International Students at Purdue:

What recent survey data show
Many colleges are taking a closer look at their foreign-student services, reimagining and recasting them to be more responsive to the new breed of student’s academic, social, and emotional needs.¹

Purdue University is one of the top US college destinations for international students.² Data for Fall 2011 show Purdue’s international student enrollment to be second in the nation among public institutions and fourth overall.³ Fifteen percent of undergraduates and 38% of graduate students are citizens of other nations.⁴ These students account for a significant share of the student population and an ever greater share of student revenues, since their tuition is higher than in-state students and fewer international students receive financial aid.

International students may be viewed at other colleges and universities as sources of cash. One admissions official at a public university admitted this: “I hate to say it, but it is pretty much revenue-driven.”⁵

Purdue must value its international students for more than the tuition they pay. International students are a great asset to Purdue in many respects. They enhance campus diversity. Many of them perform well academically. They expand Purdue’s global recognition. But recruitment and enrollment do not guarantee first-year persistence, on-time graduation or any of the other forms of student success that Purdue is striving to improve. As Purdue enrolls more international students, it must also consider them in relation to those other important outcomes.

The Foundations of Excellence student survey provides a valuable resource for assessing the views of Purdue freshmen, including newly arrived international students.⁶ Purdue’s Division of Student Affairs assessment team has sifted through this and other data resources to learn what we can about the international student experience at Purdue. We find that international students lack enthusiasm about most aspects of life at Purdue. In measure after measure, most international students rate Purdue only moderately favorable, while large numbers of US resident students rate those same factors highly.

**International students are lower in 10 measures of satisfaction**

Table 1 lists responses to ten questions from the Foundations of Excellence (FoE) survey and compares the responses of International and US resident students.⁷ In every case, the international students’ response is lower.

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² Most international students at Purdue are Asian. If the statistical queries discussed in this report are recalculated for Asian rather than international students, the results are similar in every case. We will use the term “international students,” but the reader may safely generalize the findings to Asian students as well.
⁴ *Enrollment & Statistical Report, Fall 2011*, International Students & Scholars, Purdue University.
⁶ The survey was completed in November 2011. It gathered 470 responses from international students among 2,200 total responses.
⁷ “Mean” is the average of all responses on a 5-point scale where 1=“Not at all” and 5=“Very High.” A larger mean value indicates greater overall agreement with the statement. Standard deviation is the range above and below
Table 1
Responses to 10 key measures of student satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>International</th>
<th></th>
<th>US Resident</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>St Dev</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>St Dev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My social needs are met</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>0.935</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I belong at Purdue</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.941</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue has helped me transition to college</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>0.939</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue is a good value</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.842</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue has helped me succeed as a student</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.877</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My academic needs are met</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>0.879</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue is a good place for students like me</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>0.854</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue is committed to students' success</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.895</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>1.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with Purdue</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.901</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>1.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend Purdue to friends</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.924</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>0.951</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A mean value between 3.50 and 4.00 is not a bad result. Most international students either “moderately” or “highly” agree with each statement. Yet the international response is consistently lower than the US resident response. The difference between the two groups is significant in all cases but “Purdue has helped me succeed as a student.”

In addition to the mean scores, Table 1 also displays the standard deviation for each question. This statistic summarizes the disparity among the responses. In each case, the standard deviation is greater for US resident students. This is a short-hand way of showing that the US residents had many more extreme answers – more 1s and 5s – while international students gave more answers in the middle of the range. A detailed check of the frequencies for each answer confirms this. A larger share of US respondents answered “1” in every case, though the international students’ mean response was lower overall.

International students are less connected to campus services

Chart 2, below, reveals that US resident students and international students have different views on the non-academic services provided at Purdue. The student survey listed 30 programs that provide various types of assistance to students. One question asked students to check all programs that they had visited the mean into which 68% of all responses fall. Thus, a larger standard deviation indicates that the responses are scattered rather than closely grouped near the mean.

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8 Measures of statistical significance are not shown here for the sake of brevity. But except as noted, all correlations and all mean differences are statistically significant at the .01 level according to ANOVA, Chi Square, or other appropriate tests.
or sought help from during the fall semester. The follow-up question, shown here, asks those who reported no visits at all to explain.

