

**2020-2021**  
**Unit Annual Report**  
**Division of Academic Affairs**  
**Unit: International Education**

*There are amended instructions throughout this document to reflect the special circumstances of this academic year (AY20-21). You will find these in red. As an institution and as departments we have learned that we can use our creativity to deliver services and learning even in the most difficult of circumstances. This year's annual report should also serve as a memorialization of the lessons learned.*

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

The mission of the Office of International Education is to provide a high quality services to both international students and study abroad participants and serve as a resource for the Fitchburg State University faculty, community and their partners. Provide leadership in promoting global awareness by enhancing the understanding of our context in a global society.

**II Personnel:**

*List all staff and note all personnel changes that occurred during 20-21.*

**Professional Staff:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Nelly Wadsworth -	Director
Nicole Salerno -	Study Abroad Coordinator
Sandy Yu -	International Student Coordinator

**Support Student Staff:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Muchafara Punungwe	Student Office Assistant – November 2020 to May 2021
Xhulja Kola	Student Office Assistant – November, 2020 to May, 2021
Julia Seijak	Student Office Assistant – January to May, 2021

**III Facilities/Equipment:**

*List any new facilities/equipment/software etc. acquired during 20-21.*

Furniture filing and cabinet hutch for Nelly Wadsworth's office  
Portable Small office laser printer for printing I-20s during remote working.

#### **IV Budget Expenditure Analysis:**

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

*Please note any changes that resulted from the pandemic.*

45% of the OIE budget was clawed back.

There is a small amount leftover FY 21 budget because the student workers were not able to work remotely.

#### **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. Please note which, if any, of these*

*activities occurred specifically as a result of, or in response to, the pandemic . (In red ink)*

- 1. Very successful Virtual International Student Orientation (Fall and Spring)**
- 2. Successful SEVIS Recertification**
- 3. Study Abroad outreach to Students: virtual information sessions and virtual summer orientation**
- 4. Spring and summer 2021 Study Abroad students for semester abroad and faculty led programs were all cancelled close to the date.**
- 5. Presented at MaCIE on International recruitment Spring 2021 conference**
- 6. Global Village virtual program with international students presentations**
- 7. Skype meeting with accepted students to prepare them to pass the student entry visa application interviews at their country's US consular offices**
- 8. Virtual check-ins for international students to be sure the students are doing OK and comply with the Immigration regulations.**
- 9. Information session to Stuttgart University exchange partner institution to encourage Stuttgart University students to come to Fitchburg State.**
- 10. Virtual cultural training to AUIA Summer 2021 faculty.**
- 11. Professional Development and conferences attended:**
  - MaCIE conference
  - International Enrollment Management workshops
  - Attended NAFSA National virtual conference, Education USA, AIRC
  - NAFSA Regional Spring Immigration virtual Workshop
  - NAFSA Regional virtual conferences
  - Virtual webinars on international student recruitment post-pandemic
  - Study abroad virtual webinars: post pandemic challenges and opportunities
- 12. Attended webinars on partnerships with overseas institutions, students' mobility, updates and new SEVIS regulations, and bi-weekly zoom meetings with colleagues in International education in Worcester area schools. NAFSA online meetings and webinars, IIE, AACSB, CHE, AIRC webinars on changes in student mobility, recruitment and future planning.**
- 13. International Advisory Committee meetings.**
- 14. Presentations to agents in Colombia, Brazil, Vietnam, Mexico, Russia, Kenya and Kazakhstan**

**15.** Worked with US Department of commerce and Study Massachusetts for the purpose of publicizing Fitchburg State University around the globe and encourage more international students to enroll at Fitchburg State.

**VI Action Plan for 2020-21:**

*(Insert Action Plan for 20-21) Please see table below:*

**VII Assessment Report for 2020-21**

*Were the Action Plan objectives met? Provide in list or table format that parallels item VI above.  
Please note any changes to the plan that occurred as a result of the pandemic.*

