

Student Services Program Review Report

Sierra College, 2016-17

Department/Program Name: International Student Program

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Ideally, the writing of a Program Review Report should be a collaborative process of full-time and part time faculty as well as the appropriate educational administrator, instructional assistants, classified staff members and students who have an interest in the present and future vision of the program at all sites throughout the district. The Program Review Committee needs as much information as possible to evaluate the past and current performance, assessment, and planning of your program.

1) Relevancy: This section assesses the program's significance to the students, the college, and the community.

1a) To provide context for the information that follows, describe the basic functions of your area and/or program.

If applicable, also explain how the program aligns with state mandates, priorities set by external agencies, or any other relevant organizations.

In Spring 2000 Sierra College had 55 international students attending the school, but by the end of 2016 that number was closer to 200 (Fall 2016 enrollment was 198). Every year Sierra welcomes approximately 100 new international students to the college from a wide variety of countries. These students have to complete an extensive admission process to the college and attend an embassy interview in their home country before being granted an F1 student visa to study at Sierra. The international students program handles the admission and enrollment processes to the school and then provides extensive support services during the student's time at the college. The program is also primarily responsible for the marketing and recruitment activities that encourage these students to apply to the college.

The college is marketed overseas through advertisements on international websites, working with marketing partners and agencies in particular regions and participating in educational fairs throughout the world. In the last couple of years in-country recruitment trips have taken place. These had not happened for about 6 years. Recruitment trips were undertaken to China in 2016 and a further trip to Vietnam and Southern China is taking place in March 2017.

Once the student is accepted to the school and successfully applies for their visa they are now eligible to attend the college. Once they arrive at Sierra the program provides an extensive two week orientation which involves comprehensive support with the enrollment steps and identifying dedicated support available to the student during their time at the college. The international program in partnership with Admissions & Records assists in making sure that students maintain their visa requirements while at the college and most importantly are successful in terms of graduation, transfer and retention.

Since Fall 2014 all new students have been assigned a peer mentor to assist them in the transition to Sierra College during their first semester. During their time at Sierra College these students are also assigned a dedicated international counselor to assist them with their educational goals. The counselor also coordinates the peer mentor program.

The international office has to work closely with Admissions & Records as there is a lot of reporting requirements that need to be fulfilled by the college for international students that are on an F1 visa.

There has been some internal restructuring ongoing within the international program over the last semester that will more clearly separate the recruitment and admission process from the ongoing support provided to international students once they attend Sierra College. At this time the Enrollment Specialist in the hub is assisting with the admission process, the Admissions & Records office produce the immigration documents and then the international office is responsible for the orientation program and on-going support once the student arrives at the college.

1b) How does your program support the district mission, as quoted below, and align with student needs? Please include an analysis of how your program supports ISLOs (Institutional Student Learning Outcomes) or the district's strategic planning goals.

"Sierra College provides an academic environment that is challenging and supportive for students of diverse backgrounds, needs, abilities, and goals with a focus on access, equity, student-centered learning, and achievement. The college is committed to practicing diversity and inclusion, and recognizes that a diverse and inclusive curriculum and workforce promotes its educational goals and values. Institutional learning outcomes guide the college's programs and services, encouraging students to identify and expand their potential by developing knowledge, skills, and values to be fully engaged and contributing members of the global community. Sierra prepares students by offering Associate's and transfer degrees, certificates, career and technical education, foundational skills, as well as lifelong learning and enrichment."

To support the goals of Sierra College, the international student program continues the efforts to increase diversity on the campus by recruitment and retention of international students. The International Student Program provides the necessary support services to assist students in their preparation and transition to study at Sierra College. Through the excellence of its services and the commitment of its staff and faculty it continuously supports those students in achieving their academic goals, whether that be obtaining an Associate degree and/or transfer to a 4 year university.

1c) Please analyze your program and its success in supporting each of the strategic goals with which your program aligns. Please provide evidence in support of this analysis, including program goals and outcomes in this analysis, as appropriate. When relevant, please refer to student learning outcomes, assessment, and evaluation in your reply.

Goal 1: Achieve equitable access and increase student success, retention and persistence in order to increase the number of students who complete certificates and degrees or transfer to four year colleges and universities while maintaining high levels of academic integrity.