**Chart 2**

*Why did you not seek assistance from on-campus services?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Int'l students</th>
<th>US resident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t have a problem</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasn’t comfortable asking</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t think program would help</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got help off-campus</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t know about help</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handled it myself</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forth-three percent of US students said they had not sought any kind of help because they had not experienced a problem during the first three months of their freshman year. The comparable number of international students was 29%. By inverting these numbers, we see that 57% of the US students and 71% of international students felt they had some sort of need during the first three months of the semester.

International students were more prone to handle the problem themselves. And even when doing so was not a priority for them, international students were more likely to say they didn’t know relevant help was available.

Few students from either group seem to have a low opinion of Purdue programs. The answer, “I did not believe on-campus offices could provide effective help” was given by only 3% of US and 2% of international students. Inhibitions (“I didn’t feel comfortable asking for help”) seem to be a bigger issue for US resident students (13%) than for international students (9%).

**The message on ethics doesn’t come through to international students**

The transition to college includes a new and higher standard of academic ethics for all students. Improper citations, which in high school might incur only a corrective note from the teacher, are likely in college to results in a zero for the assignment and punitive action.

Once again, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* article states that concerns about plagiarism and classroom conduct are apt to grow along with international student enrollment: “It’s well and good to

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9 Appendix 3 lists the 30 programs included in the question.
say that plagiarism isn’t allowed,” says [Scott E.] King, assistant dean of international programs at the University of Iowa. “But are we making assumptions that students get what plagiarism is?” (Chronicle)

Like most universities, Purdue includes messages about plagiarism specifically and ethical conduct in general in its orientation processes. The message is communicated variously by different schools and colleges. But the FoE students survey makes one thing manifest: fewer international students are getting the message.

Chart 3 shows the percentage of survey respondents who indicated that Purdue pays slight or moderate regard to these four ethical issues. So higher values in the chart means students feel they are less well advised about plagiarism and other ethical issues, less concerned about their importance at Purdue, or both.

Violations of academic ethics are an issue at Purdue. Jeff Stefancic, head of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, says, “From the Academic Dishonesty cases that are referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, it appears that some International students struggle with proper citation techniques and having a clear understanding of what constitutes plagiarism. The explanation for this may be differences in American educational expectations, as well as general transitional issues that International students face acclimating to Purdue University.”

We are not suggesting here that any group of students is more apt to cheat or less able to understand the rules that are appropriate for college. We recognize that college raises the bar and that academic ethics must be taught to all students. The data cited here suggest only that the message has not been well communicated. We cannot explain the gap in awareness. It could be that the ethics message is left out of orientation sessions or is ineffectively communicated there. It could be that fewer international students attend those sessions, or that students who are struggling to grasp everything at once may not grasp it all.
International students find fewer co-curricular opportunities

Question 31 of the FoE survey asks if the university “offers activities that interest the student.” Both US resident students and international student provide a generally favorable response (US=3.81, Int’l=3.46). But fewer international students show a very high level of agreement. Among US resident students, 29.4% give the highest rating, while half as many (14.8%) international students do.

![Chart 4: Adequacy of co-curricular opportunities](chart)

Lower rates of international student involvement are implied in the results of another survey – the 2010 Student Importance & Satisfaction Survey. Students were asked about more than 100 campus resources, facilities, programs and services. In all but a few instances, usage by international students was lower than by US resident students. It is worth noting that international students rated many specific services and programs higher than US resident students. For example, international students gave a 3.93 mean rating to programs provided by Purdue Police, compared to 3.68 from US resident students.

To say that international students find less to do at Purdue than US resident students is not the same as saying they find nothing to do at all. A search of the website for Student Activities and Organizations shows 64 organizations under the heading of “International / Multicultural” and 63 more classified as “Ethnic / Cultural.” But clubs only enrich the experience of students who join them. There is, unfortunately, no good way of determining the membership of students clubs and organizations at Purdue.

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10 The SISS was administered in Spring 2010. Responses were received from 1,852 international students and 6,518 students overall, including graduate students.
Clubs and organizations are intended to get students engaged and give them a well-rounded college experience. But it is possible that clubs would have the opposite effect. If club membership is homogeneous – if students interact only with their circle of compatriots – even engaged students may feel alienated from the campus overall. This has come to the notice of campus officials elsewhere. The above-referenced article in The Chronicle of Higher Education reports, “Educators worry about closed sets forming, isolating those students and robbing them of a truly international experience.”

