

**2024-2025**  
**Unit Annual Report**  
**Division of Academic Affairs**  
**Unit: \_International Education\_**

*Please submit by June 1<sup>st</sup> to the AVP for Institutional Research & Planning*

**I Mission and Goal/Outcomes Statement:**

*Provide overall Mission/Goal Statement for your unit.*

Our mission at the Office of International Education is to provide exceptional services to international students and study abroad participants, while also serving as a valuable resource for Fitchburg State University's faculty, community, and partners. Through fostering an inclusive environment, promoting cross-cultural interactions, and forging strong global partnerships, we aim to cultivate global awareness and enrich the educational journey of our students, preparing them to thrive in an interconnected world.

**II Personnel:**

*List all staff and note all personnel changes that occurred during 24-25.*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Nelly Wadsworth	Director
Nicole Salerno	Assistant Director, Study Abroad Services
Sandy Yu	Assistant Director, International Student Services
Arianna Robichaud	Administrative Assistant II (new employee from Nov. 2024)

**III Facilities/Equipment:**

*List any new facilities/equipment/software etc. acquired during 24-25.*

One new laptop for the newly hired Administrative Assistant and three updated laptops and new three new Desktop screens were assigned to OIE staff in exchange of the older laptops

**IV Budget Expenditure Analysis:**

*Was the budget expended as planned? Were additions/changes made, and if so, explain.*

The budget for the Office of International Education (OIE) during AY 2024–2025 presented significant challenges in planning and implementation due to its unpredictability and insufficient baseline allocation.

At the start of the fiscal year, the OIE was allocated \$13,000 in departmental-level funding. This amount is not adequate to sustain the unit's operations for a full academic year, especially given the increasing demands of international student support, partnership management, and study abroad programming. This limitation made it extremely difficult to plan strategically or allocate resources proactively.

Adding to the complexity, there was no clear indication early in the year whether additional funds would be made available. Consequently, budget projections and spending plans had to remain tentative for several months.

In August 2024, the School of Graduate, Online and Continuing Education (SGOCE) transferred an additional **\$25,000** to the OIE budget. While this supplemental funding provided much-needed relief, it required a complete recalibration of the initial budget. Budget lines had to be revised and reallocated to reflect actual available resources rather than initial projections. The adjustment process made fiscal oversight more reactive than strategic.

Despite these challenges, OIE remained fiscally responsible and utilized available funds to support key programming and student needs. However, the uncertainty around budget timelines and amounts continues to hinder effective long-term planning.

### **Recommendation**

For future budget cycles, we strongly recommend transitioning to a more transparent and consistent budgeting process. Knowing the actual amount available at the beginning of the fiscal year will allow the OIE to develop a realistic and comprehensive spending plan. This approach will improve financial management, program planning, and allow us to pursue strategic priorities: such as student services and programming, partnership development, and cultural programming, with greater confidence and efficiency.

## **V Programs/Activities:**

*List major campus activities, events etc. that the office participated in/supported; committees served; community outreach; etc. List events provided to current and prospective students. Also, provide professional development of all staff.*

### **Programs and Activities/Events (AY 2024–2025)**

Throughout the year, the Office of International Education (OIE) organized and participated in a wide range of programs, presentations, and campus-wide events that supported international student integration, promoted study abroad opportunities, and advanced global engagement across the university. These activities also fostered collaboration with academic departments, student affairs, and the broader campus community.

#### **1. Study Abroad Presentation to Summer Bridge Program**

Delivered an interactive session introducing study abroad opportunities to first-generation and underrepresented students in the Summer Bridge Program, helping to build early awareness and aspiration for global learning.

#### **2. Participation in Open Houses and Admissions Events**

Engaged with prospective students and their families at multiple Open House events to promote international opportunities, study abroad programs, and support services for international students.

#### **3. New International Student Orientation**

Successfully hosted a comprehensive 2-day virtual and 1-day in-person orientation program each

semester for new international students. This initiative was carried out in collaboration with key partners including Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, the Registrar's Office, Student Accounts, Career Services, ACT, Counselling Services, SGOCE and others to ensure a holistic introduction to campus life and compliance expectations.

**4. Presentation to the President and Cabinet**

Provided a comprehensive overview of international programs and services, highlighting strategic priorities, key achievements, and institutional challenges in internationalization.

**5. Support for Diwali Celebration**

Collaborated with the Fitchburg Indian Students Association (FISA) to plan, coordinate, and implement the highly successful Diwali celebration, which engaged both campus and community participants in cultural appreciation.

**6. Board of Trustees Presentation**

Presented to the Board of Trustees to highlight the work of the OIE, with a focus on study abroad programs. The presentation featured returned study abroad students in a panel format to share their transformative global learning experiences.

