8-2014

Campus Personnel's Perceptions of International Student Support Services at Special Focus Institutions of Higher Education

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Abstract

Over the past decade, the growth of international undergraduate students in United States (U.S.) higher education has increased tremendously. While there has been growth, there is limited research on the support services available to these students and the perceived level of institutional commitment to providing the services. The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify international student support services available and perceptions of institutional commitment to these services from the perspective of the campus personnel working at the top 40 special focus institutions enrolling international students in U.S. higher education. The perceptions of institutional commitment and available services were reported by program administrators in the roles of international student advisors, directors, deans, and vice presidents of international student services. Based on self-reported responses of 17 campus personnel each representing one of the 40 top enrolling special focus institutions for international students, no significant differences in perceptions of institutional commitment existed between institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment or international student enrollment. In addition, there was no significant relationship between number of campus personnel dedicated to international support services and institutional commitment or campus characteristics and international student support services. According to the self-report of the 17 international student campus personnel, each institution addressed the need for international student support services similarly regardless of total enrollment or demographics. Based on the growing international student population, it is essential to continue looking at how institutions of all structures and locations can address international student support services and commitment to these services.

Degree Type
Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Education (EdD)

Department
Executive Leadership

First Supervisor
Byron Hargrove

Subject Categories
Education

Campus Personnel's Perceptions of International Student Support Services at Special

Focus Institutions of Higher Education

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

Dr. Byron K. Hargrove

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Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education
St. John Fisher College

August, 2014

Dedication

When I think about my life and some of the significant milestones, I realize the importance of acknowledging the people who made a difference in my journey. My number one personal motivator has been my mother, Gail Levine. She has always modeled the way and believed in my ability to achieve. I am so thankful for all she has done to make the difference in my life. To Dr. Emily Wughalter, I thank you for being a patient mentor throughout the doctoral process and taking my phone calls at all times. To my sons, Vieux and Cobe Toure, I know it has been a difficult few years. I could not have made it through without you both on my side. You are my motivation for working hard and setting an example in life. I am a very lucky woman to have such wonderful sons. I also want to thank Cynthia Marchese, who has been a mentor and friend to me for the past 12 years. I appreciate her encouragement and support for achieving a doctorate.

A sincere thank you to my chair Dr. Byron K. Hargrove and co-chair Dr. Ellen M. Gambino who helped me stay on track, pushed me past my limits, and guided me through the process. I would also like to thank Dr. Ronald Valenti who has supported me from the beginning and through every crossroad along the way. In addition, I am truly grateful to the St. John Fisher College faculty and staff who have helped me through the process. And, a big thank you to my colleagues, family, and friends who have cheered me on and supported me on this journey. I am very fortunate and appreciate the relevance of having all of these good people in my life.

Biographical Sketch

Nori Jaffer is currently the Associate Vice President of International Student Services at

Berkeley College. As an undergraduate student, she attended the University of

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research in campus personnel's perceptions of international student services under the

direction of Dr. Byron K. Hargrove and Dr. Ellen M. Gambino and received the Ed.D.

degree in 2014.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to Berkeley College for the support that I have received during this doctoral program.

Abstract

Over the past decade, the growth of international undergraduate students in United States (U.S.) higher education has increased tremendously. While there has been growth, there is limited research on the support services available to these students and the perceived level of institutional commitment to providing the services. The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify international student support services available and perceptions of institutional commitment to these services from the perspective of the campus personnel working at the top 40 special focus institutions enrolling international students in U.S. higher education.

The perceptions of institutional commitment and available services were reported by program administrators in the roles of international student advisors, directors, deans, and vice presidents of international student services. Based on self-reported responses of 17 campus personnel each representing one of the 40 top enrolling special focus institutions for international students, no significant differences in perceptions of institutional commitment existed between institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment or international student enrollment. In addition, there was no significant relationship between number of campus personnel dedicated to international support services and institutional commitment or campus characteristics and international student support services. According to the self-report of the 17 international student campus personnel, each institution addressed the need for international student support services similarly regardless of total enrollment or demographics. Based on the growing

international student population, it is essential to continue looking at how institutions of

all structures and locations can address international student support services and

commitment to these services.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

Over the past decade, U.S. institutions of higher education have been aggressively

recruiting international students for study in the United States of America (American

Council on Education, 2012). According to Bhandari, Chow, and Farrugia (2012) in the

Institute of International Education (IIE) Open Doors Report, the number of international

students at the undergraduate level has steadily increased over the past decade. In

2011/2012, there was a 6% increase from the prior year leading to a total of 309,342

international undergraduate students studying in the United States. The IIE Open Doors

Report found that in 2011/2012, international students contributed over $22 billion to the

U.S. economy. Due to the need to foster cross-cultural awareness and the possibility of

favorable financial returns, U.S. institutions of higher education are not likely to slow

down in their efforts to recruit international students and internationalize campuses.

As the growth in numbers of international students on U.S. campuses of higher

education continues to increase, campus officials will need to examine further the needs

of these students and make a commitment to their retention and graduation. An overall

institutional commitment is essential to the positive outcomes expected from international

recruitment efforts. For purposes of this study, institutional commitment is a perceived

commitment and understanding of the responsibility to provide the resources and support

services essential for the retention and persistence of international students. As stated by

Colondres (2005), institutional commitment is a characteristic important for the timely

delivery of a quality and effective program. Rendón (1994) emphasizes, institutional commitment is crucial to student success. Based on the positive long-term outcomes for retaining international students, inclusive of the opportunity to create good will ambassadors overseas, it is important to examine the support services available and our institutional commitment to retaining and supporting international students (American Council on Education, 2012).

According to Andrade (2006), although extensive research exists on student persistence and satisfaction for the general undergraduate or graduate student population, very little research exists on the international student population. Andrade states that the concerns of this special population needs to be addressed because, while they are facing the same challenges of traditional college students, they also must adjust to a new language, culture, and educational system. Andrade notes that few empirical studies focus on the successes or failures of international students. U.S. institutions of higher education are investing significantly in international recruitment. Therefore, it is important to examine the factors that contribute to an international student's success. Grahame and Poyrazli (2007) state that in the wake of 9/11, the challenges these students confront have intensified due to increased scrutiny and suspicion of foreigners. The academic success and psychological well-being of international students are important for campus personnel to acknowledge and address from the start of an international student's program in the United States.

Problem Statement

While international students add diversity and perspective to the campus and classroom environment, they have unique needs that should be met by campus personnel.

International students face many challenges while studying in the United States (Lin, 2012). The concern is whether there is an institutional commitment to providing the resources and services that will meet these needs. With limited staff and budgets, it is important to examine whether campus personnel are able to address the perceived essential needs of international students and implement support systems and programming to retain these students. Upon arrival in the United States, an international student is dealing with possible culture shock, language barriers, potential financial concerns, and classroom adjustment issues (Arthur, 2004). There is a lack of research and literature addressing the support services available to international students (Sallie, 2007).

Two previous studies, Colondres (2005) and Sallie, (2007) addressed international student support services at community colleges. Sallie (2007) focused specifically on the first-year of college. There is limited information available regarding ongoing services throughout a student's study program at other types of institutions. The limitation in both of the studies conducted by Colondres (2005) and Sallie (2007) was the lack of previous research on the topic. In addition, as a qualitative researcher, Colondres stated a potential bias on the topic as someone who works in international student support services. Colondres also mentioned the limitation of her qualitative research study was having spoken with only the top 10 enrolling community colleges for international students. This was a limitation on Colondres' data as there were 40 top enrolling institutions. In terms of Sallie (2007), whose research will be used as a framework for the current study, there was also a limitation based on the response of 18 out of 40 top enrolling institutions for international students. In addition, Sallie stated that the lack of previous research on the topic and common definitions of services created a limitation in the study. According to

Sallie, his study was based on a mixed methods survey resulting in a possible imbalance of the analysis. This quantitative study builds on the work of Colondres (2005) and Sallie (2007) and looks at international support services throughout an international student's experience at special focus institutions in U.S. higher education. Special focus institutions, as defined by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, awards baccalaureate or higher-level degrees where a high concentration of degrees (above 75%) is in a single field or set of related fields.

Theoretical Rationale

According to Braxton, Milem, and Sullivan (2000), due to the increased need for measuring student satisfaction and success, scholars in U.S. higher education are looking for explanations for why students leave college after the first year of attendance. Theoretical models for student retention and persistence can offer us a framework for this process. The topic of interest is programming and support services that may influence the international student experience leading to their persistence toward graduation. Although the larger student population has been examined extensively, international students are a growing sub-group that warrants attention for support instruments to be put in place.

Sallie (2007) based his study on the conceptual framework of a student's first-year experience in U.S. higher education from Upcraft, Gardner, and Barefoot's (2005) research on the first-year experience. This framework focused on the need for services and programs addressing a first year student experience. Upcraft et al. (2005) researched the first-year student experience resulting in a book with 29 chapters written by 39 different authors. Their research-based book summarizes characteristics of institutional excellence for the first-year experience. Sallie used their research for guidance in

developing the Likert scale items of his survey based on 16 characteristics of institutional excellence. The characteristics are as follows: committed resources, high priority on first-year, seminars for all first-year students, respect for all students, faculty involvement in first-year seminars, professional development, academic and student affairs cooperation, supportive curricular structures, and responsibility for student success. For purposes of this study, characteristics of institutional excellence are addressed as institutional commitment to international student support services. Commitment was substituted for excellence as it is being viewed as an institution's responsibility to providing the resources necessary for an international student's success. In creating an environment that is committed to an international student's success, there is an opportunity for a greater balance between enrollment and retention. According to Rendón (2004), by placing the responsibility on the institution, we are validating an international student and respecting the needs associated with their increased presence.

  Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework. Looking at the overall student experience, Bronfenbrenner (1979) focused on the environmental influence on someone's experience with his ecological system theory. The individual's growth in an environment will evolve based on their interactions and the specific characteristics of their environmental context. International students are coming from a different cultural, religious, and linguistic context with a completely different frame of reference from a U.S. student. Their life experiences from this context are all part of the ecological framework for growth and change. While they have chosen to attend a university in the United States, they still must adjust and implement the skills necessary for surviving in an interactive classroom and social environment that is completely different from their

norm. Behavior and thinking should shift regarding how to act and think. Whereas a U.S. student is dealing with similar academic and social adjustment, the international student has the added challenges of a new environmental framework. By examining this through an ecological perspective, attention can be paid to the characteristics of the setting and the individuals experience within it.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework theory addressed five systems aiding in human development and their experiences in an environment. Bronfenbrenner addressed the micro system, meso system, exo system, macro system, and chrono system. Each of these systems addresses the inner dimensions of an individual's growth over time. In the micro system, someone is starting off with their parents and the neighborhood. As they grow, the meso system of day care, family, and the community start to become an influence. Following this, the exo system of school and society begin to influence them along with the macro system of culture. Over time, life experiences that shape someone are the chrono system. If we are to apply this framework to an international student's experience, they are temporarily leaving the context of their known ecological system and have to adjust and apply it to their U.S. educational life.

Astin's theory of student involvement. In line with Bronfenbrenner, Astin (1985) presented the theory of student involvement. This model is based on the premise that students learn by becoming involved in the academic experience. The amount of physical and psychological energy exerted by a student affects their experience. Astin's theory of student involvement stated that persistence is associated with high involvement: "full-time attendance, participation in extra-curricular activities, studying hard, living on campus, and interacting frequently with other students and with faculty" (Astin, 1985, p.

37). Astin emphasized that universities must focus on the talent development of its students. Astin's concern was that too much focus is placed on rankings and material acquisition. Views of excellence should be more student centric. Along with Astin's theory of student involvement, Astin (1993) developed an Input-Environment-Output Model (I-E-O) demonstrating that outputs, (grade point average, exam scores, course performance, degree completion, curriculum, and classroom experience), are evaluated in terms of inputs (characteristics of students) in the broad context of the environment (college or university setting). Examples of student inputs include demographic information, educational background, behavior pattern, degree aspiration, financial status, life goals and reason for attending college (Astin, 1993). Inputs directly influence both the environment and outputs. In order to best serve international students, university personnel need to address the relationship between their environment and the student experience.

Other theoretical models. In line with the need for quality services to international students, Tinto's (1987) model of institutional departure suggested that student retention by institutions is correlated to students' overall experiences with the institution. If a student has any negative experiences within the environment, the institutional culture, or even with their peers, they are more likely to withdraw from peer interaction, faculty-student involvement, and possibly from the institution. Berger and Milem (1999) point out that positive interaction between students and their peers, as well as with faculty, benefits the students particularly in their first year. Although conducting student satisfaction surveys is a usual practice in institutions, they suggest that these surveys should be used as a compass for innovation toward recruitment and retention. In

addition, sub groups such as international students may need more attention. Following this, Tinto (1993) revisited his model, putting his focus on a student's failure to negotiate the rites of passage. Tinto emphasized the importance of separating from family and high school friends. This would help a student take on the values of other students and faculty. They can better commit themselves to pursuing those values and behaviors of the community when adapting to the prevailing cultural environment.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) supported the strong relationship between student-faculty involvement and persistence. Their research outlined the theories of student involvement and integration from the perspective of student interaction with faculty and peers. They provided a model addressing the effects of increased student involvement and interaction with faculty. The outcome of their research emphasized the importance of increased time spent by faculty in and out of the classroom with students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).