Evidence that such alienation occurs at Purdue can be found in the 2010 NSSE survey.11 Two of the questions in that survey ask how often the student “Conversed with students of different religion, values, etc?” and how often they “Had serious conversation with people of different ethnicity?” To both these questions 18% of international students answered “Never.” US students (especially US under-represented minorities) indicated much higher levels of cross-cultural interaction.

Students expect to have broad cultural experience at Purdue, and the BCSSE survey shows that the reality falls short of students’ expectations.12 Sixty-five percent of high school students said, before beginning classes in Fall of 2009, that they expected to have “Serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than their own” in college. In Spring of 2010, only 49% of first-year students at Purdue said this had happened. The gap between expectation and experience was even wider concerning “Serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of religious beliefs, political opinions or values.” Seventy-one percent expected such encounters, but only 53% said they occurred. First-year students’ average responses to these questions are lower at Purdue than at peer universities.

Classes are harder for international students

About one in five international students says classes are too difficult with respect to reading, library research and writing assignments. The international students’ response is significantly different from that of US resident students. More than a fifth of US students complain about the difficulty of math assignments while less than 10% of international students do. Differences in Chart 5 are statistically significant at the .01 level for all variables except Computing.

Chart 5
Percent of respondents saying subject is “Too difficult” or “Difficult”

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11 The NSSE survey was completed in Spring 2010. It was completed by 6518 freshmen and seniors, including more than 1,000 international students.
12 The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) queried 1,227 high school seniors in 2009 after those students declared their intention to enroll at Purdue but before they began college. The NSSE asked the same questions of freshmen in the Spring Semester of their freshman year. The values reported above are the percentage of all respondents to the BCSSE or NSSE saying the activity had occurred “Often” or “Very Often.”
The FoE survey contains two questions touching on the academic help resources offered at Purdue. Question 28 asks to what extent Purdue has “Connected you with academic support outside the classroom?” Question 52 asks to what degree the students understand how Purdue is organized to provide help to the student who needs help with coursework. The international students’ response to both these questions is almost identical to that of US resident students. Further, both groups express a similar level of satisfaction with Purdue’s academic advising: US=3.71, Int’l=3.61.

Academic success rates are similar for international and US students

This narrative focuses on perceptions of student life at Purdue. It bears noting that students’ learning outcomes are not always closely tied to their perceptions. International students at Purdue University have similar retention and graduation rates to those of US students. This is shown in Table 6.13

Table 6
Retention & graduation rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One-Year Retention</th>
<th>Four-Year Graduation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nor-resident</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 One-year retention rates are for all undergraduates, Fall 2007 to Fall 2011. Four-year graduation rates are the percent of Fall 2007 undergraduates who had obtained a bachelor’s degree by 2011.
International students’ families are less a part of the college experience

It is not surprising that international students feel their families are less a part of the college experience than do US resident students. The mean for US residents is 3.02, that of international students is 2.77. Students who feel their families are involved are happier with Purdue overall. Chart 7 shows that the difference is greater for US residents.

Great distances make family involvement difficult if not impossible. But family engagement is an important goal of Purdue’s policies toward most of its students, because family involvement is known to be a predictor of student success. It bears considering how international students can be expected to flourish without that benefit.

International students feel less safe

Physical safety is a greater concern for female students than for males. But the FoE survey response shows that international students, both male and female, feel less safe at Purdue than US resident students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>US resident</th>
<th>Int’l students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Living in university housing has a curious effect on students’ sense of safety. Male students – both US resident and international – indicate a significantly higher sense of safety when they live on campus. But residence makes no meaningful difference to female students’ sense of safety. Perhaps the female students’ sense of insecurity has more to do with safety on the streets and sidewalks, so the effect of safe housing is small.

