



Report to President's Advisory Committee International Students Program



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Introduction

This report is presented to the President's Advisory Committee as a result of two Academic Senate Resolutions passed in 2012 and 2013. Extensive work has been done by the F-1 International Students Advisory Committee, in conjunction with the office of Research and Institutional Effectiveness to develop this report. It should be noted that there is some general confusion when talking about "international students" as Mt. SAC has a very diverse population of students – many of whom were born internationally but are not enrolled as F-1 international students. This report references "F-1 international students" as the focus.

One aspect of both Senate resolutions was to look at the "impact" of F-1 international students. Impact can be both "negative" and "positive". This report attempted to keep a neutral perspective regarding "impact". The report consists of both demographic data as well as survey data gathered from students and employees. Also included are some of the highlights of the International Students Program, especially during the current year 2014-15. The Conclusion section details how the Committee wishes to proceed from this point forward.

Academic Senate Resolution 2012-06: Expansion of the International Students Program

- Insists that no action be taken on any expansion of the International Students Program until the potential impact to the College is fully researched through a shared governance procedure

Academic Senate Resolution 2013-13: International Students Program & Shared Governance

- Requests a moratorium on the development of the International English Language Program and in the expansion of the International Students Program
- Requests the International Program Advisory Committee to create and disseminate to the campus **a study on the potential impacts** of an International English Language Training Program and/or a **significantly increased number of international students with regard to other college areas and programs**
- Declares that international students benefit the college when they interact with and share perspectives with local students, but that this benefit does not warrant isolated international student learning communities or any form of favored status based primarily on having international student status.

Student Demographics

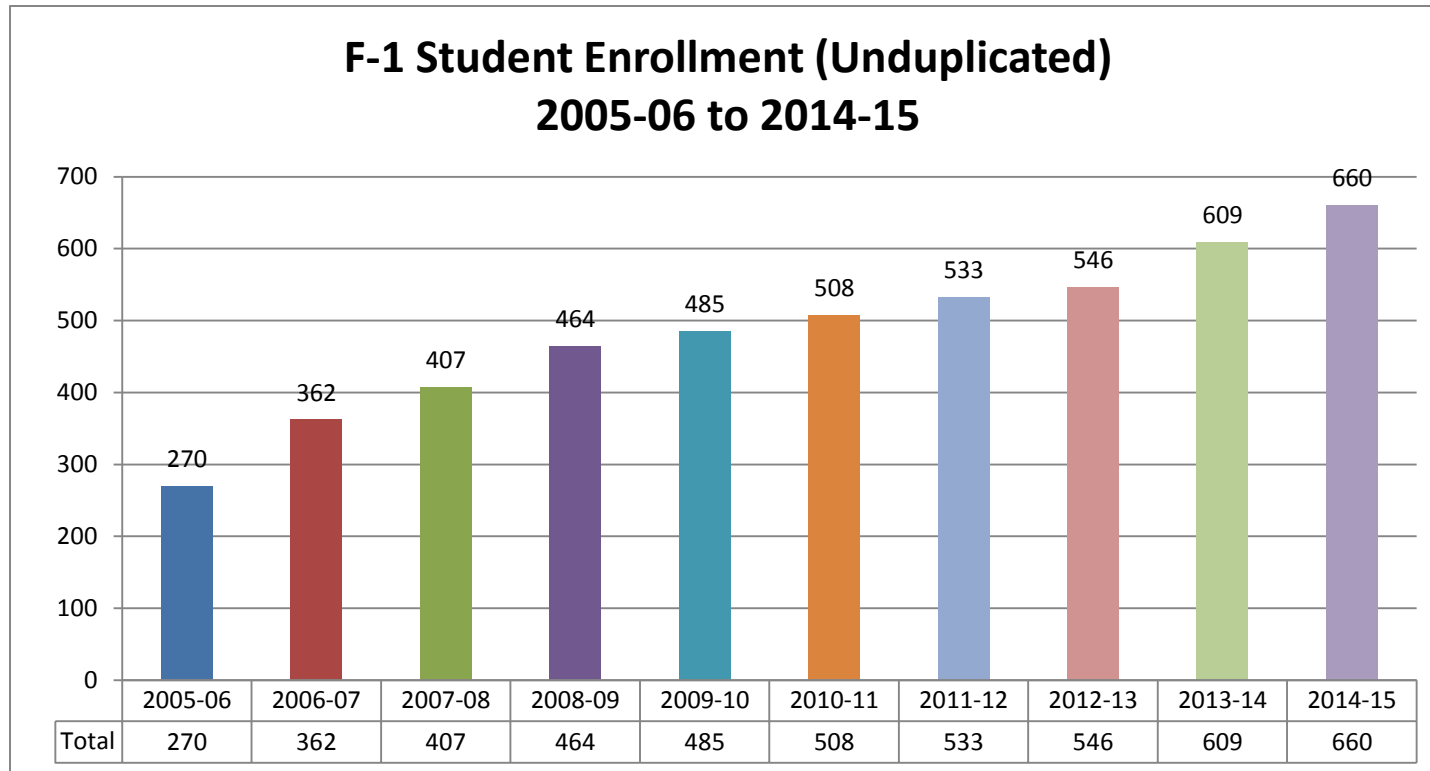
Gathering data for this report has had its limitations. The majority of data included in this report is derived from the college's former MIS system (ICCIS) and the current Banner system using Argos reports. Since this is not a full research report, very little comparison to non-F-1 students was made.

There has been a steady increase of international students at Mt. SAC, starting with an unduplicated enrollment in 2005-06 of 270 to an estimated all-time high of 660 in 2014-15. The growth in the enrollment of F-1 international students has been organic – and clearly outside the bounds of any organized recruitment efforts.