Goal 2: Identify and close success and equity gaps amongst underserved and/or underrepresented student populations.

Goal 3: Provide professional growth and develop a climate of inclusion in order to support highly effective and innovative teaching and learning, support services, operations, and collaboration.

Goal 4: Meet and exceed external standards through an outcomes based framework for continuous quality improvement.

Goal 5: Modernize, revitalize and develop new facilities and infrastructure based on the current Facilities and Technology Master Plans.

Goal 6: Expand community partnerships and funding opportunities to support strategic goals and leverage resources.

Please include an analysis of program goals and service area outcomes in your description, as appropriate.

Goal 1 and Goal 2. The programs and services offered by the international student program are directly related to access and success. With the provision of a dedicated counselor there is the goal of success and achievement for international students. The success and retention rates for international students are above the district average and are all the more impressive when you realize these students are studying in a second language.

Students are recommended to meet with a Sierra College counselor once a semester. Although this is not currently mandated over 70% of international students meet with a counselor at least once during the spring 2015 semester. Our plan in Fall 2017 is to implement mandatory counseling appointments once per semester to improve retention and build stronger relationships with students.

The international program requires that all new students meet with a counselor during the orientation week, but then subsequently in their first semester require that they complete progress reports around the fifth or sixth week and make a follow up appointment. These progress reports are completed by the instructors and provide earlier indication of how the student is transitioning into the college. It allows the counselor to discuss any challenges or issue they may be experiencing with transitioning to life at Sierra College. For example in Spring 2016 progress reports were issued for the 45 new students that had enrolled this

semester, with 38 attending the assigned meetings. The early alert system through starfish means that all flags raised by an instructor come directly to the international counselor allowing early intervention as required. In Fall 2016 58 progress reports were issued to new students and 48 attended the follow-up counseling appointment.

The International Student Office (ISO) is often the first point of contact for any issue that the international student have with the college. They are then referred to the appropriate services. Specific workshops are provided focused on transfer pathways to the UC & CSU system and Optional Practical Training (OPT).

1d) Optional Additional Data: Describe any other contributions of your program not incorporated in the prompts above and relevant to the district goals, mission, and values. These may include but are not limited to contributions to diversity, campus climate, cultural enrichment, community ties, partnerships and service. Please include specific data and examples when these are available and relevant to the analysis.

The international students program contributes greatly to the cultural diversity that exists at Sierra College. In Fall 2016 there was 198 international students from 42 countries attending Sierra College on an F1 student visa. They bring a significant and valued cultural perspective to the classroom and the campus community.

In addition to their internationalization of the campus, which is difficult to quantify, these students provide a significant revenue stream directly to the college, allowing the college in turn to devote these resources to support its mission. In 2016 international students alone contributed approx. \$1.2million to the college in tuition revenue.

In addition to tuition revenue they contribute greatly to the local economy due to their enrollment at the college, many living in local apartment as well as a significant amount in the college dorms. But more importantly in a small way the international program brings the wider world to Rocklin.

2) Currency

2a) Service Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: Considering any relevant information, please describe and analyze your program's development and assessment of Service Assessment Outcomes and/or Student Learning Outcomes. Please describe any improvements or changes made to the program as a result of this analysis.

Outcomes and outcome data: **Please find attached the Service Area Outcomes** (Appendix A)

Assessment of outcomes: **The outcome data showed that that the orientation was a crucial part of connecting new students to the college. Based on the data collected and the feedback provided the orientation has once again been reviewed and the structure will be changing for Fall 2017 orientation**

In the space below, please describe or attach the cycle you have developed for outcomes assessment.

The review of the orientation program takes place every semester to look at the outcome data (see attached SAO's – Appendix A). A staff meeting is now happening on a fortnightly basis.

2b) Professional Development: Describe how departmental activities serve to improve teaching, learning and scholarship. Please be sure to specifically include flex activities, departmental meetings and activities, conferences, outreach to other colleges, research and implementation of best practices, changes in legislation, mandates from regulatory agencies, required faculty certifications, health and safety trainings or other factors. How do these activities contribute to your program's self-assessment and planning?