**International women do not feel respected**

In general, Purdue is a good place for women students to succeed. Women have higher rates of retention, higher GPAs in most academic schools, and higher levels of satisfaction according to most measures. But there is a gap between US resident and international women. When asked if they feel respected at Purdue, international women indicate a surprisingly low measure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9</th>
<th>Do you feel respected at Purdue?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cultural difference diminishes when a different question is asked. Question #61 of the FoE survey asks students if they feel they belong at Purdue. All four groups give a lower value to this question than to the question about respect. But the international student values fall by quite a lot more than the values given by US residents. International women again give the lowest level of agreement to this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10</th>
<th>Do you feel you belong at Purdue?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The NSSE survey provides a corroborating look at the international student’s experience at Purdue. The NSSE asks, “If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?” The result is display in Chart 11, which distinguishes responses from non-minority US residents, international students, and US underrepresented minority students.
International students express the lowest commitment to Purdue among the three groups. Not many of them express strong dissatisfaction, but also fewer of them express a definite commitment to Purdue.

What’s more, the “enthusiasm gap” widens over time. Commitment to Purdue, as measured by the NSSE survey, is stronger among US seniors than freshmen. The opposite is true for international students. Among international freshmen, 36.1% give a definite “Yes” to the question. That number falls to 31.7% among seniors.

### Differences probably change over time

The FoE survey gathered information only from freshmen in their first semester at Purdue. It is possible that some of the observations discussed above might be very transitory. One way of learning whether an observation is transitory or permanent is to ask the same question of people at different times. In the university setting, this might mean asking freshmen and seniors the same questions. The NSSE survey did this.

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14 The process of entering and adjusting to a new culture often begins with a “honeymoon phase” in which most aspects of life in the new place is invigorating and positive. But that phase ends after some time, when the individual starts to step outside the initial circle of contacts. This often happens after about three months’ time, which would correspond, for international students who arrived in West Lafayette in August, to precisely the time the survey was administered.
### Table 12
NSSE results: “Supportive Campus Environment”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Int’l students</td>
<td>US residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with other students(^{(1)})</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Internationally less positive; Gap widens)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with faculty(^{(1)})</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>4.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Internationally more positive; Gap narrows)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with staff(^{(1)})</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Internationally more satisfied; Gap constant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for academic success(^{(2)})</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No difference; Internationally more positive)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for non-academic issues(^{(2)})</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Internationally more satisfied; Gap widens)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for social engagement(^{(2)})</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Internationally more satisfied; No difference)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Values are group mean scores on a 1-7 scale.
(2) Values are group mean scores on a 1-4 scale. “No difference” means the difference is not statistically significant.

### Table 13
NSSE results: “Enriching Educational Experiences”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Int’l students</td>
<td>US residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used electronic media to complete assignments(^{(1)})</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No difference among freshmen)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had serious conversations w/ students of different ethnicity(^{(1)})</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Int’l students less as freshmen; more as seniors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had serious conversations w/ students of different religion, values, etc.(^{(1)})</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Int’l students less as freshmen, but catch up as seniors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did an internship, practicum, etc.(^{(2)})</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Int’l students less likely to do an internship)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did community service or volunteer work(^{(2)})</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Int’l students less likely to do volunteer work)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in a learning community(^{(3)})</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Values are group mean scores on a 1-4 scale.
(2) Values are percent of respondents say they have done the activity.
(3) It is likely that some respondents misunderstood this question.
Tables 12 and 13 present a detailed and confusing picture. The NSSE shows the same sort of differences between international students and US residents that we observed in the FoE data. But NSSE also shows that these differences can change over time.

International freshmen indicate that their relationships with other students are less friendly and supportive compared to the views of US resident freshmen. Relationships develop over time, so it is probable that older students would have more supportive relationships. And the NSSE data show this to be the case: both international and US students rate their relationship with other students higher as seniors than as freshmen.

An initial gap between international and US students in outreach to students of different religions or political view disappears over time. International freshmen seem slow to begin these encounters, but international seniors appear just as likely as US residents seniors to do so.

In a few cases, the difference between international and US students reverses. International freshmen indicate a lower value for “Support for academic success” than US freshmen. As seniors, however, international students are more satisfied.

Like the FoE data, the NSSE was not designed specifically to assess differences between US and international students. Its purpose is to show the extent of students’ engagement at different stages in their academic careers. As international students settle in and learn to navigate the resources available to them at Purdue, they probably will change the early impressions that were captured by the FoE survey. But the early measure is nonetheless a valid and important indicator of the international students’ experience at Purdue.