**7. Faculty Presentation on Supporting International Students**

Partnered with the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to offer a session for faculty on how immigration policy affects international students and what faculty can do to support their academic success and integration.

**8. COIL Development Initiatives**

Worked with CTL to host guest speakers and informational sessions on Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), encouraging faculty to consider global virtual collaboration within their courses.

**9. International Education Week (IEW) Activities**

Coordinated a week-long celebration featuring cultural displays, a Flag Identification Challenge, student panels, international-themed meals in the dining hall, and study abroad informational sessions to promote global awareness across campus.

**10. Exchange and International Student Year -end Reception**

Organized end-of-semester receptions to celebrate the accomplishments of graduating international students and acknowledge the contributions of exchange students completing their term.

**11. Study Abroad Fair and Global Village**

Hosted a combined event showcasing study abroad programs alongside student-led cultural booths. This vibrant event promoted peer-to-peer engagement and cross-cultural learning.

**12. International Night**

Held in Hammond Main Lounge and supported by Identity-Based Programming funding, this event attracted a large and diverse crowd of students, faculty, staff, and local community members. International Night featured student performances, cultural displays, and global cuisine.

### **13. End-of-Year International Graduation and Faculty Recognition Reception**

Celebrated both international and study abroad student accomplishments while recognizing faculty members who made exceptional contributions to international and exchange programs. This event served as a key moment to reinforce the internationalization of Fitchburg State and was well-attended by students, faculty, and staff.

## **VI Action Plan for 2024-25:**

*(Insert your 24-25 Action Plan from last year's report)*

### **Office of International Education Goals for Academic Year 2024-2025**

I hope these goals will help us make significant strides in international education and global engagement, fostering a diverse and inclusive learning environment at Fitchburg State University.

**These goals are in addition to the current services we offer to International Students and Study abroad students.**

#### **1. Increase Undergraduate International Enrollment:**

Work with Enrollment management office to develop innovative strategies to attract 25 new undergraduate international students to study at Fitchburg State University (15 Fall semester and 10 Spring semester). Work with Marketing office to leverage digital marketing, social media campaigns, and alumni networks and current students. Hopefully approve the use of agents in countries that has a high rate of visa approval.

#### **2. Expand Study Abroad Participation:**

Enhance the visibility and appeal of study abroad programs among students and faculty. Implement targeted marketing campaigns, offer more diverse program options, and collaborate with faculty to integrate study abroad opportunities into the curriculum. Meet with the Development Office and see if there might be more money that we can use as scholarship for study abroad faculty-led programs. Create a new faculty-led program for First Year experience and use this as recruitment incentive. We will need scholarships for this.

#### **3. Work with International Advisory Committee to start the Internationalization Processes through NAFSA e-Institute Knowledge:**

Together with the IAC, we will apply insights and strategies gained from the NAFSA Executive Leadership e-Institute to strengthen and streamline the university's internationalization efforts. Ensure these processes are effectively communicated and integrated across campus departments.

#### **4. Strengthen International Partnerships:**

Finalize the partnership with the University of Warsaw. Develop collaborative academic programs including COIL, research initiatives, and student exchange opportunities to enhance the global footprint of Fitchburg State University.

#### **5. Engage in AASCU 1+2+1 Sino-American Articulation Partnerships:**

Advocate for and secure approval from university leadership to participate in the AASCU 1+2+1 program. Emphasize the benefits of gaining more undergraduate students who will pay the ‘out of state’ tuition fees for two years. We have the capacity to provide necessary services to the Chinese accepted students in this program.

**6. Explore the Creation of an ESL Program or Investigate the feasibility**

of offering an English course for international students if we participate in the Sino-American AASCU program (if establishing an English as a Second Language (ESL) program will be a bit difficult). Assess demand and resource requirements to support international students' language proficiency and academic success.

**7. Initiate Collaboration for COIL Program:**

Begin working with faculty to develop Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) programs. Encourage faculty to create joint projects with international partners, integrating virtual exchanges and global perspectives into the classroom.

**8. Introduce Additional Graduate Programs in STEM and Specialized Fields:**

Explore the option of introducing additional graduate programs in STEM fields or specialized programs tailored to meet the workforce demands of the region, the nation, and international students' home countries. This aligns with the institution's goal of increasing international student enrollment.

**VII Assessment Report for 2024-25**

*Were the Action Plan objectives met? Provide in list or table format that parallels item VI above.*

**OIE Accomplishments for AY 2024-25 with the Action Plan submitted last year.**

**Overview**

Despite limited resources, the Office of International Education (OIE) made significant progress in advancing Fitchburg State University's global engagement goals in AY 2024–25. The hiring of a new full-time staff member enhanced the office’s operational capacity, allowing for strategic improvements across international student services, study abroad programming, faculty engagement, and institutional partnerships.