Applying their model to international students brings to the surface challenges that an international student may face initially in the U.S. classroom environment. These students are not accustomed to the U.S. interactive teaching style and do not expect the type of student-professor interaction that is "normal" in the United States. According to Berger & Milem (1999), if administrators are serious about improving retention, the campus environment must reflect the norms and values of a wider group rather than just the dominant culture. They looked at the relationship between behavioral involvement and perceptual integration in the college persistence process. These theorists reflected a broader perspective on how we can better assist the international student.

In conclusion, the theoretical frameworks presented are a means to examine the international student population in U.S. institutions of higher education. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system theory is reflective of the whole person. Everyone comes to the table with their own sets of experiences. How we apply our experiences and adjust our norms to a current environment will influence the outcome. International students are experiencing adjustment challenges that a U.S. student may not experience. Therefore, the international student may take longer to integrate into the campus community. These theories support the importance of institutional commitment to international student services. Campus personnel must ensure the overall experience of international students pre-entry and throughout their program at a U.S. institution of higher education. When addressing the persistence and retention of international students, it is important to examine whether initial English language levels, campus culture integration, faculty student involvement, goal outcome focus, or any other factors make the most difference in retaining these students. Implementing programming that addresses all aspects of the international student's needs and experience will more effectively support an institution's goals of increasing and retaining international enrollment.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify international student support services available and perceptions of institutional commitment to these services at special focus institutions in U.S higher education. The perceptions of institutional commitment and available services are reported by program administrators in the roles of international student advisors, international admissions advisors, directors and vice presidents of

international student services, and student development staff. The objective of this research was to develop recommendations for programming and effective support services to enhance the experience of international students studying at U.S. institutions of higher education. A supportive campus environment is essential for assisting international students in attaining their academic and personal goals (Arthur, 2004). According to Colondres (2005), it is important to identify programs for international students that will aid in the recruitment and retention of this population. Scully (1993) asserted that the value of an institution recognizing the need for addressing international student issues is in the returns it offers as an enrollment and retention tool.

Research Questions

This study addresses how campus administrators in the roles of international student advisors, international admissions advisors, directors and vice presidents of international student services, and student development staff provide support to international students and their perceptions of institutional commitment to these services at U.S. institutions of higher education.

This study will attempt to answer the following questions:

Research question one: What international support services do special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment provide to address international student needs and maintain student involvement?

Research question two: What is the relationship between institutional characteristics (institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment, international student enrollment) and international student support services available at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?

Research question three: What is the relationship between institutional characteristics (institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment, international student enrollment) and the individual elements of institutional commitment at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?

Research question four: What is the relationship between the number of campus personnel dedicated to international support services and the individual elements of institutional commitment at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?

Research question five: What is the perceived institutional commitment to international support services at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?

Significance of the Study

According to Braxton, Milem, and Sullivan (2000), due to the increased need for measuring student satisfaction and success, it is important for university administrators to seek insight for balancing enrollment and retention. It is no longer sufficient to focus only on increasing international student enrollment. Campus personnel should implement systems supporting international students in order to influence their decision to remain at the institution. An increased understanding of available support services and institutional commitment to these services can assist in developing increased programming and graduation rates for international students.

Definition of Terms

For purposes of this research, an *international student* is defined as an individual who is enrolled at a U.S. institution of higher education on a temporary visa. This

definition was taken from Gallup-Black (2004) who stated that the most useful definition of international students focuses on non-immigrants.

Adjustment for purposes of this research is viewed as a transitional process that unfolds over time as students learn to cope with the exigencies of the campus environment.

Attrition for the purposes of higher education is defined as a gradual reduction in enrollment numbers.

Institutional commitment for purposes of this study is viewed as an institution's perceived commitment to the support services essential for the retention and persistence of international students.

Persistence can be defined in higher education as a student who stays through degree completion. For purposes of this study, a student who stays past their first year of college is likely to persist to graduation.

Retention is defined as an institution of higher education's ability to retain an international student from admission until graduation.

Special focus institution, as defined by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, awards baccalaureate or higher-level degrees where a high concentration of degrees (above 75%) is in a single field or set of related fields.

Chapter Summary

International students in U.S. institutions of higher education face difficult adjustments to new cultural, linguistic and academic environments (Curry & Copeman, 2005). Therefore, it is important to examine not only how we can best support our U.S. student experience but the international student experience as well. Prior to beginning the

journey of studying in the United States, great excitement and expectations for what lies ahead build in a student. For some it is the first time visiting the United States and they are going to a college campus sight unseen. As stated by Lin, (2012) as we grow as a global society, international students serve as positive factors to help internationalize our campuses. We need to welcome these students and gain an understanding of their initial experiences leading to persistence or attrition. In addition to wanting to retain and graduate our students, we want to foster cross-cultural experiences and create environments where students can learn from each other. By addressing the experience of all populations, we can better assess the factors that contribute to and possibly work against their success. This study focused on international support services available and institutional commitment to supporting these services for international student success. The Chapters are organized as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the literature; Chapter 3 describes the research methodology; Chapter 4 presents findings from the data collected; and Chapter 5 discusses the results of the study tying it to the purpose of the study.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to offer an overview of the international student experience and the need for an overall institutional commitment to supporting international students. Although the direct responsibility of implementing international student services usually lies with the international advisement staff or student affairs, campus personnel as a whole need to work toward the retention and overall satisfaction level of international students. This chapter will discuss the research addressing challenges and cultural differences that an international student faces while studying in another country, along with possible ways to accommodate these issues.

An international student offers a unique contribution to the U.S. classroom and campus environment (Andrade, 2005). According to the Bhandari, Chow, and Farrugia (2012), there is a strong indication that enrollment and interest has grown for international students studying in U.S. institutions of higher education. Due to this continued growth, campus personnel need to assess on an ongoing basis, how they can best serve and be sensitive to the needs of an international student who is studying on a U.S. campus of higher education (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002). When an individual is coming from a different frame of reference, although they may be academically prepared, other factors can impede or contribute to their success (Mori, 2000). In order to influence an international student's campus experience, student services professionals can examine and implement systems for acculturating international students to the greater campus

community. The level of support systems and awareness to the need is a step toward international student success (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002).

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this section is to address the growth of international student enrollment on U.S. campuses of higher education and their unique needs to be addressed by campus personnel. This section is organized into the following sections: Background, Empirical Studies and International Student Persistence, and Chapter Summary.

Background. Melby (1966) researched the history of international students studying in the United States. Melby stated that in the early nineteenth century, Americans studied mostly in Europe but a very small number of students came to the U.S. for study. Prior to World War I, other than religious-based promotion of educational exchanges, there were no organizations involved in bringing international students to the United States. After World War I, a number of organizations emerged to promote peace through increased understanding among peoples. The Institute of International Education (IIE), founded in 1919, was created to promote, facilitate, and administer exchange programs between the United States and other nations. IIE began collecting data in 1921 on international students studying in the United States. In 1921, 6,740 foreign students were reported to be studying at U.S. institutions of higher education. By the end of World War II, there were 10,300 international students. From 1921 to 1949, the number of students increased to 25,400, displaying an increase of 247 % (Knowles, 1977). According to the IIE Open Doors Report (Bhandari et al., 2012), whereas the United Kingdom and Australia once competed with the United States for international students, the United States has now become the destination of choice for most foreign students.

From a global and political perspective, educating the future leaders of foreign countries helps spread U.S. political values and influence, creating goodwill ambassadors throughout the world (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2003). Based on the continuously increasing numbers of international students in the United States, a focus on how campuses can best support this population is a topic worthy of attention.

Empirical studies on international student persistence. Extensive literature is available on student persistence and models for retention but the focus is on the general undergraduate or graduate student population, inclusive of international students (Andrade, 2006; Mamiseishvili, 2012). Since student satisfaction and experiences are tied to retention and the profitability of an institution, it is important for administrators to address the socio-cultural needs of a student adapting to life on campus (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002). Institutions cannot expect students to navigate all their new experiences without sufficient programming and support (Andrade, 2006). Lau (2003) emphasizes, "higher education administrators must help students adjust to their new learning and living environments, and ensure that the institution is accommodating to the student's needs, interests, and learning styles" (p. 128). Lau encouraged campuses to have a well-managed multicultural office coordinating services and offering support services that make students feel like they have a place to go on campus. Socio-cultural adjustment is a major area to address when an international student arrives on campus. Tseng and Newton (2002) emphasized that this can include culture shock, culture fatigue, or racial discrimination. When someone is new to a culture, they have to adjust to the host culture's customs, norms, and differences in social interaction. When a student is dealing with this type of stressor, it can affect their academic performance and overall outcomes.

Academic problems, social withdrawal, and loss of self-esteem are all part of the initial cultural adjustment (Marion, 1986).

For many international students, studying in the United States is their first time away from family and friends. There is some discrepancy in the literature and some researchers feel homesickness has no influence on an international student's experience. However, Ying and Liese (1994) found that the level of homesickness was the strongest predictor of poor adjustment. Most other cultures are collectivist, not individualist like the United States. Ying and Liese (1994) stated that an international student is not used to being away from the close ties of a community. They also face possible housing issues where they either live alone or with a roommate or have to cook. A majority of students have never cooked and this could be a major issue without a food plan. Or, a student could be in a dormitory where the meal plan does not meet their dietary customs.

According to Cadieux and Wehrly (1986), the lack of sufficient funds can be one of the biggest stressors of an international student's time in the USA. Financial stress can be consuming to a student, especially since most international students do not qualify for loans and grants. In addition, due to U.S. Homeland Security, off-campus employment is generally not allowable and on-campus employment is difficult to find. Based on financial limitations and an eagerness to graduate early, many international students choose to take an overload of course enrollment to accelerate their program. (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986). They indicated that it is important for campus personnel to be sensitive to this issue.

While examining the support services that are crucial to an international student's experience, an area for campus administration to focus on is English language skills as it

relates to academic success and campus community adjustment (Andrade, 2006). The studies available on the influence of English language skills on a student's experience are contradictory in nature and offer different outcomes depending on a student's major or institution. According to Yeh and Inose (2003), a lack of English proficiency may be the single greatest barrier for an international student. Their ability to succeed academically is hindered along with their ability to engage socially on campus. Within a U.S. classroom, besides the possible English language barriers, international students may face the challenge of adjusting to different classroom norms. While other cultures expect obedience in the classroom and little to no interaction, the U.S. classroom tends to be highly interactive. There is an expectation that a student will question and speak up with answers. This is highly unusual in most other countries and can lead to confusion for a student dealing with adjustment to cultural norms (Andrade, 2006). Based on this, campus personnel need examine the support services in place for the initial challenges of English language proficiency and classroom adjustment.

However, in contrast to other studies, a study by Stoynoff (1997) found that 97% of the first-year international students met the minimum grade point average requirement. These students persisted despite any initial English language difficulties. Their success was the result of considerable effort and anxiety that led to the sacrifice of social involvement and integration. Stoynoff conducted a mixed methods study of 77 freshmen in their first six months of study at a large public university in the Northwest. During the second week of their fall term, these students completed the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) and a questionnaire asking them about any previous study skills strategy training. Based on their responses and grade point average (GPA), 18

students were selected during their second term for 30-minute interviews. Using an interview protocol, students were asked about their study strategies. The outcome of Stoynoff's research confirmed that there is a modest relationship between initial English language proficiency and academic success. The recommendation of this study was for researchers to continue exploring the effects of social assistance and mentoring programs implemented by student services personnel. Stoynoff indicated that student services personnel may want to look into the other contributing factors that help students succeed.

Andrade (2006) found that international students should be studied because while they are facing the same challenges of traditional college students, they also must adjust to a new language, culture, and educational system. She stated that few empirical studies focused on the successes or failures of international students in the United States. Based on this, Andrade (2006) used Tinto (1975) as a basis for looking at the concept of integration as it relates to international student persistence. Through a constructivist lens, she used qualitative research to learn about international students' perceptions on integration and the influencing factors on their ability to persist. Students in her study were interviewed while in their senior year at a private, religiously affiliated four-year university located in the western United States. This institution's persistence rate was low for international students as well as for domestic students. Andrade's primary means of data collection was through ethnographic interviews and focus groups. She sent out e-mail invitations to 95 international students in their senior year. From a pool of 17 student respondents, nine females and eight males, she conducted personal interviews of 45 minutes each and followed up with focus groups. Based on the limited geographic diversity of the student population and its religious affiliation at this institution,

Andrade's research population was homogeneous. This may be perceived as a limitation to the study as it lacks feedback from students representing diverse backgrounds. Through her interviews, Andrade (2006) found the following:

> Although many college students lack confidence, international students are often sensitive to their ability to use English, and consequently, hesitate to participate in class. Participation is also hindered by students' cultural backgrounds, which may prohibit questioning the teacher. Many students indicated that gaining confidence was one of the most significant changes resulting from their college experience (p. 68).