Recruitment, to date, has been passive. Continued research into how and why students are selecting Mt. SAC as their college choice will be undertaken. As shown in Table 1, the numbers of applicants, the numbers of admitted, and the numbers of enrolled students all continue to increase.

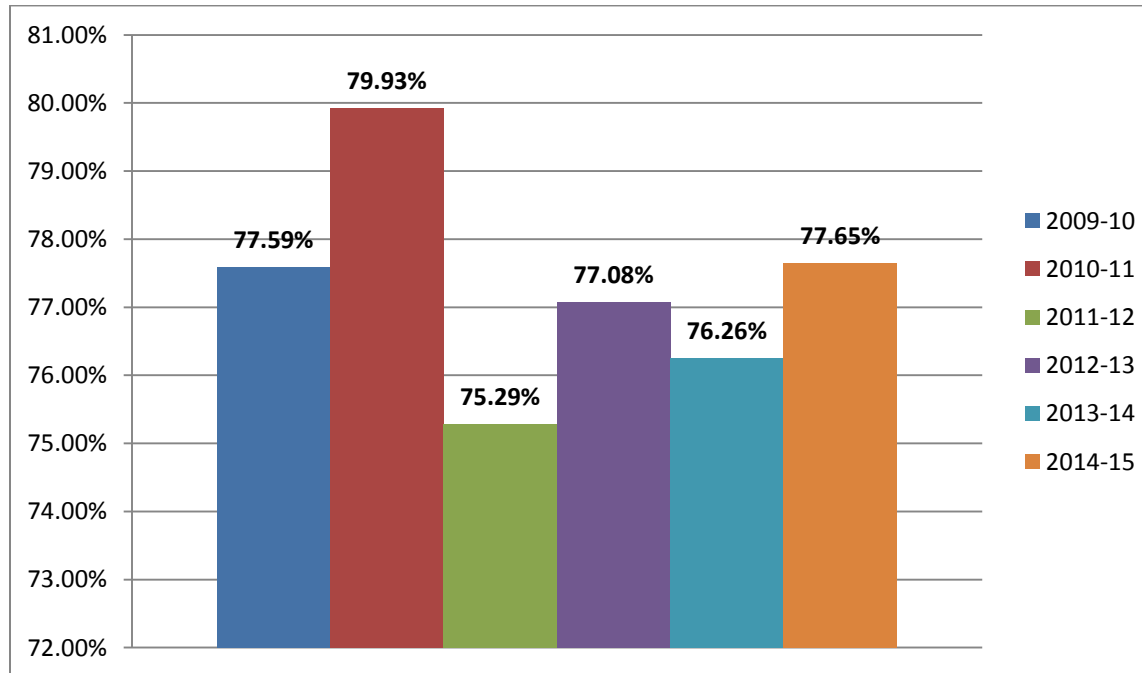
The International Students Program staff work in Admissions and Records work diligently to respond to students' inquiries about enrolling and in assisting F-1 international students with their application process, including issuing of necessary documents. More students apply than are accepted and then actually enroll. The goal of the program staff is to increase the actual yield of students who complete the enrollment process. In looking at our overall yield, the percentage of students who are admitted and then enroll averages 77% with the lowest range 75% and the highest range 81%. (Table 2)