This report outlines OIE’s accomplishments, ongoing projects, challenges encountered, and recommendations to guide continued growth.

**1. International Student Undergraduate Enrollment and Support**

**Accomplishments**

- Enrolled **15 new undergraduate international students** and **6 exchange students** across Fall 2024 and Spring 2025.
- Presented a comprehensive **proposal to the President’s Cabinet and Enrollment Management Team** advocating for the use of recruiting agents.

- Re-established connections with **previously vetted recruitment agents**—several are ready to send students to Fitchburg State.

## 2. Study Abroad

### Accomplishments

- Facilitated **six faculty-led study abroad programs** with **77 student participants**.
- Launched a new, well-received **faculty-led program in Rome**.
- Collaborated with faculty in the design and approval of study abroad proposals.

## 3. International Advisory Committee (IAC)

### Accomplishments

- Engaged international faculty through the IAC to define what **“internationalization” means to them**, promoting a culture of global inclusion.

## 4. Institutional Partnerships

### Accomplishments

- The university signed a new **MOU with the University of Warsaw, Poland**.
- Renewed and expanded partnerships with **Rhine-Waal University** and renewed partnership with **University of Verona**.
- Re-engaged with the **University of Florence** to revive a previously proposed collaboration.

## 5 & 6. AASCU 1+2+1 Program and ESL Integration

### Accomplishments

- Conducted successful outreach to **Business and Technology deans and department chairs**, who expressed strong interest and understanding of the 1+2+1 program.
- Awaiting partner institution lists from **AASCU and CCIEE** to move forward with student recruitment.

## 7. Collaboration for COIL Initiatives

- Worked with CTL hosted guest speakers and informational sessions on Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), encouraging faculty to consider global virtual collaboration within their courses
- Assisted and recommended a faculty member for Fulbright scholarship for COIL Initiatives

**8. Explored** the idea of offering additional on campus graduate **programs in STEM and Specialized Field** with SGOCE. This needs departmental buy-in and others. Nothing happened.

## **9. Expanded Programming and Community Building**

### **New Student Orientation,**

- Successfully implemented a **hybrid orientation format**, improving access and flexibility for international students.

### **Cultural Programming**

- Hosted vibrant cultural events including **Diwali Celebration, Global Village, and International Night**.
- Supported the recognition of **Fitchburg Indian Student Association (FISA)** as an official student club.

## **Conclusion and Strategic Outlook**

AY 2024–2025 was a year of both growth and reflection for the Office of International Education. With increased staffing, renewed partnerships, and strong faculty collaboration, OIE laid important groundwork for future internationalization initiatives. Continued progress will depend on timely administrative support, strategic investment in ESL and scholarship programs, and greater faculty and departmental engagement.

By prioritizing these areas, Fitchburg State can strengthen its global profile and ensure that internationalization remains central to its mission of inclusive, high-impact education.

## **VIII Other Accomplishments:**

*List accomplishments not already captured above.*

Attended the NAFSA Conference – May 26-30, 2025

The NAFSA 2025 Annual Conference in San Diego, provided an invaluable opportunity for professional development, institutional networking, and strategic planning for international education. I participated in a variety of sessions and meetings that directly align with Fitchburg State University’s internationalization goals—particularly in expanding global learning opportunities, enhancing services for international students, and exploring future partnerships.

### **e-Institute Capstone Seminar**

I began the conference by attending the half-day seminar for participants in the **e-Institute for Internationalization Leadership**. The session provided dedicated time to work on our capstone projects with guidance from mentors. The group discussion helped me refine my capstone focus to ensure it is actionable and applicable to Fitchburg State. My project continues to integrate what I’ve learned across the Institute, including SWOT analysis and stakeholder engagement.

### Sessions focusing on Faculty Engagement and Internationalization Strategy

There were sessions focused on actionable strategies to engage faculty and build comprehensive global learning opportunities:

#### Key Topics Covered:

*Engaging Faculty Beyond Study Abroad:* Showcased models of faculty involvement in curriculum internationalization, including COIL and global research projects.

*Creative Global Programming:* Included programs that promote student-faculty collaboration and global competence.

*Strategic Partnerships:* Focused on COIL and dual-degree potential with institutions overseas.