Based on her findings, Andrade (2006) stated that first year programming is essential for the retention of international students. Andrade emphasized that personnel must support any deficits due to English proficiency and aid in the development of social networks. The value of Andrade's research using ethnographic interviews was that students reported their challenges directly and offered possible solutions to issues in and out of the classroom. Basing her research on Tinto's theory of integration, Andrade noted that it is important for us to understand that integration does not have to mean loss of culture or identity but an educator's responsibility is to assist students in having the most successful experience.

Barker, Jones, & Ramsay (2007) conducted a comparative study on self-perceptions in the first year of university for local Australian and international students at an Australian university. They sought to examine the relationship between adjustment and support types, sources and levels of support, and satisfaction with levels of support for these groups. Using student perception data, their method for research was to

distribute questionnaires to international and domestic first year students. They received 280 responses from 44% males, and 56% females; 195 locals, and 85 international students from Southeast Asia. Based on responses, it was found that international students perceived that they were less adjusted than local students in their first year. Compared to the local students, the international students placed a high value on the support needed from campus administration also indicating that quality relationships with faculty had more of an impact on the students than we might perceive. The results of this study called for more campus support mechanisms and venues for social companionship. In addition, they suggested more promotion of positive peer group interaction in the first year. International students perceived a need for more emotional, practical, social, and informational support from campus administration. A limitation of this study similar to Andrade (2006) was its focus on students from similar backgrounds at one university. The majority of international students at this university were from Southeast Asia. The authors recommended that future studies survey those from a broader range of contexts and campus locations.

According to Grahame and Poyrazli (2007), attention should be given to different parts of social systems that contribute to an international student's adjustment. Using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework, the premise of Grahame and Poyrazli's study focused on human behavior and its reaction to the context of their environment. They conducted their qualitative research at a racially homogeneous, semi-urban, commuter university with international students from multiple countries. Grahame and Poyrazli (2007) spoke with a total of 15 undergraduate and graduate international students through focus groups containing four students each. The questions in their study

were focused on initial transition, academic and social life, and psychological experiences. Although the students in their study had many positive experiences, they voiced concerns about the adjustment process and how the university could help to improve their experiences. Topics of importance for improving their experience were pre-arrival information, initial orientation to the campus and information on transportation, accommodation, social connections, academics, advisement, financial, health, and a fear of using counseling services. Based on student perceptions, the outcome of this study offered recommendations to help increase enrollment and improve retention. Grahame and Poyrazli's study confirmed the importance of student services personnel's role in the first year experience of an international student.

The majority of research available on the topic of international students is based on the international student's personally reported experience. The quality of services is very important to retaining students. Prior to a student's arrival in the United States, they are working with an international admission representative. Upon arrival to campus, students are greeted by the student services staff and international advisors (Mamiseishvili, 2012). Regardless of where someone is from, perception regarding the caring level of faculty and staff affects outcomes tremendously (Russell, 2005). According to Mazzarol (1998), while developing strategic plans for recruiting international students, organizations should be aware that contact between prospective students and school representatives needs to be "client-oriented" and sensitive to cultural norms. From a marketing point of view, Russell (2005) emphasized that the quality of service that students perceive has a direct relation to student satisfaction, which affects the level of loyalty and commitment to the institution.

Hanassab and Tidwell (2002) conducted a quantitative study surveying the needs and experiences of international students in Los Angeles enrolled at UCLA. Out of 2,093 international students, they received 640 respondents to their survey. By using a three-component instrument, they surveyed students on needs and concerns, personal changes, and demographic information. Their results found that the female students had greater difficulty with initial adjustment than did male students. In addition, there was a significant difference between students' needs based on their region of the world. The most unanimous response was a low psychological need for support. The most important need was for knowledge about visa and immigration rules. Results indicated that those with high grade point averages (GPA) needed less in general but, regardless of GPA, all respondents needed clear information and support with immigration regulations. Based on the study by Hanassab and Tidwell, (2002) there was an indication that education is a valued commodity in an international student's home country. Because of this, they might experience more self-imposed academic pressure and university personnel must be aware and offer programs to support their career and academic objectives. Hanassab and Tidwell recommended tailoring initial orientations to cultural adjustment but any ongoing programming should be based on career and academics and immigration as well as focusing on the needs of particular nationalities.

Sallie (2007) focused his research on the international student support services available at the top 40 community colleges with the highest enrollment of international students. The goal of his study was to add to the limited literature available on first-year programming for international students attending community colleges. As reported by Sallie, a national set of standards is not available for first-year international student

support services attending community colleges. Sallie (2007) asked, "we have opened our doors and invited students from around the world to attend our community colleges, but are we good hosts?" (p. 26). By using a survey with open- and closed-ended questions, Sallie sought to explore the presence of first year support services as reported by campus personnel responsible for administering these services. Of the 40 campuses surveyed, 18 respondents completed the surveys. An important theme was lack of funding available to increase specific services for international students. In line with other studies (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002), the services available and most used were those for immigration advice, cultural adjustment, and transfer advising. Most institutions offered a first-year seminar but not specifically for international students. The list of challenges reported and perceived by campus personnel were international students' issues with language barriers, cultural adjustment, and the U.S. classroom environment. The institutions reported addressing these areas with English as a Second Language courses, orientations workshops, events, clubs, and all student first-year seminars. Sallie's research highlights the need for community colleges to have more program specific planning for international students. In addition, Sallie's research supports the need for institutional commitment to the funding of staff and services available to international students.

Sherry, Thomas, and Chui (2010) were interested in learning about the experiences of international students at the University of Toledo. Based on an online survey to more than 1,100 international students, they sought to discover the social, cultural, and academic experiences of these students on campus. Their study was of a qualitative nature in order to gain insight into the trials, tribulations, supports, and successes of international students. Sherry et al. (2010) received 121 responses

confirming that language issues, cultural adjustment, financial problems, and the receptiveness of the university community are the factors most affecting their initial adjustment. In addition, students emphasized that spoken language barriers were far more troublesome to them than written language problems. Many of the survey respondents stated that the writing center helped them with any initial difficulty with their writing skills but it was the social integration that was more of a challenge initially for them. The outcome of the Sherry et al. (2010) study emphasized that we cannot place all of the responsibility on the student. Campus personnel must play a part in a student's campus experience. A recurring theme from survey respondents was the lack of receptiveness from the university community toward international students. One student suggested bi-weekly presentations to American and international students on specific countries and cultures. Another major theme was the absence of friendships with American students. International students indicated having made new friends but mostly with other international students. Recommendations from this study were to raise the profile of international students on campus, increase cross-cultural understanding, and increase opportunities for involvement in the community. This study encompassed a diverse international student body and is valuable in helping with campus programming. The concern remains as to the implementation process of these programs. Campus personnel must work together to create continuous programming that is inclusive of all populations.

In a study based on archival data, Mamiseishvili (2012) used data from the 2003 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study data set available from the National Center from Education Statistics. This was used to report the characteristics of international students in their first year of college and the factors contributing to their

persistence in U.S. higher education. The results of the study indicated that the academic side of college life was important to a first-year international student. It was found that international students who came to the United States with a stronger academic base and language preparation were more likely to persist than students with lower levels of English and academic strength. Mamiseishvili (2012) stated, "GPA, degree plans, and academic integration were positively related to persistence of international students, while remediation in English and social integration had negative effects on their persistence outcome" (p. 1). The data available indicated that international students reported little involvement with campus social activities, inclusive of clubs, events, and athletics. An assumption of the study was that those students who were too social had difficulties with persistence. Recommendations of the study were for campuses to encourage collaboration between offices of international student services, faculty, and other student services departments. Mamiseishvili indicated that persistence of international students cannot be viewed as the responsibility of international advisors only. Limitations of the study were the nature of the data set identifying race and ethnicity rather than region or country of origin. In addition, the data included students from two- and four- year institutions and did not address the acculturation process and possible issues of a first year international student.

The findings from Mamiseishvili's (2012) study were in line with Colondres (2005) regarding the need for all campus personnel to assist with the proper servicing of international students. It is an institution-wide effort to work toward the engagement of international students in campus life. Colondres (2005) stated the importance of properly servicing international students and assisting them with accomplishing their educational

goals smoothly. In effect, recruitment strategies will also be supported as students will feel cared about by campus personnel. International student's interest in being part of the campus community will remain.

Lin (2012) conducted research to examine international student's attitudes and perceptions about their academic, cultural, and social experiences on a single university campus. Lin's framework was based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system theory focusing on the quality and context of the individual's environment. According to Lin, the individual student's experience is complex and particular attention must be paid to context and setting. "International students who come from different countries to study in the United States have to learn to survive fairly quickly to succeed academically and socially in a new environment" (Lin, 2012, p. 335). Lin's methodology employed qualitative research presenting a case study of six international students studying at a large suburban public university. The university enrolled more than 2,000 international students with a total of 45,000 students. Participants in the study were approached and selected from students who attended the school's social events regularly. Three male and three female students were chosen with the majority coming from Asia. Areas of focus were academic work, social life, cultural experiences in America, social service/support, and financial support. Lin's research was an effort to work toward an increase in understanding between international students and the school community. Those students with lower English language skills had greater difficulties with adjustment. However, there was no information regarding how this correlated to grade point average. Lin (2012) reported, the biggest challenge for international students was the different teaching style in America. Students indicated feeling less "smart" because of insufficient preliminary

knowledge about the interactive nature of the U.S. classroom. While a U.S. classroom expects interactive learning, a student in other countries is expected to be a passive listener. Lin found that a student's home culture seemed to affect the way they perceived and reacted to things and people. She also indicated the importance of looking at the significance of the professor's role in the process. Consistent with previous studies, the outcome of the study indicated the importance of U.S. higher education addressing issues of diversity. Campus programming should foster a multicultural learning environment for local and international students helping them to understand and respect each other. Although this study is quite useful, possible limitations are its use of students who regularly participated in events, their homogeneous geographic backgrounds, and their enrollment in a single institution. As with the other studies, Lin emphasized the need to pay attention to a student's socio-cultural adjustment and campus involvement.

Chapter Summary

Based on a review of the literature, it is clear that multiple factors contribute to an international student's experience. Some of the challenges that an international student faces include English language barriers, friendship development, cultural adjustment, and getting used to curriculum and the U.S. classroom (Andrade, 2006). Due to the increase in international student enrollment at U.S. institutions of higher education, it is important that we evaluate and support the needs of these students (Lin, 2012). With the increase in international student enrollment nationwide, it is no longer sufficient to bring these students here and group their needs with the larger student population. According to Arthur (2004), international students, and all individuals, have the capability to adjust in a new culture and adapt to the culture shock that they will experience. Even with this

knowledge, it is essential for an institution to acknowledge the needs of international students and make a commitment to support them throughout their program. University administration and faculty are interested in the success of all students studying in U.S. institutions of higher education. There may not be one sole predictor of what will influence an international student's ability to adjust and flourish during their program. Factors such as homesickness, initial language barriers, lack of campus integration, and limited community support all can contribute to a student's first year experience and persistence until graduation. In light of this, it is important to provide adequate support systems in the first year and throughout a student's program.

Previous studies have focused on student or administrator perceptions of international support services at four-year institutions and community college in the first year of study. The strength of these studies is their assessment of what is being done to address the services available to international students and identify any gaps in the services. However, after the first year of study, there is no tangible research on continuing services available to international students. According to Sallie's (2007) research on community colleges, there is a lack of information in the research addressing the support services available to international students in general. What remains to be addressed in the research, are international student services available at other types of institutions and any gaps in the services in the first year and throughout a student's program. The purpose of this study was to identify perceived institutional commitment to and availability of pre-entry and on-campus support services available to international students at special focus institutions. There is no indication of previous research available on this topic. This study addressed international services at the top 40 enrolling special

focus U.S. institutions of higher education as reported by program administrators in the roles of international student advisors, international admissions advisors, directors and vice presidents of international student services, and student development staff.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

General Perspective

In recent years, U.S. institutions of higher education have enjoyed the benefits of a growing international student population (Bhandari et al., 2012). Due to the potential financial, cultural, and good will returns, campuses across the United States have increased their allocation of funds directed towards marketing and recruitment efforts (American Council on Education, 2012). It is clear that institutions will not cease in their efforts and instead will want to continue to attract international students to study in the United States. Institutions of higher education in the U.S. can only benefit from having an increased number of international students adding to the campus cultural and learning environment (Bhandari et al., 2012). Based on this growing population, it has become evident that campus administration should address the needs of these students and commit to providing support services for them. International students in U.S. institutions of higher education face difficult adjustments to new cultural, linguistic and academic environments (Curry & Copeman, 2005). Whereas in the past, campus administration might have been able to group the needs of one or two students into general services, it is impossible to do so when hundreds of international students are on campus (Lin, 2012). In reviewing the Open Doors Report (Bhandari et al., 2012), there is a strong indication that enrollment and interest has grown for international students studying in the United States. However, a gap remains in how we can best service and be sensitive to an international student's needs while they study on a U.S. campus. Theoretical frameworks

for student persistence and integration support the need for systems in place to ensure international student success. Many times, we are unaware of the challenges international students are facing in their daily experience (Arthur, 2004). When an individual is coming from a different frame of reference, although they may be academically prepared, other factors can impede or contribute to their success. Student services professionals need to examine and implement support systems for acculturating international students into the greater campus community (Andrade, 2006).