Table 1



Sources: ICCIS: 2005/06 - 2008/09; Banner/Argos Report: 2009/10 - 2014/15

Table 2
F-1 Yield: Admitted/Enrolled
2008-09 to 2014-15

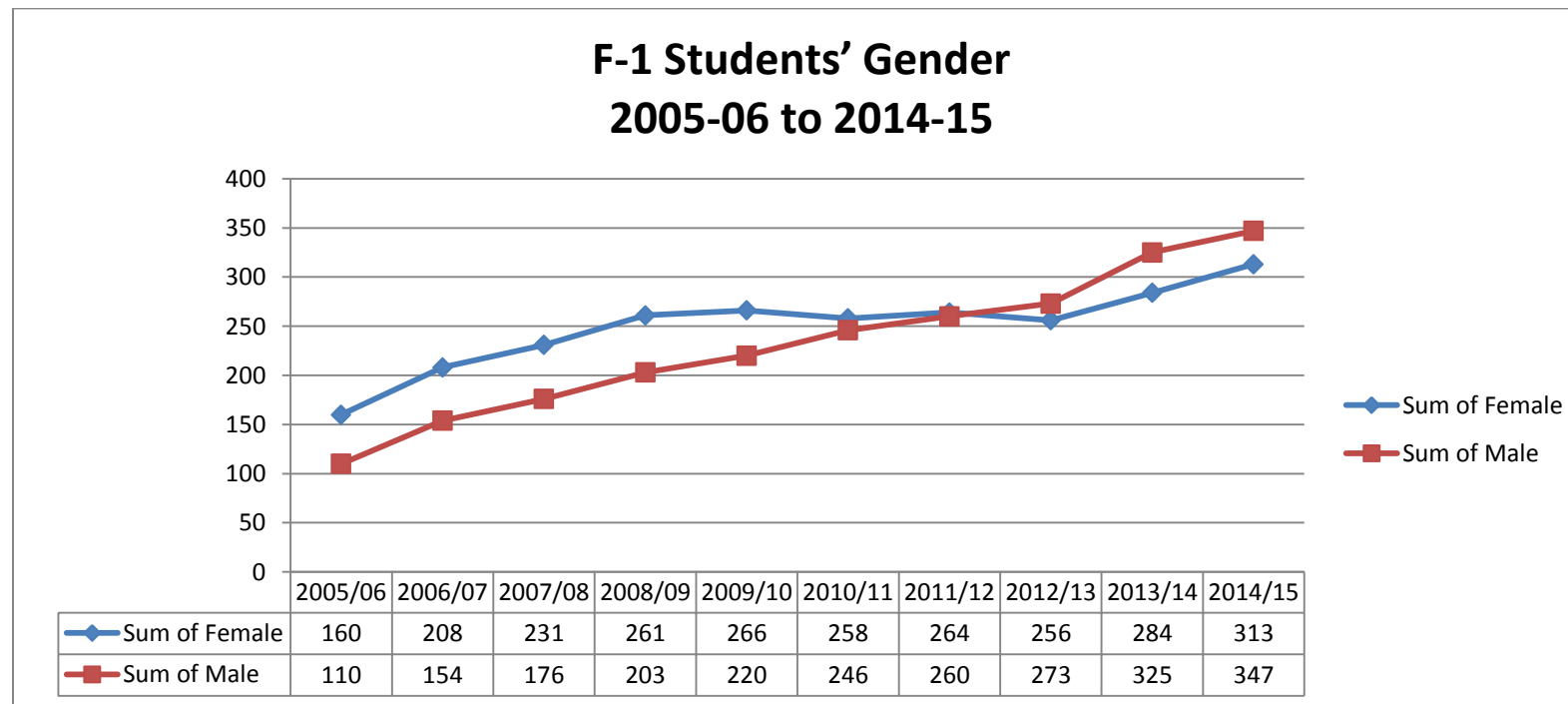


Source: Admissions & Records Application Reports

Over time, our gender balance has shifted from majority female to majority male. (Table 3)

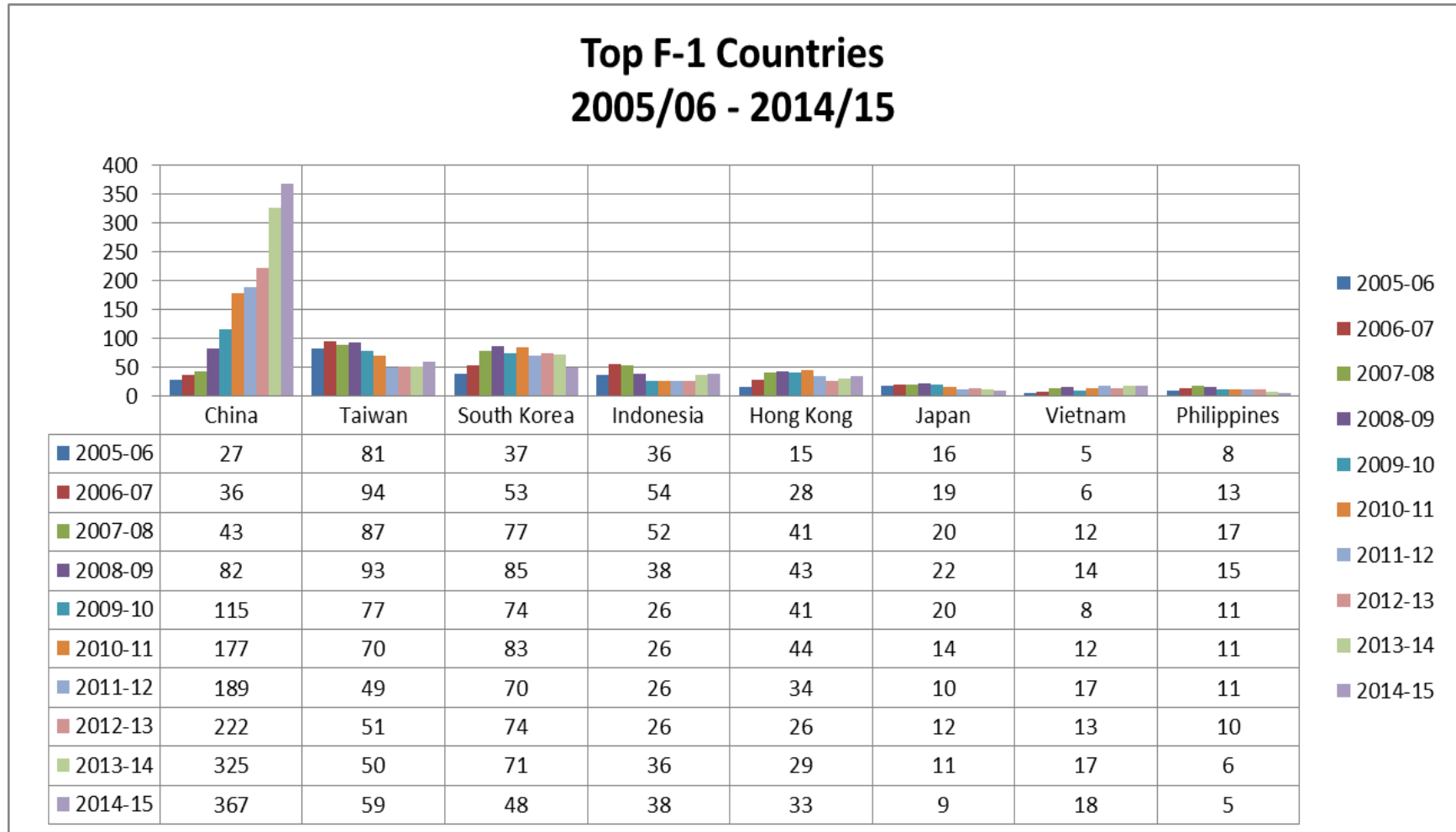
In terms of country of origin, overall, we have seen somewhat of a decline in the overall number of students coming from Taiwan, Japan, and Hong Kong but a substantial increase in the number of students coming from China. (For F-1 purposes, Hong Kong is still counted separately from China). The number of students from Indonesia has stayed relatively the same, with a current year (2014-15) decline in students from South Korea. (Table 4)