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15 The rapid growth of international enrollment at Purdue in very recent years means that the seniors of 2010 (and today) have had a very different experience than current freshmen can expect. We can probably accept what NSSE shows us as a snapshot in time. But we ought not to assume the patterns shown in Tables 11 and 12 will recur.
Conclusion

There is a growing sense of the importance of the first-year experience for all students. This report suggests that the needs of Purdue’s new wave of international students require special attention if those students are to thrive.

In this, Purdue is not alone. Many colleges and universities across the US are encountering the same challenges:

“International-student offices are dealing with issues as varied as plagiarism, poor language skills, country-specific cliques, and cultural taboos against counseling. They are being called on to provide sex education to sheltered undergrads, to respond to religious conservatives unsettled by opposite-gender instructors, and to contend with helicopter parents a dozen time zones away. ‘It’s a culture shock not just for the students,’ says the director of the international office at UC-Berkeley, ‘but for the campus.’”

The observations in this report are preliminary and are based on research that was intended for other purposes. Nevertheless, they are adequate to show that the experience of international students at Purdue is different from (and in many ways less satisfactory than) that of US students.

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Recommendations

- Engage Purdue international programs to ensure that their activities mesh with those of Student Affairs, University Housing, and the academic schools and colleges. These divisions must cooperate to ensure there are no gaps in service after students arrive.

- The FoE survey drew responses from first-semester students. We should learn if international students in upper grades share the same views. This would show if there are persistent problems or if international students just need to get a better start through improved orientation and first-year programs.

- Some effort should be made (without overtaxing the SAO staff!) to determine whether clubs and organizations are diverse or insular.

- Assess how well students retain information from ISSWOW (International Students and Scholars Week of Welcome). Some reports suggest that a single brief, intense orientation cannot provide students with an adequate grounding in American campus life. ISSWOW is not the only orientation resource at Purdue, but it is the primary resource for international students. Perhaps more international content should be added to other programs – or orientation services should extended beyond single week events.

- Confer with academic professors to identify those who have especially good rapport with international students and who best help them to overcome language and cultural difficulties. Duplicate that success in other classrooms.

- Investigate if cultural differences affect how students respond to survey questions. Interpret future survey data through the lens of improved cultural understanding.

- Avoid one-size-fits-all solutions. This report has treated international students as a single, homogeneous group. They are not. Serving the international community will require multiple distinct programs and services.
Appendix 1: 
Student Comments 
2010 Student Importance & Satisfaction Survey

(Note: Comments are drawn directly from the SISS and are presented verbatim.)

COMMENTS ABOUT ENROLLING, REGISTERING AND PAYING

- I can't pay using my visa debit card on the "paypath" portal, which is annoying, as it cost me a lot of money to use my german credit card (foreign country fee, fees to transfer money to the german account,...)
- Important information should be emphasized more in the correspondence to the admitted students. I am an international student. I had to request document and had it send to me from abroad after I arrived at the campus. The instruction was listed in a whole set of files so I didn't notice before I came. It would be great if the required documents were highlighted.
- As an international student, I need read many times to understand some documents. So this could not the problem of this web
- Funding opportunities are very limited for Internationals
- I have not gotten notifications about financial aid. I suppose it is because I am an international student but it would be nice to have something available.
- Financial aid for international students is not available. It would be nice if you had a special section of the financial aid department that was focused on international students.
- As an international student, I suffered unmeasurable worry when I am waiting for the hard copy letter from Purdue. Unfortunately, the admission center forgot to send me a letter at that time which almost caused the unexpected delay of getting my F-1 visa. I strongly suggest that you could use a Express service to send international students their F-1 form after you receive the confirmation fee from international students.
- the people manning the counters at the financial aid office should have better knowledge of the financing options provided by the university. Also, the website should have a separate section for international students' financing options since purdue has a sizeable international student population.
- the DFA website is virtually of no use to international students. The fee structure for international students should be provided separately and it should be clearly mentioned what scholarships are available for international students so that it becomes easy to apply for the same if available.
- Given that it's really hard for Chinese students to coordinate their time to visit any universities on the other side of the world, Purdue really has done a great job posting videos on YouTube introducing Purdue. However, YouTube is blocked in China nowadays, Purdue's administration should consider posting videos about Purdue on youku.com and tudou.com for marketing purpose in China.
- I'm an international student and the web site did not have all the information clear.
- If you come from a country where the grading system or documentation is totally different than here, it takes the employees forever to verify your documents or transcripts, course transfers for the plan of study. Purdue is an international campus so they should be ready and informed about all the different systems in the countries students come from.
- Staff is certainly welcoming; However, being an international student, most often I have to run from office to office to get an appropriate answer for questions regarding registration. In particular, When I wanted to seek, if I shall have the benefit of Indiana resident (I was a graduate assistant at Purdue since 2004 Fall; but this semester I am only just a student) to be eligible for fee deduction for my spouse, there was no proper guidance at registrar office. May be we are not eligible, but a solid NO would have helped me avoid mental stress.
- Campus visits are only possible for US citizens. International students can not arrive to US any time before 30 days before classes start. This is a restriction of our F1 student visa.
- More details to get Student ID should be provided. Especially, for international student, it is more complicated to get Student ID; let international students know what they should bring or prepare for it before semester starts. The easiest way can be purdue web mail because most people check email everyday.
- Queue too long for international students. I had to queue twice. First on the ISS, which took about 1-2 hours and then a second queue to obtain my card, which took about 1-2 hours as well.
- The ISS office had a major orientation session for international students in fall 2008, when they explained immigration rules, insurance etc. They could have provided food then.
- I took a foreign language placement test but the way the test was run seemed very rushed. The listening part started immediately giving the student no time to try to understand the conversation beforehand.