Regular staff meetings are important to provide updates, share information regarding the status of students, applications, orientation and other issues. Staff are also encouraged to attend webinars on various topics related to international education. There is also a regional group of universities and colleges in the Sacramento valley (SVIEG) that meets once a semester to share ideas and discuss best practices. It is also hoped that this year it will be possible to send representatives to the annual NAFSA conference (international educators), that is a national conference held once a year.

2c) Optional Additional Data: Enter additional data or other information here that you believe to be an indicator of your program's effectiveness and explain why.

The average GPA of an international student in Spring 2016 was 3.11, compared to the college average for Spring 2016 of 2.65, this supports the view that the support services and guidance provided by the ISO support the students as they attempt to reach their academic goals.

In the Spring of 2015 60 international students left Sierra College for a variety of destinations with 11 transferring to a CSU, 10 transferred to a UC, 3 transferred out of state, 6 transferred to another community college and 17 returned home (some with an Associate degree). In the Spring of 2016 there were 57 international students that left Sierra College for a variety of destinations with over 30 completing an AA degree and/or transferring to a 4 year school. Included in that number were 8 students who transferred to UC Davis. When you consider the diverse goals and objectives of students that arrive at Sierra College these results reflect the value of the international program.

In 2006 nearly 50% of all international students at Sierra College came from Japan. In the last 10 years the Japanese market has halved in terms of students attending the United States. The college has therefore been required to diversify its recruitment strategy. Since 2011 attention has been focused on new areas such as China, Morocco and Malaysia. The college partnered with a new Chinese website called Zinch www.zinch.cn. The website provides a listing to Chinese students of universities and

colleges in America. In 2015 Sierra College received on average 20 students enquires per month through this site.

By 2016 13% of international students came from China, compared to less than 3% in 2006. In addition there were 6% from Morocco and 7% from Malaysia (in 2006 both these countries did not send any students to Sierra College. In comparison Japanese student numbers had reduced to 14% reflecting a national trend in that country sending students to the United States.

The college has a variety of marketing partners and advertises on four main international education websites. The www.StudyUSA.com is another important advertising vehicle for the international program at Sierra College. The Sierra College listing is translated into six different languages. For Fall 2015 there were 24 prospective students who applied to Sierra College and indicated that internet advertising was the primary reason they first heard about Sierra College.

The international student program at Sierra College also provides the opportunity of increasing the educational experience for both our domestic and international students as they bring their different diverse cultural perspective to the classroom and provide for a more global perspective and an internationalization of the campus.

3) Effectiveness: This section assesses the effectiveness of the program in light of traditional measurements.

3a) Retention and Success/Service Outcomes – Please analyze your success in achieving your program goals (including Service Outcomes and/or Student Learning Outcomes), using whatever data is relevant to your program. Describe any changes you have made that have improved the effectiveness of the program as well as any barriers you may have encountered in making these or other changes. If applicable, please include any analysis related to Student Success or Equity. If you determine that you need to improve the program’s performance in any way, please describe how you plan to achieve this goal.

The success and retention of international students compares extremely favorably with the district success and retention rates indicated above. International student success rates during the last 4 years has consistently been 85% plus. This figure is much higher than the district average that hovered around 72%. (Please see the attached document for the international student profile which lists these success rates - Appendix B).

The international student orientation provides information on appropriate support services. International students meet with a counselor once a semester. The international counselor continually monitors student progress and will also reach out to the instructors of international students. International students are contacted regularly throughout the semester via email about upcoming events and activities.

International students experience many challenges that are unique to them. The goal of the international program is to continue to provide a high level of assistance and support allowing these students to achieve their academic goals.

3b) Usage Trends - Identify and analyze the usage trends relevant to your program for the last three years. Address separately the data for on ground and on-line services, as well as usage at the various centers when applicable. Analyze these trends as well as any challenges experienced by the program. If applicable, please include any analysis related to Student Success or Equity. If you determine that you need to improve the program's performance in any way, please describe how you plan to achieve this goal.

In the last 15 years the international student program has grown at a considerable rate. In 1999 there were 40 international students on the campus, but by 2006 this had grown to 223. This number has reduced slightly in recent years but has hovered around 180 to 200 over the last 5 years (see attached data – Appendix B)

In 2006 nearly half of all international students (47%) came from Japan, and no other country contributed more than 6% to the total. By 2016 only 8% of international students to Sierra College were coming from Japan.