Table 3



Sources: ICCIS 2005-06 to 2008 -09; Banner/Argos Report 2009-10 to 2014-15

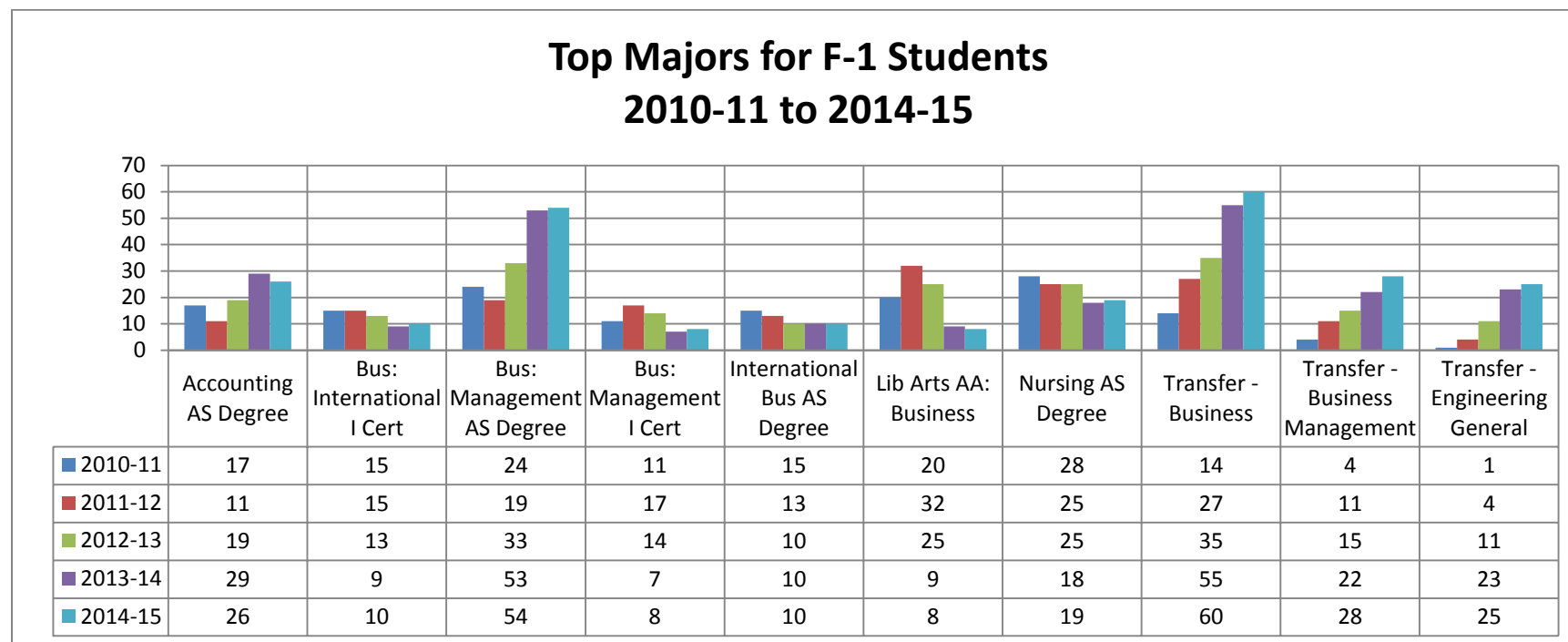
Table 4



Source: SEVIS (Student & Exchange Visitor Information System)

F-1 students' majors continue to be largely focused on all degree options/majors related to business –from accounting to management. Business transfer majors is presently the highest declared educational goals/majors. The only other noted area of study is the A.S. degree in nursing, but those numbers are declining. (Table 5)

Table 5



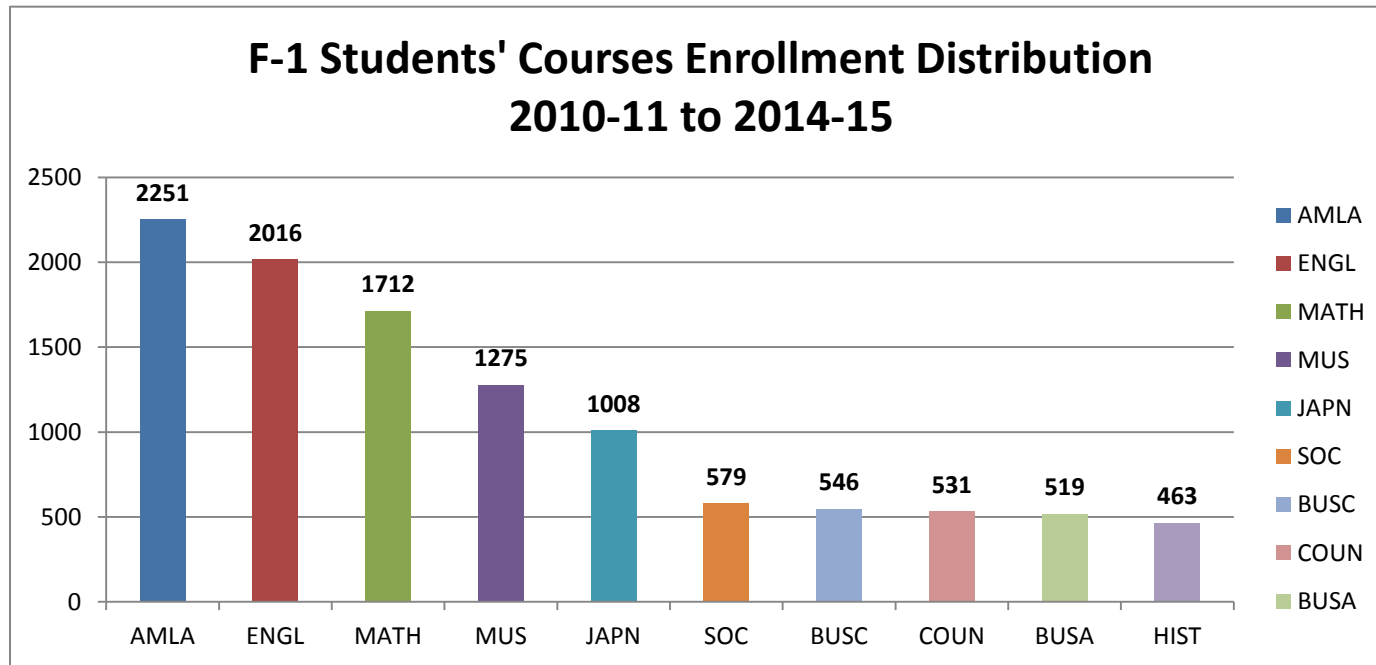
Source: Banner/Argos Report; SEVIS (Service & Exchange Visitor Information System) Data Extract

