programs, supported by International Admissions and Enrollment and Retention Management, and assisted by the Chinese Student and Scholar Association (CSSA), were held in Beijing and Shanghai to prepare students for their arrival on campus. Over 300 new Stony Brook students (both Grad and Undergrad) attended the sessions to learn about academic advising and course registration, on- and off-campus housing, FERPA laws, and trip preparation.

Students also heard from peers about student life at Stony Brook, and were put in discussion groups with other students in their major. Representatives from the OGA, Student Orientation, and CSSA were on-hand to answer questions from both new students and their families about their transition to Stony Brook.

The pre-orientation sessions were an outcome from the AIEA Thematic Forum held at Stony Brook this April. OGA and Student Orientation and Family Programs will assess the effectiveness of these pilot sessions to determine if the program will expand.

Global Forum Encourages Study Abroad

What is it like to study abroad for a semester? Can I go overseas and still graduate on time? What scholarship opportunities are available? How can study abroad help me reach my career goals?

These were just a few of the questions answered during the [March 29 Global Forum, Transform Your Life Through Study Abroad](#). A panel including Rome Program Director Prof. Mario Mignone, Senior Assistant Dean for International Academic Programs Lindsy Walker, study abroad returnees Lydia Senatus and Lorenzo Fedi, and Jessica Jin from the President's Council of Student Advisors discussed the study abroad experience and answered questions from students interested in studying overseas.



Throughout the forum, panelists highlighted the benefits students receive from studying abroad, and shared some of the most memorable parts of their own journeys.

The biggest benefit was, of course, increased desirability to future employers. "When you apply for graduate school or when you apply for a job, it stands out," said Prof. Mignone. Study abroad "forces you to reflect, and process, and to be analytical. Companies and graduate schools appreciate that."

[Read more](#)

Global Affairs Highlights



Meeting Tokyo University for Foreign Studies

NAFSA Annual Conference

The Office of Global Affairs attended the NAFSA Association of International Educators annual conference this May in Los Angeles. Staff met with more than 30 international partner universities to discuss ongoing exchange relationships and develop new collaborative efforts. Stony Brook University was also showcased in the Higher Education Fair to meet with new potential partners.

Vice Provost Jun Liu also spoke at the open session *Chinese Students at U.S. Universities: Integration, Challenges, and Post-Graduation Outcomes*, where he joined two other panelists to discuss the challenges and aspirations of Chinese students as they acclimate to the U.S. university classroom.



Plaque unveiling of the Putonghua Test Center

Putonghua Center at Stony Brook

This April, a delegation from the Chinese Ministry of Education visited Stony Brook University to establish the first standard Chinese (Putonghua) testing center in North America.

Putonghua was enacted by the Chinese government to promote the standardization of Chinese language instruction abroad, and grants Mandarin language certificates from the Chinese National Language Committee. The center at Stony Brook is only the second such center worldwide, the first being in Groningen, Netherlands.

The Putonghua Training and Testing Center will be part of Stony Brook's new China Center, to be housed in the Charles B. Wang Center.

Global Summer Institute 2017



\$500 - \$3000

International Academic Programs Study Abroad Scholarship

Global Summer Institute Starts in July

Next month, the Office of Global Affairs will welcome more than 200 international students from five countries to the inaugural Global Summer Institute (GSI) program.

GSI was created to expand Stony Brook University's brand awareness overseas and introduce it as a place for further study to prospective international students. Students can choose one of [four different summer study options](#) that best fits their academic needs and English language proficiency, and participate in organized cultural activities.

For the first time this year, newly admitted international students are also eligible to take summer courses through GSI. In addition to getting a head start on their studies, GSI will help them acclimate to the campus, academic environment, and US culture.

Global Affairs is excited to host such a large group of international students this summer and introduce them to Stony Brook University and New York!

New Scholarships for Study Abroad

Students participating in a study abroad program this Summer or Fall semester were eligible to apply for a new scholarship through International Academic Programs. The scholarships were developed to award high-achieving students with funds to help offset the extra costs associated with studying abroad.

Nearly 50 students were awarded scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$3,000 to put toward their study abroad experience. Scholarships were granted based on GPA, letters of recommendation, and a one-page essay on *"How you feel this study abroad experience will positively influence your career"*.

Congratulations to all scholarship recipients! OGA wishes you and all our study abroad students a fantastic adventure overseas!

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