Due to the limited research on the topic, it is important to continue examining international student support services available and institutional commitment to offering these services. Using the guidance of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Astin (1985) that emphasized the importance of environmental influence on a student's experience, the needs of international students were examined at special focus institutions in order to identify some possible strategies for their retention. By using a survey with quantitative items, campus personnel were asked about the profile of their institution and services and programming available to address international student's needs.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research design and method used to analyze services available to international students and a perceived institutional commitment to offering these services. The chapter is organized in the following sections: Research Context, Research Participants, Research Instruments, and Data Analysis.

Research Context

For this study, participants were selected based on the Open Doors Report (Bhandari, Chow, & Farrugia, 2013) listing the top 40 special focus institutions hosting

the highest number of international students. According to Creswell (2009), this would be considered a convenience sample because the participants have been chosen in a non-random manner due to the high percentage of international students at their institutions. The Open Doors Report is a valuable resource, focused on international students in the United States, offering data gathered from surveys sent to institutions around the country during the 2012 to 2013 academic year. Based on institution type, information on institutional and international student demographics, as well as international enrollment numbers for specific programs, is cited in the Open Doors Report. The strength of the Open Doors Report is that it is the only comprehensive report available regarding international student enrollment in the U.S. institutions of higher education. The limitation of the Open Doors Report is that it relies on self-report data provided by the individual institutions possibly affecting their validity and reliability.

The webpages for the top 40 special focus institutions based upon the Open Doors Report were examined to determine the names and e-mail addresses of those individuals who, by title, appeared responsible for international student services. As this information was gathered, it was saved in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with categories for institution name, institutional representative and title (if available), e-mail, and phone number.

Based on Sallie's (2007) research using a survey with quantitative and qualitative items on first-year international support services offered at community colleges, a modified version of the First Year Student Support Services for International Students Attending Community College Survey (FYSS) was used for surveying campus personnel who work in the area of international student services at the top 40 special focus

institutions. This survey was administered electronically to selected practitioners through the Qualtrics survey website.

Research Participants

Each of the top 40 special focus institution websites identified from the Open Doors Report (Bhandari et al., 2013) (Appendix A) was examined to identify and select the college professionals who, by title, appear responsible for international student services. Targeted college professionals or staff included international student advisors, international admissions advisors, directors and vice presidents of international student services, and student development staff that work at U.S. institutions of higher education. A limitation of this method was that some websites only offered general e-mail addresses and phone numbers for international offices. And, some websites were very difficult to navigate to locate the international services departments. Phone calls had to be made to the general phone number of institutions to identify specific contacts with e-mail addresses. The contact list contained, at minimum, a general departmental e-mail or one representative's e-mail from each institution.

The electronic program Qualtrics proved to be a user friendly, powerful tool that could summarize results from Likert scale, open-ended, and multiple-choice questions. Initial surveys were sent in the middle of February 2014 after the start of each institution's January term. The selection criteria for this study were: (a) campus personnel with direct responsibility for international student services, and (b) campus personnel responsible for international student retention. In the first week, 13 surveys were returned with only 11 completed in total. Follow up e-mails were sent three weeks later in the first week of March 2014. This generated two more responses bringing the total up to 13

completed surveys out of 15 returned surveys. After attending a dissertation seminar, it was suggested that a method for increasing response rates would be to distribute the third request from the researcher's work e-mail. This suggestion was taken and a third request was sent in the third week of March 2014 from the researcher's work e-mail. This generated five more responses from participants offering a total of 20 returned surveys with 17 completed in full translating to a 42.5% return rate. In hindsight, it may have been more effective to send a more personalized e-mail from the start of the research. In consultation with the researcher's chair, the survey was closed in the second week of April 2014. Similar to the researcher's experience, Sallie (2007) had to follow up electronically and send personal e-mails requesting responses to the survey. This resulted in Sallie receiving a total of 20 surveys that were returned with 18 fully completed surveys, offering a 45% return rate.

Research Instruments

Sallie's (2007) research using quantitative and qualitative questions on first-year international support services offered at community colleges was used as a framework for the survey research. After asking permission by e-mail from Sallie (Appendix B), Sallie approved the request to modify his survey, the First Year Student Support Services for International Students Attending Community College Survey (FYSS) (Appendix C). A modified version of Sallie's survey, International Student Support Services and Institutional Commitment (ISSSIC) (Appendix D), was used for contacting campus personnel to assess international student support services at special focus institutions and the perceived institutional commitment to supporting these services.

First year support services survey. Sallie's (2007) first year student support services (FYSS) survey is a 30-item self-report survey designed to assess institutional excellence and specialized support services available to international students attending community colleges in their first year of study. Items one to seven address institutional demographics and services available. Within the survey, item 8 has 16 sub items that used a 5-point Likert response format ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree responses. Sallie (2007) based his 16 sub items on the 16 characteristics of institutional excellence (Appendix F) as described by Upcraft et al. (2005) in their handbook on the first-year student experience. For purposes of this research, the characteristics of "institutional excellence" were substituted with the term "institutional commitment." In assessing institutional excellence, Sallie assigned a numeric value to each response as follows: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, undecided = 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5. Following the 16 Likert scale sub items for item 8 were 22 open-ended items for response regarding international support services. Sallie (2007) also used Colondres' (2005) qualitative survey, the Community College International Student Support Services Survey (CCIS) to guide the development of the FYSS. Colondres' (2005) studied 13 major characteristics of international student services further described in the review of the literature.

International student support services and institutional commitment (ISSSIC). The researcher's modified version of the FYSS is the International Student Support Services and Institutional Commitment (ISSSIC) survey. It is reduced from Sallie's 30 item mixed methods survey to a quantitative 23 item survey assessing international student support services available and perceived institutional commitment to

offering these services. The survey items were administered with an electronic survey program, Qualtrics. Participants were asked to respond to the first 12 items that consist of questions regarding institutional and departmental characteristics along with international student support services available for international students. Based on a review of the literature, these questions address an institution's profile and availability of services deemed valuable to international students. Following this, items 13 through 21 used a 5-point Likert scale with strongly disagree to strongly agree responses on the perceptions of institutional commitment to the deliverance of international support services. The Likert scale items were modified and taken from Sallie's items that were associated to 16 characteristics of institutional excellence. The ISSSIC survey substituted the term "institutional excellence" with "institutional commitment" and used the following nine characteristics of institutional commitment for the Likert scale items: (a) committed resources, (b) high priority on first-year, (c) first-year seminars for all students, (d) respect for all students, (e) faculty involvement in first-year seminars, (f) professional development, (g) academic and student affairs cooperation, (h) supportive curricular structures, and (i) responsibility for student success. For purposes of this study, "commitment" was substituted for "excellence" based on assessing the practitioner's perceptions of an institution's sense of responsibility to international student support services. The decision to use these nine characteristics was based on their being most applicable to the study. Sallie's study was focused on the first-year while the researcher's study was based on continuous perceptions of commitment and services for the student. Two final questions queried the participants about whether they would like to receive the results of the survey.

Data Analysis

Data for this research was reported based on sections of the survey. The first nine items of the survey report on demographics inclusive of institutional structure, institutional location, institutional total enrollment, international student enrollment, and staffing dedicated to international student services. The next three items report on initial and continuous services available to international students. This was used to assess the level of initial entry services and student programming available during an international student's study program. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and organize the data. Inferential statistics were used to draw conclusions.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 22 (SPSS 22) was used to code and tabulate scores collected from the survey and provide summarized values where applicable including the mean, central tendency, variance, and standard deviation. Demographic statistics were provided including count and percent statistics. As displayed in Table 3.1, descriptive statistics, non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests, and correlation analyses were used to evaluate the five research questions.

Table 3.1

Summary of Variables and Statistical Tests used to Evaluate Research Questions 1-5

Research Question	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Analysis
1	Support Services		Descriptive
2	Support Services	Institutional Structure, Institutional Location, Student Enrollment, International Student Enrollment	Kruskal-Wallis
3	Institutional Commitment	Institutional Structure, Institutional Location, Student Enrollment, International Student Enrollment	Kruskal-Wallis
4	Institutional Commitment	International Student Advisors	Correlation
5	Institutional Commitment		Descriptive

The research questions were:

Research question one: What international support services do special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment provide to address international student needs and maintain student involvement? Survey items 10, 11, 12 reported this information with descriptive statistics.

Research question two: What is the relationship between institutional characteristics (institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment, international student enrollment) and international student support services available at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment? Survey items 5, 7, 8, and 9 are independent variables and survey item 12 is the dependent variable. Four non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests reported the relationship between these items.

Research question three: What is the relationship between institutional characteristics (institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment, international student enrollment) and the individual elements of institutional commitment at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment? Survey items 5, 7, 8, and 9 are the independent variables and items 13 – 21 regarding institutional commitment are the dependent variable. Four non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests reported the relationship between these items.

Research question four: What is the relationship between the number of campus personnel dedicated to international support services and the individual elements of institutional commitment at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment? Survey item 6 is the independent variable and items 13 -21 regarding institutional commitment are the dependent variables. Correlation statistics reported the correlation between these items.

Research question five: What is the perceived institutional commitment to international support services at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment? Likert scale responses from survey items 13 – 21 are reported with descriptive statistics.

The Qualtrics program automatically recorded and compiled the data. Qualtrics proved to be a user-friendly platform for creating, distributing, and collecting data from participants.

Summary

The research sought to address services available to international students and a perceived institutional commitment to offering these services. Data was gathered from

surveying the top 40 special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment based on the Open Doors Report (Bhandari et al., 2013). Through compiling and analyzing the data, the research builds upon the current information available for practitioners in international support services.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This quantitative study examined the support services available to international students attending the top 40 special focus institutions of higher education with the highest international college student enrollment based on the Open Doors Report (Bhandari et al., 2013). It also examined campus personnel's perceptions of institutional commitment to the support of an international student. For the purposes of this study, the targeted college professional participants included international student advisors, international admissions advisors, directors and vice presidents of international student services, and student development staff that work at U.S. institutions of higher education. Due to the lack of information on continuous support services available to international students at U.S. institutions of higher education, it is hoped that this study will build upon the information available to practitioners in international student services. The data received from the International Student Support Services and Institutional Commitment Survey are presented and analyzed in this chapter. The following research questions were analyzed in this chapter:

Research question one: What international support services do special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment provide to address international student needs and maintain student involvement?

Research question two: What is the relationship between institutional characteristics (institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment,

international student enrollment) and international student support services available at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?

Research question three: What is the relationship between institutional characteristics (institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment, international student enrollment) and the individual elements of institutional commitment at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?

Research question four: What is the relationship between the number of campus personnel dedicated to international support services and the individual elements of institutional commitment at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?

Research question five: What is the perceived institutional commitment to international support services at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?

Preliminary Data Analyses and Findings

The first preliminary analysis run was to determine the reliability of the measure used in the present study. Reliability analysis was run to determine if the dependent variable (institutional commitment) as measured by nine items (survey items 13-21) on the International Student Support Services Survey was sufficiently reliable. Reliability analysis allows one to study the properties of measurement scales and the items that compose the scales (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis procedure calculates a reliability coefficient that ranges between 0-1. The results of the reliability coefficient are based on the average inter-item correlation. Scale reliability is

assumed if the coefficient is ≥.70. Results from the test found that the institutional commitment variable construct was sufficiently reliable (*Cronbach's alpha* = .92).

The second preliminary analysis was to determine the demographic profile of the respondents and institutions identified by the 40 special focus institutions. The participants were chosen based on their role at a top 40 special focus institution enrolling the highest number of international college students in the United States (Bhandari et al., 2013). Out of 40 contacts, 20 participant surveys were returned within a three-month period with 17 participant surveys recognized as fully completed by the Qualtrics software. Based on receiving 17 completed surveys out of 40 participating institutions, the completion rate was 42.5%. Three participants responded to the first four items only and were removed from all analyses. Thus, 17 participants provided data that was used to analyze the five research questions. The demographic profile of these 17 respondents is summarized in Table 4.1.

For personal demographics, the participants were asked to give their current title (ISSSIC – item 1). There were 12 different titles used by the respondents with the most popular title being Director, International Student Services (35.28%). The rest are as follows: Assistant Dean for International Students (5.88%), Assistant Director (5.88%), Assistant Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs/Student Affairs (5.88%), Associate Dean of Students (5.88%), Associate Vice President (5.88%), Coordinator of Community Support (11.76%), International Representative (5.88%), International Student Advisor (5.88%), Senior Immigration Specialist (5.88%), and Student Services Director (5.88%).