#### Key Takeaways

- Faculty engagement is essential to advancing campus internationalization; several models shared at the conference could be piloted at Fitchburg State.
- There is a growing need to adapt international student services to changing immigration, mental health, and diversity-related policy contexts.
- Developing intentional and mission-aligned partnerships (especially with African, European, and Latin American institutions) remains a strategic opportunity.
- COIL and other low-cost, high-impact global learning strategies can help Fitchburg State expand access to international education.
- The sessions reaffirmed the importance of cross-campus collaboration—internationalization is most effective when it's not siloed.

### IX Action Plan 2025-2026:

Planned Initiatives for 2025-26 Add more rows as needed	Associated Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 3.2 Or NECHE Projection	Indicate if a DEI initiative
<b>Goals for Academic Year 2025–2026</b>  In alignment with Fitchburg State University’s mission to foster global citizenship and inclusive excellence, the Office of International Education (OIE) has established the following goals for		



<p>Academic Year 2025–2026. These goals aim to deepen the institution’s international engagement, expand access to global learning, and promote a welcoming environment for all students, faculty, and staff.</p> <p><b>1. Support of International Student Recruitment</b></p> <p>The OIE will collaborate with Enrollment Management and Academic Affairs and will <b>recommend to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prioritize the execution of agent contracts to maximize international student enrollment for AY 2025–2026.</li> <li>- Expand country-specific recruitment strategies through in-country agents.</li> <li>- Adapt Basic English and Composition courses to better serve international and newly arrived immigrant students.</li> <li>- Develop an ESL pathway program to support access, retention, and revenue generation.</li> <li>- Increase institutional partnerships that support recruitment efforts (e.g., 1+2+1 AASCU Program, Beijing Prepare Education &amp; Technology Co., and other interested partners).</li> <li>- Enhance onboarding, advising, and community-building initiatives to ensure the success and belonging of incoming international students.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>2. Broaden Study Abroad Participation</b></p> <p>To expand access and diversify participation in study abroad, OIE will:</p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase student participation in both faculty-led and semester-long programs, especially among underrepresented majors through more ways of promoting study abroad programs.</li> <li>- Collaborate with the Development Office to identify opportunities for growing study abroad scholarship funds in response to rising program costs.</li> <li>- Partner with faculty and Academic Affairs to promote inclusive, academically integrated global programs such as faculty-led experiences and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL).</li> </ul>		
<p><b>3. Deepen Faculty Engagement in Internationalization</b></p> <p>Work with Academic Affairs and the International Advisory Committee to foster greater faculty involvement in global initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Propose to Academic Affairs to assign a Faculty Fellow for Internationalization who will coordinate internationalization of the curriculum, global learning initiatives and COIL.</li> <li>- Develop ways to incentivized study abroad leadership</li> <li>- Proposal for a faculty training on creating COIL and global learning integration in courses.</li> <li>- Work with international faculty to launch a campus-wide Global Learning</li> </ul>		

community for interested faculty and staff.		
<p><b>4. Support the Integration of Global Learning Across the Curriculum</b></p> <p>With the support of the International Advisory Committee (IAC), and in coordination with academic departments and the General Education Committee, OIE will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compile and share a list of courses that effectively incorporate global learning as models for others.</li> <li>- Promote the integration of global learning outcomes across disciplines.</li> <li>- Provide resources and support for internationalizing course syllabi.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>5. Advance Campus-Wide Internationalization</b></p> <p>To institutionalize global engagement, OIE and the IAC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advocate for the inclusion of internationalization goals in the revised University Strategic Plan.</li> <li>- Support the work of the International Advisory Committee and international faculty to foster a sustained culture of global engagement.</li> <li>- Host cross-cultural workshops and dialogue sessions for students, faculty, and staff to build intercultural competence and global awareness.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>6. Strengthen and Diversify International Partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expand institutional partnerships, particularly in underrepresented regions (e.g., Latin America, Southeast Asia).</li> </ul>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Activate existing MOUs through meaningful engagement, including student/faculty mobility, COIL, and joint programming.</li> <li>- Improve internal systems for tracking, assessing, and reporting partnership outcomes.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>7. Institutional Capacity Building</b></p> <p>To ensure long-term sustainability and effectiveness, OIE will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop tools to track international engagement, including MOU status, mobility data, and participation trends.</li> <li>- Increase cross-training among OIE staff to ensure continuity of services and operational resilience.</li> </ul> <p>These goals represent OIE’s continued commitment to positioning Fitchburg State University as a globally connected institution. Progress in these areas will require strong cross-campus collaboration, sustained administrative support, and shared ownership of internationalization as a core institutional priority.</p>		

*Updates to the Action Plan may be submitted via a revised Annual Report.*

## **X Reflection:**

*Take this section to reflect on--*

- 1) *Initiatives that you may be considering for 25-26 academic year that you did not already capture above.*
- 2.) *Anything else not captured in this report that you would like to share.*