Course Enrollment Patterns

F-1 students enroll overwhelmingly in AmLa and English courses, followed by math, as shown in Table 6. Although this is not surprising, the high enrolment in music and Japanese language courses is interesting to note.

Average number of units enrolled and completed by term is 12.87 units for Fall and 12.64 units for Spring. Because F-1 students are required by U.S. federal regulations [8 CFR § 214.2(f)(6)(i)] to be enrolled full-time, it is encouraging to see that F-1 students are maintaining status regardless of unpredictable economic trends that have impacted course enrollment for all students, including F-1 students.

Table 6



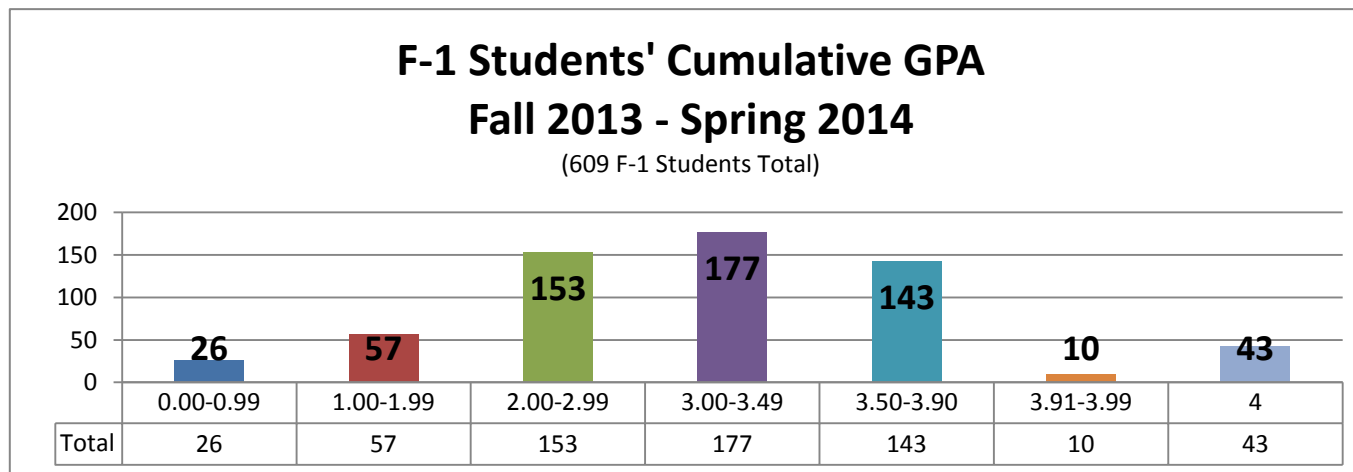
Source: Banner/Argos Report - International Student Enrollment Count by Subject

Student Outcomes

F-1 students, on average, enroll in more units, complete more units and have grade point averages that are higher.

Overall, F-1 students are excelling academically. Although 83 students (14%) have below a 2.00 grade point average, 526 students have a 2.00 GPA or higher (86%). Table 7 shows that 43 of 609 students (7%) have a 4.00 cumulative GPA, and 196 (32%) have a GPA of 3.50 or higher. The number of F-1 students who have a 3.00 GPA or higher is 373 or (61%).

Table 7



Source: Banner/Argos Report and SEVIS (Student Exchange and Visitor Information System) Data Extract

Student Survey Results

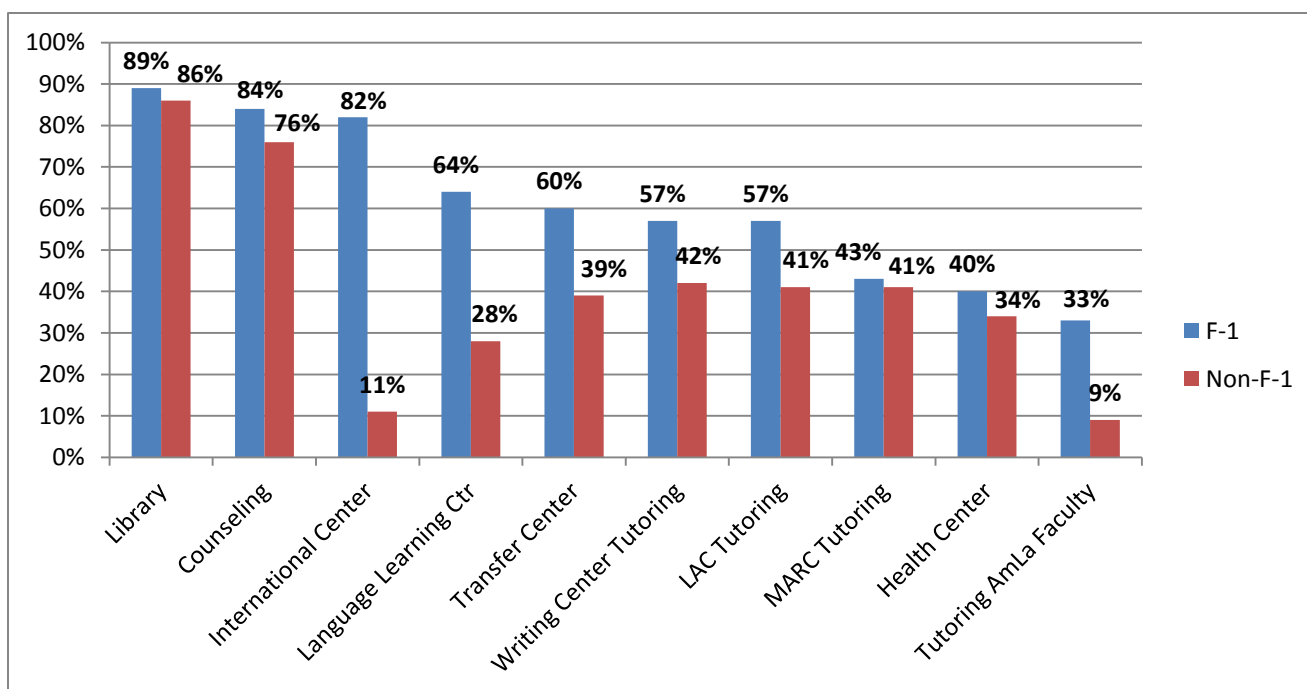
Purpose: In order to meet the Academic Senate Resolution 2013-13 to study the impacts of a significantly increased number of international students with regard to other college areas and programs, a survey of students was posted to the student portal. International students were contacted and encouraged to complete the survey.