Table 4.1

Demographic Profile of the 17 International Student Campus Personnel Respondents

Job Title	Frequency	Percent
Assistant Dean for International Students	1	5.88
Assistant Director, ISSS	1	5.88
Assistant Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs/Student Affairs	1	5.88
Associate Dean of Students	1	5.88
Associate Vice President	1	5.88
Coordinator of Community Support	2	11.76
Director	2	11.76
Director, International Student & Scholar Services	1	5.88
Director, International Student Services	2	11.76
Director, Office of International Services	1	5.88
International Representative	1	5.88
International Student Advisor	1	5.88
Senior Immigration Specialist	1	5.88
Student Services Director	1	5.88
Total	17	100.00

Note. Survey Item 1. Sample participants identified from Open Doors Report 2013

As shown in Table 4.2, the 17 participants were asked if they were responsible for providing international student support services (ISSSIC – item 2). From the 17 (*n*=17) responses to this question, 16 responded "yes" and one stated "no." This indicates that the majority of those completing the survey were directly responsible for international

student services. Participants were also asked to indicate the number of years that they have had direct responsibility for international students (ISSSIC – item 3). Two of the participants listed one – two years, five listed three – five years, three listed six – 10 years, and six said more than 10 years. Lastly, for the personal demographics section of the ISSSIC survey, participants were asked if there were staff dedicated to international student support services at their institution (ISSSIC – item 4). Similar to the responses for question two, 16 responded "yes" and one stated "no" (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Frequency Distribution and Percentages of Participants' that were Responsible for ISSS, Years of Responsibility for ISSS, and Whether the Institutions had Staff Dedicated to ISSS

Demographic	Frequency	Percent
Responsible for ISSS		
Yes	16	94.12
No	1	5.88
Total	17	100.00
Years of Responsibility for ISSS		
1 - 2 years	2	11.76
3 - 5 years	5	29.41
6 - 10 years	3	17.65
More than 10 years	6	35.29
Missing	1	5.88
Total	17	100.00
Dedicated ISSS Staff		
Yes	16	94.12
No	1	5.88
Total	17	100.00

Institutional Demographics

Institutional demographics or characteristics were gathered to analyze their relationship to perceived institutional commitment. The institutional characteristics

included institutional structure, staff members dedicated to international services,

institutional location, total student enrollment, and international student enrollment.

Institutional structure and location. The participants were asked to identify

their institutional structure as single campus, multi-campus, or other. In addition, they

were asked whether their locations were urban, suburban, or rural (ISSSIC – items 5 and

7). Table 4.3 portrays a cross tabulation of structure and location for the 17 completed

surveys (*n*=17).

Table 4.3

Demographic Profile of Institutional Structure and Campus Location

Institutional Structure	Campus Location					Total
	Urban	Suburban	Urban & Suburban	Urban & Rural	Urban, Suburban, & Rural	
Single Campus	3	4	0	0	0	7
Multi-campus locations	4	0	3	1	2	10
Total	7	4	3	1	2	17

Note. Survey Items 5 and 7 – Institutional Structure and Location

Campus personnel dedicated to international student services. ISSSIC – item

6 asked the number of campus personnel dedicated to international student support

services. From the 17 completed surveys, there were 16 responses to this question. Three

respondents listed one staff member; three listed two staff members; five listed three staff

members; four listed four staff members; and one listed eight staff members as dedicated

to international student support services (Tables 4.4 and 4.5).

Table 4.4

Demographic Profile of Total Student Enrollment and Campus Personnel Dedicated to

Serving International Students

Number of International Student Advisors	Fall 2013 Total Student Enrollment		Total
	Less than 5,000	More than 5,000	
1 advisor	3	0	3
2 advisors	1	2	3
3 advisors	3	2	5
4 advisors	2	2	4
8 advisors	0	1	1
Total	9	7	16

Note. Survey Item 6 and 8.

Table 4.5

Demographic Profile of Total International Student Enrollment and Campus Personnel

Dedicated to Serving International Students

Number of International Student Advisors	Fall 2013 Total International Student Enrollment		Total
	1-400 students	More than 400 students	
1 advisor	3	0	3
2 advisors	2	1	3
3 advisors	2	3	5
4 advisors	1	3	4
8 advisors	0	1	1
Total	8	8	16

Note. Survey Items 6 and 9.

Total student enrollment. ISSSIC – item 8 asked the fall 2013 total student enrollment of the institutions as reported by the participants. The majority of participants reported less than 3,000 or between 3,000 to 10,000 students in their total enrollment with one reporting 15,000 – 20,000 students.

Total international student enrollment. ISSSIC – item 9 asked the fall 2013 total international student enrollment. The majority of respondents indicated an international student enrollment ranging between 201 – 400 students with two institutions reporting enrollment between 1,500 and 2,000 students and none reporting over 2,000 international students.

Research questions analyses. The results from the five research questions are presented in Tables 4.6 – 4.22. In order to analyze Research Question One (What international support services do special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment provide to address international student needs and maintain student involvement?), the frequency distribution and percent statistics were analyzed for survey items 10, 11, and 12 on the International Student Support Services Survey.

Survey item 10 asked, "What services does your institution offer to address initial entry support services for an international student? Please check all that apply." Response options for institutions' initial entry support services included pre-arrival orientation, international student orientation, week-long workshops, peer mentors, and other. As displayed in Table 4.6, using SPSS 22, survey item 10 was evaluated through frequency and percent statistics. Results indicated that 94.1% of the participants' colleges provided international student orientations ($n = 16$), 52.9% provided peer mentors to international students ($n = 9$), 41.2% had pre-arrival orientation ($n = 7$), and

two participants indicated that their schools had week-long workshops for international

students. Seven respondents provided qualitative/written responses for the option "other".

Table 4.6

Frequency Distribution and Percentages of Initial Entry Support Services

Initial Entry Support Services	Frequency	Percent
Pre-arrival orientation	7	41.20
International student orientation	16	94.10
Week-long workshops	2	11.80
Peer mentors	9	52.90
Other	7	41.20

Note. Self-reported services by 17 Campus Personnel Identified from the Open Doors Report 2013.

The international student services listed by participants included four week pre-

arrival acculturation programs, friendship family programs, guest lecture series (taxes,

immigration, etc.), pre-arrival counseling, pre-arrival email support and airport/shuttle

support, international student-specific sessions during orientation, and international

student handbook. See Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Frequency Statistics of Qualitative Responses for Survey Item 10

Response	Frequency
Four week pre arrival acculturation program	1
Friendship family program	1
Guest Lecture Series (for topics like taxes, immigration issues, etc.)	1
International Student Handbook	1
Pre-arrival counseling	1
Pre-arrival email support, airport/shuttle support	1
We offer some int'l student-specific sessions during orientation but not a separate orientation	1
Total	7

Survey item 11 asked, "Does your institution offer a first-year seminar (or similar program) that is structured for and offered specifically to international students?" Response options for item 11 were either yes or no. Survey item 11 examined whether participants' institutions offered a first-year seminar (or similar program) structured for and offered specifically to international students. Results indicated that 76.5% did not offer a first-year seminar to international students ($n = 13$) and only 23.5% did offer a first-year seminar ($n = 4$). Frequency and percent statistics for survey item 11 are displayed in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Frequency Distribution and Percentages of First Year Seminar Offerings

Offer a First-year Seminar	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	23.50
No	13	76.50
Total	17	100.00

Note. Self-reported by 17 respondents identified on the Open Doors Report 2013.

Survey item 12 asked participants to "check all of the student support services available at your institution offered to international students." For support services, there were 12 services listed including an "other" qualitative component that allowed participants to type in any other services that their institutions provided. The 12 services listed included: first-year seminars, English language support, institutional aid/international awards, learning communities, counseling, academic advising, student visa benefits advisement, tutors, peer mentors, student clubs, writing labs, and field trips. Survey item 12 was evaluated using frequency and percent statistics to identify what type of international student support services are offered to students at participants' institutions. Results indicated that 94.1% of the respondents reported that their institutions provided counseling, academic advising, student visa benefits advisement, and student clubs ($n = 16$). Additionally, 76.5% of the respondents reported that their institutions offered writing labs ($n = 13$) and 70.6% offered English language support, tutors and field trips ($n = 12$). Furthermore, 64.7% of the respondents reported that their institutions offered peer mentors ($n = 11$) and 58.8% of the respondents reported that their institutions provided institutional aid/international awards ($n = 10$). As displayed in

Table 4.9, the remaining support services provided by participants' institutions included first-year seminars ($n = 5$) and learning communities ($n = 6$). Two participants specified other support services provided by their institutions that included career development, public safety resources, center for public art (volunteering/work study), and dormitory management. Lastly, one participant stated that all the services listed in the survey item are offered to all students and that international students are not segregated. Qualitative responses to survey item 12 are displayed in Table 4.10.

Table 4.9

Frequency Distribution and Percentages of Available Support Services

Support Services	Frequency	Percent
First-year seminars	5	29.40
English language support	12	70.60
Institutional aid/international awards	10	58.80
Learning communities	6	35.30
Counseling	16	94.10
Academic advising	16	94.10
Student visa benefits advisement	16	94.10
Tutors	12	70.60
Peer mentors	11	64.70
Student clubs	16	94.10
Writing labs	13	76.50
Field trips	12	70.60
Other	3	17.60

Note. Self-reported by 17 respondents identified on the Open Doors Report 2013.

Table 4.10

Frequency Distribution and Percentages of Available Support Services

Survey Item 12	Frequency	Percent
Career development, public safety resources, Center for public art (volunteering/work study)	1	5.90
Has a dormitory where both American and International Students live together and share responsibilities of the Dorm management.	1	5.90
The above is offered to all students—we don't pull out the international students	1	5.90
No response	14	76.47
Total	17	100.00

Note. Qualitative Responses to Survey Item 12.

In order to analyze research question two (What is the relationship between institutional characteristics - institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment, international student enrollment - and international student support services available at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?), four non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests were run to determine if any significant differences in international student support services existed between four institutional characteristics (institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment, and international student enrollment). The dependent variable was international student support services, as defined in research question one. Since participants recorded several support services, the total number of support services provided were used as the dependent variable. That is, if a participant recorded having three of the 12 services, they would receive a score of "3." Thus, the possible range for the dependent variable (international student support services) was between 0 and 12.

The independent variables were institutional structure (item 5), institutional

location (item 7), student enrollment (item 8), and international student enrollment (item

9). Institutional structure (item 5) was measured on two levels including: single campus

($n = 7$) and multi-campus locations ($n = 10$). For institutional location (item 7),

participants were asked to select one or more of three location types: urban ($n = 7$),

suburban ($n = 4$), and rural ($n = 0$). Participants that stated their institutional structure

was multi-campus (response to survey item 5), multiple responses were collected on

survey item 7; thus, creating four additional levels: urban and suburban ($n = 3$), urban and

rural ($n = 1$), suburban and rural ($n = 0$), and urban, suburban, and rural ($n = 2$). However,

since the frequencies for these additional levels were so small, they were condensed into

one category labeled multiple locations ($n = 6$). Therefore, for survey item 7, the

ANOVA analysis for research question two was evaluated using three institutional

structures: urban ($n = 7$), suburban ($n = 4$), and multiple locations ($n = 6$).

For student enrollment (survey item 8), five levels were provided to choose from

including: less than 3,000 ($n = 6$), 3,000-5,000 ($n = 4$), 5,000-10,000 ($n = 5$), 10,000-

15,000 ($n = 1$), and 15,000-20,000 ($n = 1$). However, since response rates were small

across the five levels, the categories were combined into two levels: less than 5,000 ($n =$

10) and more than 5,000 ($n = 7$). The aforementioned two levels were used as the

independent variable for survey item 8 (student enrollment).

For international student enrollment (survey item 9), seven levels were provided

to choose from including: 1-200 ($n = 2$), 201-400 ($n = 7$), 401-600 ($n = 1$), 601-1000 ($n =$

4), 1001-1500 ($n = 1$), 1501-2000 ($n = 2$), and over 2000 ($n = 0$). Due to low sample

sizes per enrollment level, the enrollment rates were combined into two levels: 400

international students and less ($n = 9$) and more than 400 international students ($n = 8$). The aforementioned two levels were used as the independent variable for survey item 9 (international student enrollment).

Before the research question was evaluated, the data were screened for missing data and univariate outliers. Missing data were investigated using frequency counts and three cases were found to exist within the distributions (as discussed in the demographics section) and were removed from all analyses. The data were screened for univariate outliers by transforming raw scores to z-scores and comparing z-scores to a critical value of +/- 3.29, $p < .001$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Z-scores that exceed this critical value are more than three standard deviations away from the mean and thus represent outliers. The distributions were evaluated and no cases with univariate outliers were found. Thus, 20 responses from participants were received and 17 were evaluated by the ANOVA analysis of research question two ($n = 17$). Descriptive statistics of participants' summed support service scores are displayed in Table 4.11 by levels of the four independent variables (survey items 5, 7, 8, and 9).