This drastic reduction is partly explained by the fact that in the last 10 years the total number of students coming from Japan to American colleges has more than halved from a peak of 46,000 students in 2000 to only 21,000 in 2012. This has resulted in Sierra College having to diversify its recruitment strategy into other countries. It could no longer rely on students from Japan coming to the United States to study. More effort has been devoted to other countries such as China, Vietnam, Morocco and Malaysia.

In 2016 the breakdown at the college had changed to 10% Korean, 8% Japan, 16% China, 8% Vietnam, 4% Hong Kong, 8% Malaysia, 5% Morocco and 3% Brazil

The challenge over the next 3 to 5 years is to attempt to maintain the relationship in the old markets while at the same time growing these numbers in the new markets. There is always a need to be reviewing and evaluating country specific recruitment, marketing and retention efforts, while recognizing the staff resources that are available to the program.

3c) Productivity –Analyze the significance of the trends as well as the challenges experienced within the program. . If you determine that you need to improve the program’s performance in any way, please describe how you plan to achieve this goal.

New international student arrivals at Sierra College 2010 to 2016.

- Spring 2010-25 Fall 2010-65 2010 first time student total = 90
- Spring 2011-52 Fall 2011-40 2011 first time student total = 92
- Spring 2012-44 Fall 2012-66 2012 first time student total = 110
- Spring 2013-27 Fall 2013-44 2013 first time student total = 71
- Spring 2014-34 Fall 2014-64 2014 first time student total = 98
- Spring 2015-30 Fall 2015-62 2015 first time student total = 92
- Spring 2016-45 Fall 2016-54 2016 first time student total = 99

New student arrivals for the last 3 years have remained fairly consistent. These students require a lot of assistance when they first arrive at the college in terms of housing, course placement, counseling and general assistance with adjusting to life in the United States. The overall total enrollment of all international students was 198 by Fall 2016. Every semester these students have faced greater challenges in regards to being able to register into impacted classes as they only arrive a few weeks prior to the semester and many are unable to pre-register as they need to take our placement tests.

Recruitment efforts continue as noted in other areas of this report to both maintain and increase these student numbers. As a community college many of our students will soon be moving on and every year we experience anywhere from 80 to 100 new international students who will not return to Sierra College as they either transfer to another school, start OPT or return to their home country. The constant ongoing challenge (as it is with domestic recruitment) is replacing these with new incoming international students.

In March 2016 there was an in-country recruitment trip to China. This involved visiting 7 cities in 16 days. The format of the trip involved attendance at 5 higher education fairs (attendance at these fairs varied from 150 to 600 potential students), visits to nearly 20 high schools and one seminar presentation. As a direct result of this trip the college received 6 student applications for the Fall 2016 semester, with 5 students eventually enrolling at the college on an F1 student visa.

In March 2017 there is a planned in-country recruitment trip to Vietnam and China. This will once again involve visiting 7 cities in 16 days. The format of the trip will once again involve education fairs in four separate cities, visits to high schools and seminar. There will also be an added focus on visiting with educational agencies.

3d) Referring to your ePAR Report of Goals, Strategies, Actions, and outcomes assessment cycle and relevant assessments/evaluations, please describe your program’s plans to maintain or increase its effectiveness and evaluate your efforts to achieve these goals.

A key part of the success of the program is connecting the students to the college. The orientation program is a big part of that. But through assessment of the SSAOs (see attached) that format is going to be developed and enhanced for Fall 2017 orientation. Reflecting on ways to improve student engagement within our program, we have made changes to our new student orientation and peer mentor program. Beginning Fall 2017 semester we have improved the way we present important information to new students. The program will include more student interaction, peer mentor participation, a resource fair, and schedule changes. In addition, we are working to improve our International Student Peer Mentor program by providing mentor facilitated workshops to students, campus tours, and on-campus activities.

3e) Optional Additional Data: Enter additional data or other information here that you believe to be an indicator of your program's effectiveness and explain why.