A total of 613 students completed the “Mt. SAC Student Survey: International Students” during the Spring of 2014. However, only 7.5% or 46 students reported themselves as F-1 international students. This is clearly a limitation of the survey. Below are some key findings.

- 50% of all students surveyed reported participating in a student club.
- 96% of the F-1 students reported that they planned to transfer versus 67% for other California resident students.

The survey collected data about which services students reported using as shown in Table 8.

Table 8
Service Utilization – Spring 2014



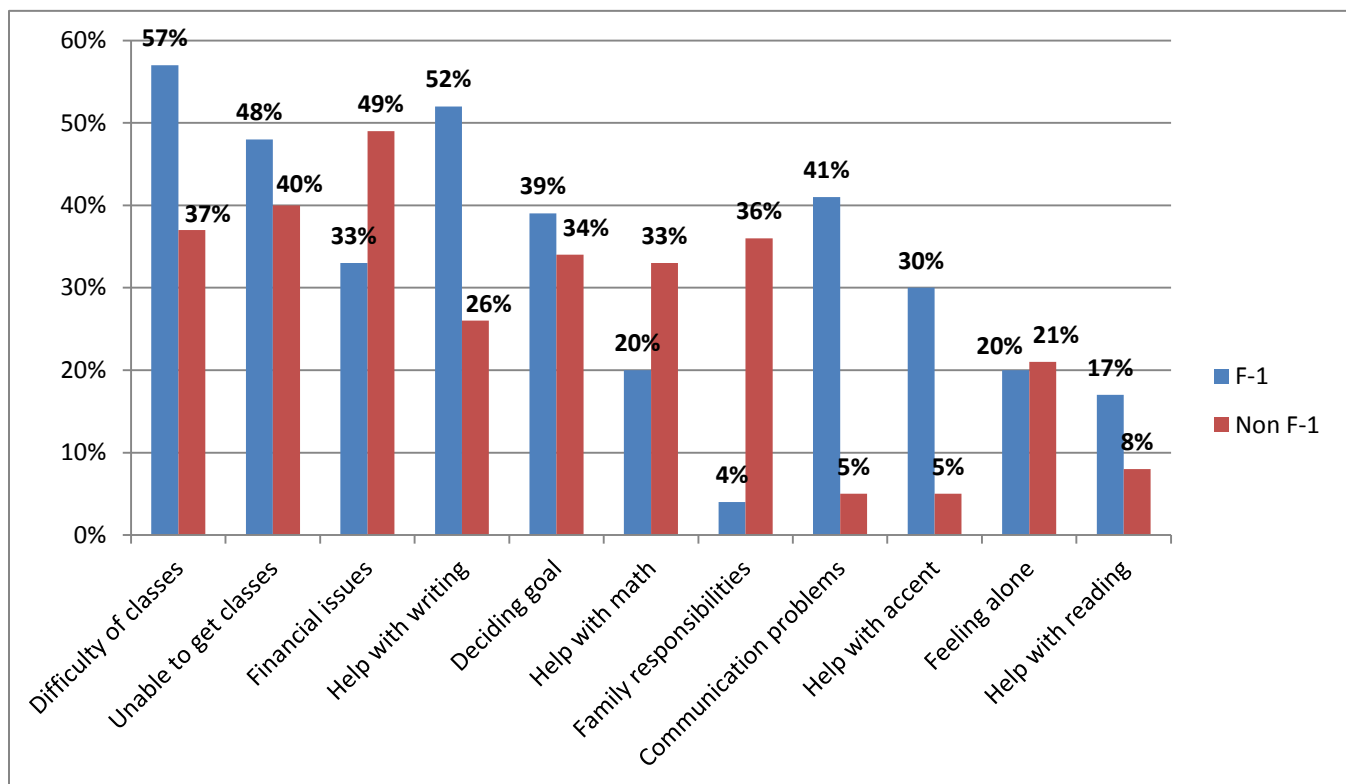
Source: Mt. SAC Student Survey: International Students

- Service utilization was very similar for F-1 and Non-F-1 students for the following service areas:
 - Library
 - Tutoring - MARC
- Service utilization was slightly higher for F-1 students in the following areas:
 - Counseling
 - Tutoring-LAC

- Tutoring-Writing Center
- Health Center
- Service utilization differed substantially in the following services areas:
 - Language Learning Center – 64% for F-1 students, compared to 28% for non-F-1
 - Tutoring by AmLa Faculty – 33% for F-1 students, compared to 9% for non F-1
 - Transfer Center – 60% for F-1 students, compared to 39% for non F-1
 - International Center – 82% for F-1 students, compared to 11% for non F-1

The survey also asked students to mark the areas in which they felt most challenged. The table below shows the similarities and variability between F-1 and non F-1 students.