**COMMENTS ABOUT FOOD**

- I think Indian food should also be served in the dining courts so that there is diversity from all around.
- Wiley needs to be more diverse. It's seems like its always steak or pizza. Maybe some international cuisine.
- I would prefer more homestyle meal options. Some dining halls seem to specialize on foreign foods too much.
- I love the international food selections offered (especially Windsor food court)
- There is a decent variety of rooms but the compulsory meal plans are a dampener since many international vegetarian students hardly want to eat at the dining halls and the money is wasted due to the lack of use of meal plan
- The menus for the dining courts have way too much international food that just isn't very good. especially Windsor. The dining courts need more good homestyle cooking, such as regular meat not ruined with a bunch of other ingredients and plain cooked vegetables. I like my food simple.
- bus frequency, underground tunnels during snow, INDIAN FOOD in dining court/s, there are so many indian's who cannot easily adjust to american food, leading to stomach problems. Good water, water in dorms and dining courts is hard and has a tinge of chlorine, i have to buy water from walmart every weekend. More options for vegetarian people. Many of my vegetrian friends have to survive on fruits and chips only!

**COMMENTS ABOUT CAMPUS ACTIVITIES**

- i would love to [participate] since i am an international student. I have alot to show and would love to perform and share my culture.
- international grad student would love to have all the information to get involved...I heard people complaining boring life at purdue at all times...
• You guys need to promote the programs more...especially to the international students...we are new here & there's nothing in west lafayette besides Purdue...so u guys really need to attract us more before we all transfer out to other states

COMMENTS ABOUT CAMPUS RELATIONS

• What's all the driving pass and yelling at me when I walk on the pedestrian streets about??!!! you guys hate foreigners or what? a perplexing question I have since the first week I arrived Purdue.
• Many, if not most, people in Purdue Village speak Chinese most of the time--interaction with these people is all but impossible.
• I understand that hygiene standards are different in different countries but when you are in an enclosed space such as the fitness equipment room and you need to breathe deeply it is a huge issue that the guy next to you is from India and decides every morning not to wear deodorant.
• Too many foreigners admitted.
• We need to be more accommodating as a staff, especially to foreign students.
• No one does anything when foreign kids hog the basketball courts and don't follow the rules like everyone else