Table 4.11

Descriptive Statistics for Levels of Support Services Available

Support Services	n	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Institutional Structure					
Single location	7	6	12	8.429	2.370
Multi-campus locations	10	2	11	8.600	3.026
Institution Location					
Urban	7	5	11	9.000	2.646
Suburban	4	6	12	8.500	2.646
Multiple locations	6	2	11	8.000	3.162
Fall 2013 Total Student Enrollment					
Less than 5,000	10	2	12	7.900	3.143
More than 5,000	7	7	11	9.429	1.718
Fall 2013 International Student Enrollment					
1-400 students	9	2	12	7.556	3.046
More than 400 students	8	6	11	9.625	1.847

Note. Significance of relationship between survey items 5, 7, 8, and 9 to survey item 12.

Using SPSS 22, four non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted to determine if significant differences in the number of international student support services at special focus institutions existed between institutional structure (survey item 5), institutional location (survey item 7), student enrollment (survey item 8), and international student enrollment (survey item 9). Results from the four analyses indicated that no significant differences in support services existed between institutional structure ($p = .728$), institutional location ($p = .851$), student enrollment ($p = .372$), or international student enrollment ($p = .142$).

That is, for survey item 5, institutions with multi-campus locations did not have significantly more support services ($M = 8.600$, $SD = 3.026$) than institutions with a single campus ($M = 8.429$, $SD = 2.370$). For survey item 7, institutions in urban settings

did not provide significantly more support services ($M = 9.000$, $SD = 2.646$) than those in the suburban settings ($M = 8.500$, $SD = 2.646$) or institutions with multiple locations ($M = 8.000$, $SD = 3.162$). For survey item 8, institutions with more than 5,000 total students enrolled did not provide significantly more support services ($M = 9.429$, $SD = 1.718$) than institutions with less than 5,000 total students ($M = 7.900$, $SD = 3.143$).

Similarly, for survey item 9, institutions with more than 400 international students did not provide significantly more support services ($M = 9.625$, $SD = 1.847$) than institutions with less than 400 international students ($M = 7.556$, $SD = 3.046$). Displayed in Table 4.12 is a model summary of results from the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests used to evaluate research question two. Tables 4.13 to 4.16 offer a cross tabulation of the relationships between institutional characteristics and international student support services.

Table 4.12

Kruskal-Wallis Tests of International Student Support Services and Levels of Survey Items 5, 7, 8, and 9

Independent Variable	df	χ^2	p
Institutional Structure	1	0.121	.728
Institution Location	2	0.322	.851
Fall 2013 Total Student Enrollment	1	0.797	.372
Fall 2013 International Student Enrollment	1	2.152	.142

Note. Dependent variable = Support Services

Table 4.13

Cross Tabulation of Support Services Provided and Institutional Structure

Support Services	Institutional Structure		Total
	Single Campus	Multi-campus	
First-year seminars	2	3	5
English language support	3	9	12
Institutional aid/international awards	4	6	10
Learning communities	3	3	6
Counseling	7	9	16
Academic advising	7	9	16
Student visa benefits advisement	7	9	16
Tutors	4	8	12
Peer mentors	6	5	11
Student clubs	7	9	16
Writing labs	5	8	13
Field trips	4	8	12
Other	1	2	3

Table 4.14 provides the cross tabulation of support services provided and institutional location at 17 special focus institutions. Table 4.15 provides cross tabulation of support services provided and student enrollment at 17 special focus institutions. Table 4.16 provides cross tabulation of support services provided and international student enrollment at 17 special focus institutions.

Table 4.14

Cross Tabulation of Support Services Provided and Institutional Location

Support Services	Campus Location						Total
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Urban & Suburban	Urban & Rural	Urban, Suburban, & Rural	
First-year Seminars	3	2	0	0	0	0	5
English language Support	6	1	0	3	0	2	12
Institutional aid, international awards	4	3	0	2	0	1	10
Learning communities	2	2	0	1	0	1	6
Counseling	7	4	0	3	0	2	16
Academic advising	7	4	0	3	0	2	16
Student visa benefits advisement	6	4	0	3	1	2	16
Tutors	5	2	0	3	1	1	12
Peer mentors	6	3	0	0	0	2	11
Student clubs	7	4	0	3	0	2	16
Writing labs	5	3	0	3	0	2	13
Field trips	5	2	0	3	0	2	12
Other	1	1	0	0	0	1	3

Table 4.15

Cross Tabulation of Support Services Provided and Student Enrollment

| Support Services | Fall 2013 Total Student Enrollment | | | | | |
	< 3,000	3,000 - 5,000	5,000- 10,000	10,000 - 15,000	15,000 - 20,000	Total
First-year seminars	2	1	1	1	0	5
English language support	6	4	1	1	0	12
Institutional aid/ international awards	4	1	4	1	0	10
Learning communities	3	0	3	0	0	6
Counseling	6	3	5	1	1	16
Academic advising	6	3	5	1	1	16
Student visa benefits advisement	5	4	5	1	1	16
Tutors	5	3	3	1	0	12
Peer mentors	3	3	3	1	1	11
Student clubs	6	3	5	1	1	16
Writing labs	5	2	4	1	1	13
Field trips	5	0	5	1	1	12
Other	1	1	0	0	1	3

Table 4.16

Cross Tabulation of Support Services Provided and International Student Enrollment

Support Services	Fall 2013 International Student Enrollment						
	1-200	201-400	401-600	601-1,000	1,001-1,500	1,501-2,000	Total
First-year seminars	1	0	1	2	1	0	5
English language support	2	4	1	2	1	2	12
Institutional aid/international awards	1	3	1	3	1	1	10
Learning communities	1	2	1	1	1	0	6
Counseling	2	6	1	4	1	2	16
Academic advising	2	6	1	4	1	2	16
Student visa benefits advisement	2	7	0	4	1	2	16
Tutors	1	5	1	3	1	1	12
Peer mentors	1	3	1	3	1	2	11
Student clubs	2	6	1	4	1	2	16
Writing labs	1	4	1	4	1	2	13
Field trips	1	2	1	2	1	2	12
Other	0	0	1	1	1	0	3

In order to analyze research question three (What is the relationship between institutional characteristics - institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment, international student enrollment - and the individual elements of institutional

commitment at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?), four non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests were run to determine if any significant differences in institutional commitment at special focus institutions existed between four institutional characteristics (institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment, and international student enrollment). The dependent variable was institutional commitment and was measured by nine items (survey items 13-21) on the International Student Support Services Survey. Response parameters were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*. That is, higher scores represent higher levels of institutional commitment. Composite (mean) scores were calculated by averaging case scores across the nine items and were used as the dependent variable for research question three. The four independent variables were survey items 5, 7, 8, and 9, as defined in research question two.

Before the research question was evaluated, the data were screened for missing data and univariate outliers. Results indicated there were three cases within the distributions (as discussed in the demographics section) and no cases with univariate outliers were found. Thus, 20 responses from participants were received and 17 were evaluated by the ANOVA analysis of research question 3 ($n = 17$). Descriptive statistics of participants' institutional commitment scores are displayed in Table 4.17 by levels of the four independent variables (survey items 5, 7, 8, and 9,).

Table 4.17

Descriptive Statistics of Institutional Commitment Scores by Location and Enrollment

	n	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Institutional Structure					
Single location	7	2.670	4.670	3.541	0.696
Multi-campus locations	10	2.110	4.780	3.617	0.790
Institution Location					
Urban	7	2.670	4.560	3.621	0.687
Suburban	4	3.110	4.670	3.890	0.637
Multiple locations	6	2.110	4.780	3.342	0.866
Fall 2013 Total Student Enrollment					
Less than 5,000	10	2.670	4.780	3.774	0.607
More than 5,000	7	2.110	4.560	3.317	0.853
Fall 2013 International Student Enrollment					
1-400 students	9	2.670	4.780	3.501	0.616
More than 400 students	8	2.110	4.670	3.681	0.875

Note. Survey Items 5, 7, 8, and 9. Dependent variable = Institutional Commitment

Four non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted to determine if

significant differences in institutional commitment at special focus institutions existed

between institutional structure (survey item 5), institutional location (survey item 7),

student enrollment (survey item 8), and international student enrollment (survey item 9).

Results from the four analyses indicated that no significant differences in institutional

commitment existed between institutional structure (p = .883), institutional location (p =

.410), student enrollment (p = .143), or international student enrollment (p = .500). That

is, for survey item 5, institutions with multi-campus locations did not have significantly

higher institutional commitment scores (M = 3.617, SD = 0.790) than institutions with a

single campus (M = 3.541, SD = 0.696). For survey item 7, institutions in the suburbs did

not have significantly higher institutional commitment scores (M = 3.890, SD = 0.637)

than those in urban settings ($M = 3.621$, $SD = 0.687$) or institutions with multiple

locations ($M = 3.342$, $SD = 0.866$). For item 8, institutions with less than 5,000 total

students enrolled did not have significantly higher institutional commitment scores ($M = 3.774$, $SD = 0.607$) than institutions with more than 5,000 total students ($M = 3.317$, $SD = 0.853$). Similarly, for survey item 9, institutions with more than 400 international

students did not have significantly higher institutional commitment scores ($M = 3.501$, $SD = 0.875$) than institutions with less than 400 international students ($M = 3.501$, $SD = 0.616$). Displayed in Table 4.18 is a model summary of results from the non-parametric

Kruskal-Wallis tests used to evaluate research question three.

Table 4.18

Kruskal-Wallis Tests of Institutional Commitment and Levels

Independent Variable	df	χ^2	p
Institutional Structure	1	0.021	.883
Institution Location	2	1.781	.410
Fall 2013 Total Student Enrollment	1	2.148	.143
Fall 2013 International Student Enrollment	1	0.455	.500

Note. Dependent variable = Institutional Commitment of Survey Items 5, 7, 8, and 9.

In order to analyze research question four (What is the relationship between the

number of campus personnel dedicated to international support services and the

individual elements of institutional commitment at special focus institutions with the

highest international college student enrollment?), a Pearson's *r* correlation analysis was

run to determine if a significant relationship existed between the number of campus

personnel dedicated to international support services and institutional commitment at special focus institutions. The criterion variable was institutional commitment at special focus institutions, as defined in research question three. The predictor variable was the number of campus personnel dedicated to international support services and was measured by survey item 6 on the International Student Support Services Survey, "How many international student advisors are dedicated to international support services?" Before the research question was evaluated, the data were screened for missing data and univariate outliers. Results indicated there was one participant that did not respond to survey item 6, and three additional cases that did not complete the survey (as discussed in the demographics section) and no cases with univariate outliers were found. Thus, 20 responses from participants were received and 16 were evaluated by the correlation analysis of research question 4 ($n = 16$). Due to a small sample size, non-parametric analyses (Spearman's rho and Kendall's tau) were conducted to affirm the results of the Pearson's correlation analysis. Descriptive statistics of participants' institutional commitment scores and number of campus personnel dedicated to international student support services are displayed in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19

Participants' Institutional Commitment Scores and Number of Personnel Dedicated to

International Student Support Services

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
# of International Student Advisors	1.00	8.00	3.000	1.713
Institutional Commitment	2.11	4.78	3.591	0.754

Note. n = 16

Research question four was evaluated using correlation analysis to determine if a

significant relationship existed between the number of campus personnel dedicated to

international support services and institutional commitment. Results indicated that a

significant relationship did not exist between variables, *Pearson's correlation* = -.012,

p = .965 (2-tailed). Additionally, results from the non-parametric tests confirmed this

finding (*Spearman's rho* = .108, *p* = .690, and *Kendall's tau* = .056, *p* = .779). These

results indicate there was no significant relationship between the number of campus

personnel dedicated to international support services and institutional commitment. A

model summary of the parametric and non-parametric correlation analyses conducted for

research question four as reported in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20

Correlations Among Campus Personnel Dedicated to International Support Services and

Institutional Commitment

Test	Correlation Coefficient	p
Pearson's r	-.012	.965
Spearman's rho	.108	.690
Kendall's tau	.056	.779

Research question five (What is the perceived institutional commitment to international support services at special focus institutions?), was analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the perceived institutional commitment to international support services at special focus institutions. Specifically, participants' responses on the individual nine survey items (13-21) measuring institutional commitment were evaluated. Response parameters for the nine survey items were measured on the 5-point Likert-type scale, as defined in research question three (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*).

Using SPSS 22, descriptive statistics including minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation were evaluated to determine the perceived institutional commitment to international support services at special focus institutions. Results indicated that survey item 16 had the highest mean score of 3.940 (*SD* = 0.899) and survey item 19 had the lowest mean score of 2.760 (*SD* = 0.752). That is, participants' agreed most strongly that their institutions values international students by meeting them where they are academically, yet maintains high expectations for each student (survey item 16).

Furthermore, participants did not agree that their institutions provide professional development activities to help prepare faculty to teach in special programs such as learning communities and first-year seminars for international students (survey item 19). Descriptive statistics of participants' institutional commitment scores on survey items 13-21 are displayed in Table 4.21.

In addition, Table 4.22 offers an overview of individual participant's perception of overall institutional commitment.