Table 9
Students' Self-Reported Challenges – Spring 2014



Source: Mt. SAC Employee Survey: International Students

- Both F-1 and non F-1 students expressed some similar challenges:
 - Unable to get classes
 - Deciding goals
 - Feeling alone

- Compared to non F-1 students, F-1 students expressed greater challenges with:
 - Difficulty of classes
 - Help with writing
 - Communication problems
 - Help with accent
 - Help with reading
- Compared to F-1 students, Non F-1 students expressed greater challenges with:
 - Financial issues
 - Family responsibilities
 - Help with math

In looking specifically at written comments from F-1 students, comments focused on the following challenges:

- Needing financial assistance and lower fees due to Mt. SAC's high tuition
- Inability to qualify for financial assistance
- Not having priority registration; difficulty in getting classes – especially competitive classes like math
- Limited availability of courses in their majors
- Difficulty with English skills, communication problems, passing English 1A, insufficient English tutoring assistance
- Although a smaller number, students also reported:
 - 20%: “I have felt all alone.”
 - 15%: “Somewhere to study for my classes.”
 - 11%: “Adjusting to college life.”

Mt. SAC Employee Survey

Purpose: In order to address Academic Senate Resolution 2013-13, a survey of staff was posted to the employee portal to gather perceptions of whether a significantly increased number of international students would impact college areas and programs.

A total of 155 employees completed the “Mt SAC Staff Survey: International Students” during the Spring of 2014. The survey showed that 53% of the respondents were faculty followed by 34% classified staff and 8% managers. Of the faculty respondents, most came from the Humanities and Social Sciences Division, followed by Natural Sciences Division. Of note are the numerous comments that were submitted to open ended questions – showing a range of thoughts and concerns.

- 85% of the faculty reported having had an international student in one of their classes
- 3% (n= 2 of 78) of faculty respondents stated that they separately track the success rates of their international students.
- 3% of faculty respondents stated that they have found differences in success or completion rates when comparing international students to other students.

- 79% of non-faculty employees stated that their department or program does not have an internal process to help them identify which students are international.
- 57% of employee respondents reported that they think that increasing the number of international students (from 480 to 960) on campus would have an impact on their own program or department.
 - 84% impact on student support services (counseling, career and transfer, etc.)
 - 79% impact on course enrollment
 - 78% impact instructional support services (tutoring, testing center, etc.)
 - 57% impact on intercultural and global perspectives of students
 - 40% impact on course advisement (review of syllabus, course expectations, etc.)
- There was no consensus as to whether there would be an impact on
 - faculty office hours
 - instruction time
- Respondents predicted that a growth in F-1 students might create greater demand for:
 - Counseling and other support services
 - Course sections (all)
 - Course sections in engineering and science and upper level math
 - Tutoring
- Many comments on concern were expressed relative to F-1 students' language abilities:
 - Difficulty keeping up with the material due to language barriers
 - Insufficient training in English language, especially writing skills
 - Needing to give extra time and attention to explaining unfamiliar vocabulary; concepts.
 - Concern about slowing down the rest of the class/impact on instruction time.
- General comments, interests, concerns:
 - Enrollment would be positively impacted. I'd love to have more international students.
 - International students add to the campus global perspective in wonderful ways.
 - I think we're already a pretty diverse population with all types of students, including existing F-1 students, so this will not be anything new.
 - I love the international flavor that international students bring to Mt. SAC and my classroom once they get comfortable sharing their thoughts and views. In many ways, their presence enriches the classroom experience for our local students who have a very limited scope of reference when it comes to global issues.
 - "This is a community college. The first priority should be to help the community."
 - "They take seats away from U.S. citizens."
 - "This would disintegrate the academic integrity of classroom instruction."
 - "Without fail, every semester, I have Asian students (and to be perfectly honest probably some Hispanic Spanish speaking students) who end up dropping, withdrawing, or simply not passing my courses because their

language skills are not quite what they should be. How were these students admitted and why were they admitted to Mt SAC if they can barely speak English?”

- “The more the merrier. Bring ‘em on!”
- Faculty will be under pressure to pass international students to “keep the money rolling in.” “There is so much more we could do to support working-class students from our local communities, such as funding from our own budget the programs that support local first-time college students (tutoring Bridge, learning communities, Pathways).”
- “I am worried about the college losing its focus on our local population. International students aren’t harmful, but we are a community college that serves the San Gabriel Valley and surrounding regions. One may come to Mt. SAC from Cerritos or China, but neither student should be our focus.”
- “I am in favor of international students, both for what they bring to the campus and for how we might impact the world through our influences on them. However, THIS CAMPUS IS BY NO MEANS READY for the kind of support that substantially increasing our international student body would take. I don’t think that there is any expertise or know how at the decision-making and student support service levels.”

International Student Focus Group Sessions

An International Student Focus Group Session was held on May 4, 2012. The Director of Marketing Clarence Brown facilitated the discussion. The focus of the group was to continue to improve our services. 15 students participated in the discussion. The group was asked a series of questions from why they chose Mt. SAC to their experiences at Mt. SAC.

- Family member comes here, Aunt, brother
- Bus Accessible
- Uncle recommended it – works at Cal Poly
- Researched aviation programs – Air Traffic Control in California on internet
- Variety of classes offered, small classes, professors are nice
- Really like the Bridge and Honors Program
- Hard to get 12 units for status
- Hard to get a job on campus

Overall the students felt comfortable speaking about their experiences, what they liked and where we could improve our services.