In looking at countries to recruit it is important to analyze the relevant data regarding where international student are coming from to study in the United States. Of all international students currently in the United States China sends over 30% of those students. This state of affairs is reflected at Sierra College where China is the number 1 largest country of origin for international students at college with 16% of all international students coming from China. But at the same time it is important to not rely on one country for enrollment. Vietnam is only the sixth largest country of origin for international students studying in the United States, but importantly for a community college like Sierra it now provides the second largest international enrollment at community colleges. Japan on the other hand now sends 50% less students to the United States than it did 10 years ago. Data like this explains why the college is currently focusing recruitment effort and resources on countries like Vietnam and China rather than Japan.

Since the implementation of the Peer Mentor Program, we've been able to capture new student concerns more effectively and offer incoming students another way to help ease the transition to American culture and education system. The program connects committed student mentors with incoming international students to improve their academic achievement, social confidence, and facilitate a smooth adjustment to life in the U.S. and at Sierra College. In addition, the program also offers a work opportunity to our current students to build leadership, communication, and networking skills.

4) Resources: This category assesses the adequacy of current resources available to the program and describes and justifies the resources required to achieve planning goals by relating program needs to the assessments above.

4a) Please describe the future direction and goals of your program for the next three years in terms of sustaining or improving program effectiveness, relevance, and currency. Please include any analysis of relevant performance assessments in your explanation.

The program is currently undergoing some restructuring. In Fall 2016 the international counselor was allocated "Lead" responsibilities. This was primarily to focus on the structure of the program support as it related to continuing students. The manager of this program is responsible for managing the high school and community outreach, recruitment and onboarding activities for the college. In relation to the international program the manager role was to focus on outreach recruitment and onboarding international students.

The admission process for the program is still very paper intensive and very time consuming. One of the goals over the next three years will be to streamline this process and allow more of the application and processing to be done online (see section 4b).

The goal for the next three years would be to continue to maintain and expand this program. As has been mentioned in other parts of the report Sierra College has begun in-country recruitment again and the last 2 two overseas recruitment trips have begun rebuilding the profile of the college and this will need to continue. The existing armchair recruitment efforts will be utilized to maintain interest as well as in country recruitment fairs. The program has a good record in terms of success and retention which we would obviously like to see continue and improve.

- 4b) Equipment and Technology: Comment on the adequacy of the program's equipment and technology funding level for the District as well as specific sites. Include a projection of equipment and technology needs for the next three years as well as a justification for needs. Please include analysis of any relevant performance assessments in your explanation.

The application process to the college is very paper intensive at this time. Students are still required to complete a written application. One option is to look at an online admission program. This is in the early stages of investigation, but any implementation would have a cost implication. The benefits though are that it would provide a better service to our students, a swifter decision on the admission process and free up staff time to devote to other areas.

- 4c) Staffing: Comment on the adequacy of your program's faculty, classified, and student help staffing levels for the overall District as well as specific sites. Include a projection of staffing needs for the next three years and justification for any increases. Please include analysis of any relevant performance assessments in your explanation.

There is one classified staff member assigned to the program and one counselor (who also meets with general students). Without these two positions the office will not be able to function. The classified position previously processed the admission applications for new students, assists in organizing the new student orientation and is often the first point of contact for student enquires regarding the international program for both external and internal questions. They also provide office support for continuing students. The counselor is required to offer significant academic and personal counseling and coordinate the orientation program and peer mentor program.

Because of the workload involved in the international admissions functions, most of this is now being performed by the enrollment specialist in the hub. The program though needs additional staffing if it is to grow. In 2009 there was one full time student service tech and also a part time student services tech, but in 2010 that part time position was not replaced when it was vacated. At the moment that admission functions for new students are currently being done by the enrollment specialist in the hub, but they have many other demands such as dual enrollment, high school outreach and the enrollment services located in the hub. Therefore this cannot be the longer term solution.

4d) Facilities: Comment on the program’s fill rate and the adequacy of the facilities for the District as well as specific sites. Include a projection of facility needs for the next three years as well as a justification for any increases. Please include analysis of any relevant performance assessments in your explanation.