Table 4.21

Descriptive Statistics for Participants Individual Elements of Institutional Commitment

Survey Item	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
13	2	5	3.590	1.176
14	2	5	3.530	1.068
15	2	5	3.880	0.857
16	1	5	3.940	0.899
17	2	5	3.760	0.831
18	2	5	3.410	0.939
19	2	4	2.760	0.752
20	1	5	3.530	1.068
21	3	5	3.880	0.781

Note. n = 17

Table 4.22

Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Composite Scores of Overall Perception of

Institutional Commitment

Participant	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	2	5	3.667	1.118
2	2	4	2.667	0.707
3	3	4	3.556	0.527
4	3	4	3.889	0.333
5	2	4	3.444	0.726
6	3	5	4.778	0.667
7	2	4	3.556	0.726
8	2	4	2.889	0.928
9	2	4	3.111	0.928
10	2	4	3.222	0.833
11	3	4	3.889	0.333
12	3	5	4.667	0.707
13	4	5	4.333	0.500
14	3	5	4.556	0.726
15	2	4	3.000	0.866
16	1	3	2.111	0.782
17	3	4	3.222	0.441

Summary

As a result of the ISSSIC survey, more information is available regarding international student support services at the top 40 special focus institutions in the United States with the highest international student enrollment (Bhandari et al., 2013). Based on feedback from the 17 participants designated as directly responsible for international student support services, it is apparent that support services are available across all campuses. However, the findings indicate that there was no significant relationship between characteristics and services available or personnel dedicated to these services. A discussion of these finding are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the reported international student support services available and perceptions of institutional commitment to these services at the top 40 special focus institutions enrolling international students in U.S higher education. As the research has shown, over the past decade, U.S. institutions of higher education have been aggressively recruiting international students for study in the United States of America (American Council on Education, 2012). There is no indication that this initiative will come to a halt. Upon arrival in the United States, an international student is dealing with possible culture shock, language barriers, potential financial concerns, and classroom adjustment issues (Arthur, 2004). Some of these issues are likely to continue throughout their program along with a need to feel part of a community. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this study, the majority of research examines the international student experience. There is limited research on the practitioner's perceptions of services available and an institution's commitment to meeting the apparent needs of an international student. Based on this, the researcher felt that it was important to examine how an international student's needs are being addressed and the perceived institutional commitment to these services. The research questions that framed this study were:

Research question one: What international support services do special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment provide to address international student needs and maintain student involvement?

Research question two: What is the relationship between institutional characteristics (institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment, international student enrollment) and international student support services available at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?

Research question three: What is the relationship between institutional characteristics (institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment, international student enrollment) and the individual elements of institutional commitment at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?

Research question four: What is the relationship between the number of campus personnel dedicated to international support services and the individual elements of institutional commitment at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?

Research question five: What is the perceived institutional commitment to international support services at special focus institutions with the highest international college student enrollment?

Implications of Findings

The statistical computer software program, SPSS version 22.0 was used to analyze data for the five research questions. The first research question was answered using a descriptive analysis with frequency and percent statistics. Research question two and three were answered using an ANOVA and/or Kruskal-Wallis test. Research question four was answered using Spearman's rho, Pearson's r, and Kendall's tau correlations. Lastly, research question five was answered using descriptive statistics

including minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. Chapter 4 offers full details of each analysis. Key findings are summarized in this section.

A correlation of the data revealed that there were no significant correlations between institutional characteristics, international student support services, and institutional commitment. Regardless of whether an institution was single or multi-campus, had below 400 or over 1,000 enrolled international students, the amount of services available and perception of commitment to these services was very similar across the board. This does not necessarily indicate a positive report of services available and perceived commitment to supporting an international student. It shows that regardless of the trend in international student enrollment growth, the services appear to be very similar along with the perceptions of institutional commitment level which are near neutral (3 = undecided). In reviewing the individual practitioner's perceptions of institutional commitment, based on the data, it can be inferred that respondents are not convinced of their institution's interest in what it really means to bring international students into an institution. We must address the overall institutional needs that are associated with servicing an increased international student population.

Interest continues for the growth of international students on our campuses (American Council on Education Report, 2012). Implications of the findings indicate that institutions must continue to work towards understanding the impact of this growing population on campus structures and address the areas of staffing in every department, professional development, and programming for student support and satisfaction. Upper level management is an essential part of this process of working towards the retention and satisfaction levels of a campuses international student population.

Research question one. The purpose of research question one was to determine the international student support services throughout a student's program. It was found that the majority of institutions (*n*=16) offered international student orientations, counseling, immigration benefit advisement, and clubs. In addition, it was important to note that although the majority of schools offer peer mentors and English language support (*n*=12), a limited amount of schools offer first-year seminars (*n*=5), and learning communities (*n*=6). It is apparent that all schools feel a responsibility for assisting their international students by offering them special programs plus support in their studies but there is a limited amount of additional programming to further enhance the student experience. As indicated in the research, the continuous services available can be a valuable tool for retaining and supporting an international student. The level of support services and awareness to the need is as a step toward international student success (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002). Upon arrival in the United States, an international student is dealing with many possible issues, as a campus we must be able to address this with faculty and administration's support (Andrade, 2006).

Research question two. The purpose of research question two was to determine the relationship between institutional characteristics and international student support services. It was found that no significant relationship existed between these variables. Regardless of an institution's location, structure, and enrollment the level of services was very similar. Institutions with multi-campus locations did not have more support services (M = 8.6, SD = 3.026) than institutions with a single campus (M=8.429, SD = 2.37). Based on the self-report of these 17 respondents, regardless of the growth of their international student population and campus locations, the level of services are not

necessarily based on an institutions location or level of enrollment. The range of international student services at institutions are anywhere from two to 12 services and there does not appear to be a formula for the level of services available. It is also important to mention that even if a campus' structure embodies multiple locations, there is a good possibility that most of the international students are enrolled in only one of the locations. This would account for no significant relationship in increased international support services for multi-campus and single location structures. These findings are in line with Sallie (2007) who found that the range of services available were not significant considering the sample population was the top 40 enrolling community colleges for international students. The data from Sallie's study indicated a need to address increased support for international student services.

Research question three. The purpose of research question three was to determine the relationship between institutional characteristics and the individual elements of institutional commitment. Based on the self-report of these 17 respondents, it was found there was no significant difference in the relationships between characteristics and individual elements. The levels of perceived institutional commitment across the nine survey items in relationship to the institutional characteristics were very similar regardless of structure, location, and enrollment. This translates into all institutions perceiving very similar levels of commitment to the different elements involved in supporting international students. It is interesting to note that the perceived levels of commitment were very near a level three, neutral range. We can infer from this that practitioners did not feel strongly about their institution's commitment to supporting the needs associated with an increased international student population. It is the researchers

belief that campus personnel involved with international student support services are a very dedicated group of individuals. It can be inferred from the self-report of these 17 respondents that they are not certain of their institution's complete understanding of the commitment necessary to properly servicing international students. This supports the conclusions of Sallie (2007) who also found no correlation between institutional characteristics and the individual elements of institutional excellence. Sallie (2007) asserts, international students bring unique challenges to our campuses, challenging us to meet them where they are and establish mutual understanding.

Research question four. The purpose of research question four was to determine if the level of staffing for international student support services had any relationship to the perceived commitment to the individual elements. In line with the other questions, there was no significant relationship between the number of campus personnel dedicated to international support services and the levels of perception to institutional commitment. It appears that the self-report of these 17 respondents is very similar regardless of the number of dedicated personnel. This is not necessarily a positive indication of strong feelings of institutional commitment. A majority of the 17 respondents reported responses that were in the neutral or agree range as opposed to strongly agreeing with perceptions of institutional commitment. In reviewing the self-reported staffing for the 17 out of 40 Open Door Institutions, it appears that these 17 institutions had similar staffing levels for their dedicated international student personnel. It would have been helpful to examine perceptions of ideal international student to staff ratios as this may also be an influence on perceived institutional commitment. The research of Graham and Poyrazli (2007)

confirmed the importance of student services personnel's role in the international student experience.

  Research question five. The purpose of research question five was to determine campus personnel's individual responses to the characteristics of institutional commitment. It is important to note that although the highest mean response was to item 16 for supportive curricular structures (M=3.940, SD = 0.899), the mean response did not reach a level four of agreeing with perceived institutional commitment. The 17 respondents self-reported that they almost believed their institutions had supportive curricular structures. Closely matched to this were survey items 15 and 21 with a mean score of 3.880 indicating that respondents almost agree that their institutions take responsibility for student success. Interesting enough, the lowest mean score of 2.76 (SD = .752) was for survey item 19 regarding professional development. The 17 respondents did not believe that their institutions were providing enough professional development for faculty in preparation for teaching international students.

  It is important to note that none of these scores were very high. A mean score of 3.94 does not indicate strongly agreeing rather it is saying that most respondent are close to the "agree" range for an area such as supportive curricular structures. These results were in line with Sallie (2007) who found perceptions of weak commitment were in the areas of faculty development, involvement and assessment. This connects back to the need for our institutions to review and connect the meaning of increased international student enrollment. While the goal is to increase international student enrollment, the expectation of retaining these student at special focus institution must be addressed in the planning process.

Limitations

By limiting the pool to 40 institutions, the response rate was not as high as it could have been. The Open Doors Report 2013 (Bhandari et al., 2013) offers information on a variety of institutions enrolling the highest number of international students in U.S. higher education. This resource could have been used to open up the survey to a larger number of institutions. Another resource to widen the sample population and response rate would have been to distribute the survey to international educators subscribed to the national list-serve. By limiting the population to the top 40 enrolling special focus institutions, this limited the sample population and possible response rate.

When thinking about the quantitative nature of the ISSSIC Survey, it was very difficult to gain a true depth in understanding of the practitioner's perceptions of institutional commitment to international student support services. It was easy to make inferences based on the respondent's overall institutional commitment scores but there was a missing element of richness in response that a qualitative instrument may have offered the research. Also, the ISSSIC survey did not require respondents to answer every question in order to move forward. This allowed for a non-response to some of the questions that would have contributed toward the data. In addition, due to the self-report aspect of the perceptions, there is a likely bias of these 17 people without other evidence to review regarding campus administration approach to international student support services.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research. A qualitative study could offer richer information on the practitioner's perceptions of international student support services and

institutional commitment to these services. By conducting interviews and focus groups with practitioners, the lived experience of a practitioner could offer more insight into their thoughts on staffing ratios, services available, perceptions on effective programming, budget limitations, and perceived institutional commitment. As a practitioner in international student services, the researcher understands that there are many factors that influence our programming and perceptions regarding institutional commitment to supporting international students. A qualitative study could offer a more robust account of the practitioner's perspective.

Another area to address with a quantitative study would be the strategic planning and systems in place for international student recruitment and increased enrollment. It would be helpful to analyze the upper level management perspective of how we can address this special population's needs. Domestic enrollment is struggling; therefore, university administrators see the international arena as the most obvious direction for increasing total student enrollment. With this desire to increase enrollment, we need to look at whether appropriate planning is in place for budgets to match the needs of a growing international student population. With more international students, it is essential for campus administration to review staff to student ratios across all departments, professional development, and international support services.

As the research indicates, practitioners in international student support services offer some of the most important services to help an international student initially and throughout their studies. As a practitioner, one must continue to address how they can help their institution understand as a whole how they can provide the best experience possible for an international student. The conversation to address how we can best

support international students needs to encompass student development, academics, financial aid, student accounts, housing, and all campus operations that have an effect on the international student experience. The responsibility is not solely assigned to the campus personnel in international student support services.

Conclusion

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify international student support services available and perceptions of institutional commitment to these services at special focus institutions in U.S higher education. The perceptions of institutional commitment and available services were reported by program administrators in the roles of international student advisors, directors, deans and vice presidents of international student services. Based on self-reported responses of 17 campus personnel each representing one of the 40 Open Door special focus institutions enrolling international students, no significant differences in perceptions of institutional commitment existed between institutional structure, institutional location, student enrollment or international student enrollment. In addition, there was no significant relationship between number of campus personnel dedicated to international support services and institutional commitment or campus characteristics and international student support services. The results of this study indicated that these institutions according to the self-report of their international student campus personnel addressed the need for international student support services similarly regardless of total enrollment or demographics. Based on the growing international student population in U.S. institutions of higher education, it is essential to continue looking at how institutions of all structures and locations can

address international student support services and institutional commitment to these services.