- Tutoring for English (grammar, tenses)
- Transportation – Shuttle services to/from airport
- How to access Public Safety - walking to parking lot at night
- Website not useful.
- Counselors should inform about transferrable and non-transferable classes. Was given a No Prerequisite class list.

On April 24, 2014 a second Focus Group was held with 12 students. Again, the Director of Marketing and Communication, Clarence Brown, facilitated the discussion. The group was

engaging and very candid about what they liked and didn't like about their experiences. The group represented the following countries: Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Ukraine, Czech Republic, and India. Overall found their experiences have been positive and favorable: pleased with the campus and location and overall quality of education. The International Student Center is proving to be the hub for their social interactions.

- I got a lot of help from the International Student Center – I went to other colleges and they didn't seem to want to help me.
- AmLa Classes are really helpful, even though it was kind of basic, I learned more
- Because we need 12 units, we have to hold onto classes we don't need
- The most compelling reason to choose community college is that it gives me more opportunity to go to a better university"
- My friend has studied at Mt. SAC before and encouraged me to come here. It's a big, beautiful campus. After I did research, it seemed like top 2 colleges in the country.
- International student have problems getting jobs because priority is given to local students and we can only work on campus.

The International Student program continues to improve its services to our International Students. Students feel that staff listen to their concerns and students feel comfortable sharing with the staff. A continuation of focus groups will take place to obtain responses which are candid and insightful.

International Students Program Accomplishments

- Increased usage of the International Students Center
 - Approximately 75 enrolled students use the center on a daily basis (based on 6 hours p/day)
 - Approximately 15 prospective student inquiries (in-person or phone calls) daily
 - 9 computer stations (one ADA access)
 - 4 study tables (accommodates up to 4 students at each)
 - Printing (up to 100 sheets per student, per semester) and office supply usage
 - Snacks and beverages available
 - Access to microwave and refrigerator
 - Monthly "Tea Time" (open discussion roundtable)
 - Book exchange corner
 - Host university representative information tables
- Comprehensive International Student Orientations
- Updated, multi-lingual, web site
- Implementation of ISSM software to track international students in Banner and to enable data extraction
- International Education Week established with growing participation across the campus
- I-News written and published by F-1 international students
- Utilize social media with International Student Program Facebook page
- Student-led Welcome Reception and Recognition Ceremony with the highest level of participation
- University visitations in collaboration with the Transfer Center:
 - UC Irvine
 - CSU Fullerton
 - UCLA/ UCLA STOMP Conference
- F-1 Workshops
 - Scholarship Workshop

- Employment Information Session
- Graduation Workshop
- Health Services Information Session
- Student activities:
 - Hollywood performance of “Wicked”
 - L.A. County Fair
 - OC Fair
 - Regular “market runs” to ethnic grocery stores
 - Lunar New Year Celebration
 - Halloween Fest
 - “The Whipping Man” performance in collaboration with ARISE Program
 - Thanksgiving Luncheon
 - Collaboration with the International Student Club

Conclusion

Limitations of the Report

The F-1 International Student Advisory Committee found that there is some confusion as to whether the campus community understands the differences between “F-1 international students” as opposed to “students born internationally -- outside of the U.S.” Because we are not sure those completing the survey shared the same definition of “international student” as an F-1 international student, it is impossible to be sure that the outcomes of the survey related strictly to F-1 students. The comments we received from the employee survey reflect opinions and perceptions of concern

Clearly Defining “Impact”

Additionally, the notion of “impact” was not clearly defined as a basis of mutual understanding. The Committee was asked to study the “impact” that an increase in F-1 international students would have on the campus. The definition of “impact” proved to be an ongoing struggle for the committee to define and measure. Impact can be positive reflecting on successes or negative, reflecting on problems or failures. This made completion of an “impact study” difficult. The College does not generally track the “impact” of particular profiles of students accessing specific programs, services, or courses of study. Going forward, the notion of “impact” needs to clearly defined.

Another factor that may have had an influence on some of the responses was that the College experienced a confluence of high demand for classes and reduced funding that restricted course offerings from around 2009-10 to 2012-13. The two Senate Resolutions were passed in 2012 and 2013 at a time when the entire campus and surrounding communities were most impacted due to the high demand and reduced course offerings. Subsequently, enrollment demands and course availability has shifted to the point where class sections have been cancelled in the 2014-15 academic year due to lower enrollment

Concluding Thoughts

Given that the college has not undertaken an intentional, structured approach to increasing, or even doubling, the number of F-1 international students, the Committee believes their work in responding to the Academic Senate resolutions is complete. **The Committee believes that this report is thorough and responsive and meets the intent of the request.** The Committee desires to continue its work focusing on how the College can improve the services we

provide to F-1 international students which will in turn address many of the concerns expressed in both the employee and student surveys.

The Committee has worked diligently over the past two years to ensure that international students receive the support services that will enable them to be successful. The Committee wishes to continue to work toward informing the campus community about the contributions of international students and clarifying the impact of F-1 students by further disaggregation of data. Analyzing engagement issues, both academic and social, is another concern of the Committee.

Next Steps

The Committee has drafted an aggressive agenda to continue to improve the work with F-1 international students. The following activities will either be expanded or developed:

- An international students mentoring program in the Business Division
- A change to the New Student Orientations to more clearly focus on the needs of F-1 students
- Research best practices in educating F-1 international students
- Investigating other models of serving F-1 international students, including visiting other colleges' international students centers
- Professional development opportunities to enhance understanding about F-1 students
- Improve engagement and address isolation by developing interventions to address loneliness and depression
- A summer English Language program to prepare students to begin their formal academic studies in the fall semester
- A peer advisor program
- Continued research/study including focus groups with students, staff/faculty/managers
- Professional development component of International Education Week
- Continued development of the International Student Center
- Accent reduction workshops and other language development workshops like Conversation Circles and Verbs Boot Camp