The international student’s office was temporary relocated to a new office space in the center of the J building in summer 2016. This drastically reduced the work and office space of the program for both the Student Services Tech and Student Worker. It also reduced the communal space available for international students. The program manager was relocated to the LRC in summer of 2016 and then the A-building in January 2017 and is now responsible to for the Hub (student help). Since the international program located to its reduced space in the J building the ASSC has kindly allowed the international students to use some of their communal space. This ability to have a hang-out space is a vital aspect in allowing students to stay connected with the international program. In summer 2017 the program is scheduled to return to the L-building. This will be an important move for the program from its temporary space. This new space is being designed to provide a welcoming environment which is a crucial aspect to the program and allows these students to feel part of the college community and welcomed at Sierra College.

4e) Please check the appropriate boxes in the chart below indicating the general reasons for the resource requests described above (please check all that apply):

Function/Role	Maintenance	Development	Growth	Safety	Outcomes	Other success measures	No Requests
		X	X		X		

5) Summary/Closing

5a) Evaluate the program’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities/future directions, challenges.

The strength of this program is in the support services provided to the international students. Feedback obtained from students indicates their experiences are extremely favorable, their success and retention is strong and there is a high transfer rate to four year universities and students consistently outperform domestic students in relation to GPA, transfer rates and time to completion. More work needs to be done within the program regarding the application process. It is currently labor intensive and opportunities will need to be explored as mentioned previously to improve this process.

The opportunity is to continue to look at new recruitment markets to grow the program. That has started in recent years with more focus on China and continues into 2017 with the focus on Vietnam. The most still be attention paid to traditional markets such as Japan and Korea, but recognizing where the resources need to be placed and where the best return on investment is going to be. Another opportunity is the correct promotion of the college in the correct markets. The cost of obtaining a four year degree has increased greatly for international students over the last 5 years as UC & CSU raise tuition rates. This presents a great opportunity for Sierra College of promoting its affordability in relation to four year schools and also the opportunities to transfer into the junior year at those schools such as UC Berkeley, UC Davis or UCLA and therefore saving considerable money.

The weakness for the college is that in attempting to attract students it finds itself in a very competitive market in direct competition with desirable California destinations and community colleges such as Santa Barbara City College or Santa Monica College. This though is also an incredible opportunity to demonstrate to students what makes Sierra College special, rewarding and a good fit for their academic and personal goals. The educational agent market is also growing in many countries and these agencies are paid on a commission basis, by universities and colleges in the United States. This is something that Sierra College does not do, but it certainly makes recruitment activities in a number of countries very challenging.

An almost unknown challenge at the current time is how other countries perceive the opportunities and ease of access in obtaining a visa to study in the United States. In international education the visa acceptance rates have always varied between different countries. The issue of visa acceptance, vetting and immigration are getting a lot of national and international attention in 2017 and only time will tell how this relates to the international education market.

The direction of the program over the next 3 to 5 years will be to attempt to maintain and grow student numbers by focusing efforts on in-country as well as armchair recruitment, marketing and retention while recognizing the staff resources that are available to the program.

5b) Please provide any other information the Program Review Committee should consider.

The international program has recently undergone a significant restructuring that is still ongoing. The program manager has been assigned to manage the hub (student help center). They are no longer located with the international program and have a primary focus on recruitment and onboarding of new international students. The counselor within the international program has now taken on lead responsibilities within the program and is focused on the orientation program for new students and the continuing student population. The student services division as a whole is also going to be restructured with new reporting lines and organization structure from July 1. Some of the internal changes within the international program are still ongoing as much of the work overlaps with Admission & Records, the Hub and the International Students Program.

5c) How has the author of this report integrated the views and perspectives of stakeholders in the program?

The international program relies on a number of different departments both within student services and beyond. It is important to communicate clearly with Assessment, Admissions & Records, Health Services, ESL faculty, General Counseling and in particular the Housing Office. All these programs have made it very clear regarding the importance of clear communication. Also it was nice to get feedback on the benefits that the international student population brings to the college as the housing office stated:-

“international students bring a different perspective and cultural diversity to the Residence Hall. This give all residents an opportunity to enrich their lives and to learn and exchange different diverse cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and ideas. Having international student in the Residence Hall has been very beneficial and a positive connection for the Housing department”