COMMENTS ABOUT PARTICULAR PROGRAMS

• The Confucius Institute is nice, but it focuses on E. Asian relations only, so students with backgrounds and interests in other Asian cultures (e.g., Indian, Filipino, Pacific Islander, and Asian *American*) are still underserved.
• The Purdue Police could be more helpful with the international students. They don't seem to make a good effort to understand people that speak English as a Second Language.
• Had two terrible international RA's that were too shy to speak to any of the students on the floor. They did not organize any programs and completely avoided the social aspect of the job. I don't know how they were selected.
• The [PUSH] waiting rooms are uncomfortable, especially for general waiting. You put people with ankle sprains next to foreign students with avian flu.
• As an international student, I am actually confused why I got some many bills after a visit to Healthcare center. One from insurance, one from Healthcare center and one from Bursar. Pretty confusing actually.
• I am an international student with an 18 year old daughter, I had bought the insurance for me and my daughter and she can't use PUSH, I don't understand why spouses can use it but my daughter not since she is 18, outside PUSH the medical services are very expensive and the deductible is too high.
• Everybody was very kind and gentle besides a Chinese lady in Urgent Care. She does not know how to deal with a patient in a wheel chair and was grumpy all the time and refused to answer my questions.
• I hope that Purdue University can offer more programs to help the international students to integrate into the student population and to get more social support, such as more graduate student psychological counseling groups. I know there are already many programs in place such as the international friendship program but I really think the mental health of international students is a pressing issue.
• I want to have some counseling services designed for international student
Appendix 2:  
International Students’ Comments  
Foundations of Excellence Student Survey

Note: Following are comments from international students to question #93 of the Foundations of Excellence Student Survey: “Please list the top three ways Purdue could have improved your transition to college.” Non-substantive comments have been removed but all item displayed are verbatim.