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Appendix A

IIE Open Doors Report 2012/13 – Top 40 Specialized Institutions

1. Academy of Art University — San Francisco, CA — 5,081
2. Savannah College of Art and Design — Savannah, GA — 1,808
3. School of Visual Arts — New York, NY — 1,403
4. Missouri University of Science and Technology — Rolia, MO — 1,132
5. Babson College — Babson Park, MA — 998
6. Berkeley College — New York, NY — 995
7. School of the Art Institute of Chicago — Chicago, IL — 772
8. Thunderbird School of Global Management — Glendale, AZ — 651
9. Goldey-Beacom College — Wilmington, DE — 647
10. University of Texas Health Science Center — Houston, TX — 611
11. Rhode Island School of Design — Providence, RI — 561
12. Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sc. — Boston, MA — 532
13. Art Center College of Design — Pasadena, CA — 521
14. DeVry University — Chicago, IL — 513
15. Loma Linda University — Loma Linda, CA — 463
16. Musicians Institute — Hollywood, CA — 393
17. California College of the Arts — Oakland, CA — 377
18. Baylor College of Medicine — Houston, TX — 333
19. Tufts University – The Fletcher School — Medford, MA — 324
20. New England Conservatory of Music — Boston, MA — 317
21. Culinary Institute of America — Hyde Park, NY — 316
22. DeVry University — Pomona, CA — 307
23. California Institute of the Arts — Valencia, CA — 264
24. University of Maryland-Baltimore — Baltimore, MD — 252
25. University of Texas Southwester Medical – Dallas — Dallas, TX — 252
26. Northwood University-Florida Campus — West Palm Beach, FL — 232
27. DeVry University — New York, NY — 220
28. University of Nebraska Medical Center — Omaha, NE — 214
29. Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale — Ft. Lauderdale, FL — 212
30. Maryland Institute College of Art — Baltimore, MD — 212
31. Moody Bible Institute — Chicago, IL — 209
32. Rose-Human Institute of Technology — Terre Haute, IN — 203
33. Northwood University – Michigan Campus — Midland, MI — 171
34. South Dakota School of Mines and Technology — Rapid City, SD — 167
35. University of the Arts — Philadelphia, PA — 165
36. Ringling College of Art and Design — Sarasota, FL — 164
37. College for Creative Studies — Detroit, MI — 155
38. University of Massachusetts Medical School — Shrewsbury, MA — 144
39. Calvin Theological Seminary — Grand Rapids, MI — 142
40. Central Baptist Theological Seminary — Shawnee, KS — 140

Appendix B

Permission of Use: Survey of First-Year Student Support Services for International Students Attending Community Colleges in the United States

RE: Doctoral Candidate - Request for Permission

Sallie, Jack (Jack.Sallie@montgomerycollege.edu) Add to contacts 11/03/13
To: Nori Jaffer

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Good morning Nori,

Your topic sounds very interesting and is of extreme
importance in our global society. You may feel free to
modify my survey instrument to target administrators of
special focus institutions. Also I would be happy to answer
any questions you may have. Please keep me posted as to how
your research is progressing and how I may help. One
thought early on is your target date to survey the
administrators. For example: although they are always very
busy, usually the first and last 2-3 weeks of a semester
are extremely busy and surveys tend to get lost in the
shuffle.

Best wishes and enjoy the process!
Jack

Jack E. Sallie, Ed.D., NCC
Counselor/ Associate Professor
Montgomery College, Germantown
Office - HS180
240-567-6959

Adversity introduces a man to himself. Anonymous.
They can because they think they can. Virgil.
_____
From: Nori Jaffer [norij_67@hotmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, November 02, 2013 5:08 PM
To: Sallie, Jack
Subject: Doctoral Candidate - Request for Permission

Dear Dr. Sallie: I am writing to you today based on my
interest in conducting research of a similar nature to your
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dissertation on first-year support services for
international students. To tell you a little about myself,
I am a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D. program in Executive
Leadership at St. John Fisher College. And, I am a manager
of International Student Services at Berkeley College in
New York City. My research interest is to look at
international student support services available at the top
40 special focus institutions as reported in the IIE Open
Doors 2012 Report. Based on this, I would like to request
permission from you to create a modified version of your
survey instrument targeting administrators at special focus
institutions. I believe your survey matches exactly the
direction I would like to go with my research.

I would also be most grateful for any advice you could
offer me regarding your experience during the research
process. I am currently working toward defending my
dissertation proposal by this December 2014 and any insight
from someone like yourself would be of great value to me.
Thank you so much for your consideration of my request.
Sincerely, Nori Jaffer

Appendix C

Survey of First-Year Student Support Services for International Students Attending Community Colleges in the United States

1. What is your institutional structure?
   a) Single campus
   b) Single college - multi-campus
   c) Single District multi-college

2. Where is your institution located?
   a) Urban
   b) Suburban
   c) Rural
   d) a. and b.
   e) Other _____

3. What is the Fall 2006 head count (total student enrollment) of your institution?
   a) Less than 3,000
   b) 3,000 – 5,000
   c) 5,001 – 10,000
   d) 10,001 – 15,000
   e) 15,001 – 20,000
   f) Over 20,000

4. What is the size of your institution's Fall 2006 international student population?
   a) 501 – 1000
   b) 1,001 – 1,500
   c) 1,501 – 2,000
   d) 2,001 – 3,000
   e) Over 3,000

5. First-Year Seminars: (These are called by different names and have many formats. Ex. Orientations: Week-long Workshops: Success Workshops, etc.) If your institution offers something similar, please give a title and a brief description.

6. Does your institution offer a first-year seminar (or similar program) that is structured for and offered specifically to international students? If yes, please give its title and a brief description of the program.

7. Please check all of the student support services your institution offers to first-year international students (Please add to the list any others your institution offers).

a) First-year seminars
b) Learning communities
c) Counseling
d) Advising
e) Peer Mentors
f) Tutors
g) Student clubs
h) Writing labs
i) Field trips
j) Other

8. Please rate each statement as it relates to your institution using a 1 – 5 scale where (1) is "Strongly disagree" and (5) is "Strongly agree".
   1. = Strongly disagree
   2. = Disagree
   3. = Undecided
   4. = Agree
   5. = Strongly agree

   a) Our institution designates a significant share of existing campus resources – personnel, financial, physical space – for student support services for first-year international students.

   b) Among the many competing priorities at our institution, first-year student support services for first-year international students is a high priority.

   c) Our institution has strong leadership (administration, faculty, or both) committed to achieving excellence in the first-year experience for our first-year international students.

   d) The culture of our institution encourages administrators, faculty, and staff to try new ideas, pilot projects, and to take risks in implementing new programs.

   e) Our institution places a strong focus on the success of first-year international students.

   f) Our institution conducts outcome assessment of our student support services for first-year international students each year and uses the results to improve the student support services for first-year international students.

   g) Our institution values first-year international students by meeting them where they are: academically, socially, and language level, yet maintains high expectations for each student.

   h) Our institution's faculty has ownership (is responsible for success) of and participates in the first-year student support services for international students.

i) Our institution provides professional development activities to help prepare faculty to teach in special first-year programs such as learning communities and firs-year seminars for international students.

j) Our institution is consistently searching for new and better ideas to improve our student support services for first-year international students.

k) Our institution uses/develops curriculum that focuses on how and what international students should learn in the firs-year of college.

l) Our institution creates learning communities for international students.

m) Our institution's academic and student affairs units work together to coordinate and provide support services for the benefit of first-year international students.

n) Our institution provides a variety of co-curricular activities (field-trips, socials, culture fairs, service-learning, etc..) that supports the curriculum of first-year international students.

o) Our institution includes the success of first-year international students in the academic mission of the institution.

p) Our institution recognizes that student success is the responsibility of both the student and the institution and we accept our role in the success of first-year international students.

9. Please share anything else you would like to add to the survey?

10. Would you like to receive a summary of the results of the survey?

11. If you answered "yes", please enter your name and contact information:
    a) Last name:
    b) First name:
    c) E-mail address:

12. What is your current title?

13. Where is your international student support services housed in your institution?

14. Are you responsible for providing support services to first-year international students only?

15. How many years have you held the position?

16. How long have you worked at the institution?

17. How would you describe your student support services and programs for first-year international students?

18. What services does your department offer first-year international students?

19. What services do other departments at your institution offer first-year international students?

20. Do the department's coordinate services?

21. What do you see as the greatest challenges first-year international students face when attending your institution?

22. Do you offer first-year seminars for first-year international students?

23. How would you describe your first-year seminars for international students?

24. What textbooks and/or other materials do you use in this seminar?

25. What type of professional development does your institution provide for those working with international students?

26. How would you describe the faculties' participation in the first-year support services for international students?

27. How would you describe the administration's support for the first-year student support services for international students?

28. Your institution has been listed as one of the top 40 community colleges with the highest enrollment of international students for 2006. To what do you attribute the large number of international students attending your institution?

29. What new or improved services has your institution offered first-year international students within the past two years?

30. Is there anything you would like to add to your comments?

Survey Distribution - Participant Request E-Mail

Dear Colleague:

As part of my research for the Doctoral Program in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College, I would like to invite your participation in a survey of international student support services at your institution.

The purpose of this study is to examine the current international student support services at special focus institutions. You are being contacted due to your being listed as one of the top 40 enrolling special focus institutions for international students in the IIE Open Doors Report 2013. The anticipated outcome of the research is to continue working toward the enhancement of an international student's experience while studying at U.S. institutions of higher education.

The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. I would very much appreciate your participation in this anonymous, web-based survey. The results of the study will be coded in such a way that the respondent's identity will not be attached to the final form of this study. All data will be presented in a confidential manner and information will not be associated with e-mails.

Follow this link to the Survey:
${l://SurveyLink?d=https://sjfc.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_29wV461tqUtpcwJ}

(If you are not responsible for international student support services, I would appreciate your forwarding this survey to the appropriate person at your institution).

Sincerely,

Ms. Nori Jaffer
Doctoral Candidate in Executive Leadership
St. John Fisher College

International Student Support Services and Institutional Commitment (ISSSIC)

Personal Demographics

1. What is your current title?

2. Are you responsible for providing international student support services?
   a) Yes
   b) No

3. In your current position, how many years have you had direct responsibility for international student support services? _____ (place # of years here)

4. Is there a dedicated international support services staff at your institution?
   a) Yes
   b) No

Institutional Demographics

5. What is your institutional structure?
   a) Single campus
   b) Multi-campus locations

6. How many international student advisors on campus are dedicated to international support services? If you are a multi-campus institution, please list the allocation of staffing.
   a) 1
   b) 2
   c) 3
   d) Other _____

7. Where is your institution located?
   a) Urban
   b) Suburban
   c) Rural

8. What is the Fall 2013 head count (total student enrollment) of your institution?
   a) Less than 3,000
   b) 3,000 – 5,000
   c) 5,001 – 10,000
   d) 10,001 – 15,000
   e) 15,001 – 20,000
   f) Over 20,000

9. What is the size of your institution's Fall 2013 international student enrollment?
   a) 1 – 200
   b) 201 – 400
   c) 401 – 600
   d) 601 – 1000
   e) 1,001 – 1,500
   f) 1,500 – 2,000
   g) Over 2,000 _____

International Student Services

10. What services does your institution offer to address initial entry support services for an international student? Please check all that apply and offer any brief descriptions.
    a) Pre-Arrival Orientation
    b) International Student Orientation
    c) Week-long workshops
    d) Peer Mentors
    e) Other

11. Does your institution offer a first-year seminar (or similar program) that is structured for and offered specifically to international students?
    a) Yes
    b) No

12. Please check all of the student support services available at your institution offered to international students (you may add to this list).
    a) First-year seminars
    b) English language support
    c) Institutional Aid/International Awards
    d) Learning communities
    e) Counseling
    f) Academic advising
    g) Visa benefit advising
    h) Tutors
    i) Peer mentors
    j) Student clubs
    k) Writing labs
    l) Field trips
    m) Other

Ratings of Institutional Commitment to International Support Services
Please rate each statement as it relates to your institution using a 1 – 5 scale where (1) is "strongly disagree" and (5) is "strongly agree".

    1. = Strongly Disagree
    2. = Disagree
    3. = Undecided
    4. = Agree
    5. = Strongly Agree

13. Our institution designates a significant share of existing personnel and financial resources for international student support services.

14. Among the many competing priorities at our institution, international support services are a high priority.

15. Our institution places a strong focus on the success of international students.

16. Our institution values international students by meeting them where they are academically, yet maintains high expectations for each student.

17. Our institution values international students by providing opportunities to enhance their social integration.

18. Our institution's faculty perceives ownership (is responsible for success) of and participates in the student support services for international students.

19. Our institution provides professional development activities to help prepare faculty to teach in special programs such as learning communities and first-year seminars for international students.

20. Our institution's academic and student affairs units work together to coordinate and provide support services for the benefit of international students.

21. Our institution recognizes that student success is the responsibility of both the student and the institution and we accept our role in the success of international students.

Conclusion:
22. Would you like to receive a summary of the results of the survey?
    a) Yes
    b) No

23. If you answered "yes", please enter your name and contact information:
    a) Last name:
    b) First name:
    c) E-mail address:

Appendix E

16 Characteristics of Institutional Excellence

- Committed Resources

- High Priority on First-Year

- Multiple Levels of Leadership

- Culture of Risk Takers

- First-Year Seminars for all Students

- Assessment and Adjustment

- Respect for all Students

- Faculty Involvement in First-Year Seminars

- Professional Development

- Adopting and Sharing Best Practices

- Pedagogy in First-Year Seminars

- Learning Communities

- Academic and Student Affairs Cooperation

- Supportive Curricular Structures

- Academic Mission Includes International Students

- Responsibility for Student Success