- A less stressful first week of college and more support from professors
- Academic advisor help me a lot.
- add or drop class system is so poor
- advisor discussing
- Advisors have less students so that they can focus on each student better.
- Allow students to choose classes they prefer (mypurdue needs to be fixed)
- an orientation program for international students who arrive in the spring semester
- As an international student, I felt like I had to figure out a lot of things all by myself.
- Better advising sessions
- Better environment
- Better explanation of majors and opportunity of taking them.
- Better on-line information page for students to get more information of this college
- Better organized club fair
- better orientation program
- Better placement tests
- Better transportation
- Boiler is really boring. They should introduce us stuff we will benefit daily instead of shouting for our residence halls.
- ENGR 131 stresses out first-year students and make the transition very difficult. Make the A level credit available more well known.
- Change/improve the academic advising staff.(especially for engineering)
- Class size should be lower so students can interact with the instructor.
- clearly guide about how to choose classes that we need
- Clubs should have better way of reaching new students.
- communication within the institution
- Concern more based on each individual.
- easier courses & fewer exams
- Easing out the homework in the first few weeks of school
- easy drop/add class methods
- English practice opportunities with native students
- Enhance the intimacy of students of the same major by organizing more career related activities.
- Expand the duration of learning community to one year or two years. Because I think learning community is a very good opportunity for friends making and group work.
• First of all is a great opportunity be here in another country and more being in an university internationally recognized like Purdue, also is a good opportunity to grow not only as a tennis player but as a person too. The installations here are amazing, incredible beautiful everything that helps a lot for the transition.
• free activities for people to get together and talk
• Give academic advisers a better understanding of requirements.
• give more guide to help us in the campus
• Give us more tips on how to get used to the new environment.
• Have a better introduction to all the clubs and organizations.
• Have more out door trips.
• Have sophomore, junior and senior students help freshmen.
• Having a gathering of international students and having a member of the local community show us around.
• Having cute hangout spot around campus for friends and I
• having more available advisers since I had to wait for one week to make an appointment with my adviser. I think each adviser is charge of so many students, which makes he or she hard to have a personal relationship and communication.
• I am an International students and so I was not familiar with the education system in here. It would have been really better if I would have received more information about what to expect.
• I would like that the university should give opportunity to everyone regardless of their GPA. For instance, all groups have certain GPA to be involved with. This should be removed.
• if we are paying for tuition, the homework should also be paid for! isn't it funny that we PAY for LEARNING but have to PAY again for DOING the HOMEWORKS that DECIDE THE FINAL GRADES! thats hilarious. homework on web assign or something like that isn't an option. its compulsory and it does alter the final grade!
• I'm an international exchange student and this is my fourth year of studying at a university. The institution at Purdue has therefore not been a transition to college for me.
• Improve the availability of information access
• Improve Purdue students' quality by heighten the administration standard.
• Improvement of Freshman Orientation
• Instead of making international student meetings, they should try us to socialize with Americans.
• Instead of office hours, the TA's should be available at the end of each class
• instruction for buses at the beginning of the semester
• Instructors should go into greater depth rather than rushing through and emphasizing the course syllabus.
• Interaction with more European students.
• ISS faculties should respond to emails in more official and nice way.
• Less workload at the first week of college.
• Libraries open till late at night
• Longer move in period available before BGR.
• Lower price of the meal plans
• Make the list of ACTIVE clubs and organizations more aware to the students
• Make the recitation classes to be only to discuss problems and clear any doubts students have in mind
• Maybe face to face advising on video calling software’s ie Skype
• Maybe make us meet more Seniors to know how they manage their time
• more academic studying associations.
• More activities to help students to know each other.
• More activities for international students.
• More activities to help communicate with other students
• More activities to help understand the local culture
• More adjustment of professors according to students' assessment
• more advising times
• More advisors. One advisor has hundreds of students and they even don't remeber them.
• More big activities for freshman
• More chance to communicate with the other freshmen students.
• More cultural awareness activities
• More dorm activities
• more events for new students
• more events for new students regardless of their ethnicity, better opportunities to make new friends
• more events for transfer students - different groups and meeting new people at BGR
• more flexible class timings
• More healthy food options at dining courts.
• more help for international students
• More information on campus bus routes.
• More interaction encouraged between students
• More international events
• more introduction about clubs, events and other opportunities in advance
• more lively campus life
• More orientations and more attention to students concern
• more out side study and activities
• more out-of-class activities for international students
• More programs exclusively available for international freshmen students
• more programs for international students
• more social activities
• More specific advice for course selecting
• More useful activities at orientation program
• None. The transition to college was easy and smooth
• not enough books in libraries
• Organize some tours to Chicago etc for students staying here in 3-4 day breaks when everyone goes home except the ones living way too far.
• People is kind, they help me so much.
• Professors should be more well versed in their subject
• Prohibit class starting at 7:30 am.
• Provide better advice on class registration and plan of study
• Provide better lectures
• provide many useful information
• Provide more opportunities to interact with faculty members in a student's college
• Provide us more phisycal safety.
• PUSH being better organized.
• Reduce the time period between exams.
• Since my student visa arrived late and I reached Purdue the night before classes started, I didn't expect anyone to help me with my transition to college
• Smaller class
• Stop smoking on campus including outside the buildings and bus stops
• Study skill class is great, it taught me how to do the college academic works
• Talking more with native students
• talking more with others
• Tell students where they can find helps in the introduction classes
• The academic advising staff and the director for advising should be much more polite with students.
• The educational ranking should be improved for students to feel respected.
• the FYE advisors are like DEMONS! what the hell! even we are humans. not some animals. treat students with respect. it's not like you are paying for our fees or supporting us. we have the money to pay for ourselves and deserve respect. some advisors are RACISTS! the female advisors treat us like CRAP !!! if this is how it's gonna be then i'm sorry , this would be the WORST! your reputation will be at stake . TREAT HUMANS LIKE HUMANS EVEN IF THEY'RE BLACK OR BROWN OR YELLOW.
• The institution could have granted scholarships to international students who have done well academically because the fee is very high .
• The institution should have made the academic environment less stressful.
• the tuition is outrageous and a bit unreasonable. also purdue could be more strict with the use of drugs.
• the workload is too much ! we are freshmen, not seniors! the work some become harder gradually. not on the VERY FIRST DAY OF COLLEGE!
• There is a huge disconnection especially between Chinese and Americans.
• transition to college; for international students learning method in college
Appendix 3:
Programs & services listed in
Foundations of Excellence Student Survey

- Academic Help Lab
- Academic professor or lecturer
- Academic Success Center
- Academic teaching assistant
- Black Cultural Center
- Center for Career Opportunities
- Classmates or fellow students
- Counseling & Psychological Services
- Dean of Students program / representative
- Disability Resource Center
- Emerging Urban Leaders
- Fraternity/sorority/co-op members
- HORIZONS
- International Students & Scholars
- Latino Cultural Center
- Learning Community faculty or staff
- myPurdue or other online resources
- Library staff or resources
- Native American Educational & Cultural Center
- On-campus religious leader
- Online Writing Lab
- Purdue Counseling & Guidance Center
- Purdue Promise
- Purdue Writing Lab
- Registrar's Office staff
- Residence hall staff
- Resident assistant
- Span Plan
- Student Activities & Organizations
- Supplemental Instruction
- Tutoring
- Women's Resource Office