*Please see table below:*

<p><b>VI - ACTION PLAN 2020-2021</b></p> <p><b>1. Recruitment and diversify international and Study abroad students:</b></p> <p>a. Working with US Department of Commerce for International Partner Search and with Study Massachusetts group to do virtual presentation about Fitchburg State to agents from: Colombia, Russia, Vietnam, Mexico, Brazil, Kenya and Kazakhstan.</p> <p>b. Submit a proposal to use recruiting agents to recruit international students for Fitchburg State and increase the visibility of Fitchburg State abroad.</p> <p>c. Submit change of the English proficiency requirement IELTS score from 6.5 to 6.0 for undergraduate applicants and accept Duolingo, Pearson Test of English and additional waivers for the English proficiency requirement to have Fitchburg State become a competitive destination for undergraduate international students.</p> <p>d. Develop strategies to partner with English Language schools in Boston area to get more international students to come to Fitchburg State University.</p> <p>e. Respond quickly to prospective students' inquiries and recommend to them to apply. Work closely with our current international students and alumni to refer to us their international student friends who are already in the United States. With this population, there is NO problem in getting entry visas.</p> <p>f. Revise and update the International Student guide to include in the international recruitment flyers.</p>	<p><b>VII - Assessment Report 2020-2021</b></p> <p><b>1. Recruited international and study abroad students:</b></p> <p>a. Presented to agents in seven countries receiving a good reception from the agents. Agents from these countries are very interested in working with Fitchburg State in recruiting international students. The administration needs to approve on using agents to recruit more international students especially in the undergraduate program.</p> <p>b. This work is now with the School of Graduate and Continuing Education department.</p> <p>c. Successfully changed the IELTS score for undergraduate applicants from 6.5 to 6.0. Duolingo and Pearson Test of English are now acceptable English Proficiency tests. This makes Fitchburg State competitive with our MA sister institutions. These requirements are now visible in the Fitchburg State website.</p> <p>d. We have two language schools who are ready to partner with Fitchburg State. Many international students who go to language schools would like to continue their academic program after completion and achieving the English proficiency required by the desired institution.</p> <p>e. For Spring 2021, Fitchburg State had 35 new international students which was the highest number of new international students as compared to all our sister state institutions.</p> <p>f. International Student application guide has been updated and revised. The guide is now in the University website. It has valuable information for prospective students.</p>
<p><b>2 For Study Abroad</b> – Strategize the recruitment of student to participate in the 2021 faculty led and study abroad programs. Faculty–led for summer 2021 and scholarships. Looking into new strategies in offering study abroad such as virtual and domestic study away programs in case travelling abroad is not a possibility in the near future.</p>	<p><b>2.</b> All study abroad programs including faculty-led programs in 2020 and 2021 were cancelled due to the pandemic. Many students signed up and applied and awarded scholarships but for the safety of all participants, these programs were cancelled very close to the date. Worked had been done.</p>

<p><b>3.Services for Retention and Collaboration:</b>          -Work closely with Risk Management office and the Campus Safety to update the Emergency Management Plan for study abroad.          -Work with the Student Services offices in the Hammond third floor to facilitate and encourage virtual student engagement.          -Revised and update CPT forms to incorporate policies for internship/CPT to make it easier to students to navigate the paperwork.</p>	<p>3. Emergency Plan for Study Abroad has been updated with a communication plan in place. Third floor student services office have got together to facilitate the conversation of unified student services. CPT forms have been revised to include policies.</p>
<p><b>4. Virtual Programming:</b> a. Virtual orientation for new incoming international students; b. virtual global village during the International week; c. Virtual check-in for students to comply with SEVIS requirements and we reminded students to register for the next semester, d. Stuttgart University presentation to prospective exchange students;</p>	<p>4. Virtual programming have been a success during the pandemic. Some of these virtual programs are necessary to retain post pandemic. Some of these activities are money savers.</p>
<p><b>5. SEVIS I-17 updates</b> and SEVIS recertification.</p>	<p>5. Completed and approved SEVIS Recertification</p>
<p><b>6. Define the role of the International Advisory Committee</b> and develop tasks for the IAC to include but not limited to: Evaluating current partnerships and assessing viability of additional partnerships; Working with academic departments to increase exchange partnerships in traditional and non-traditional regions around the globe; Defining and rethinking about the direction of Study abroad program and define the faculty role to promote global learning in their classroom</p>	<p>6. The tasks and role of the International Advisory committee has been left as a draft. We hope that the next members of the committee will finalize and define the role of this committee.</p>
<p>7. Staff          Continue training/assisting staff in all aspects of the job. Participate in the on-going professional organizations' meetings and conferences for professional development</p>	<p>7. Staff: attended webinars, meetings, workshops and classes for professional development.</p>

**VIII Other Accomplishments:**

*List accomplishments not already captured above.*

*Please note which, if any, of these accomplishments are related specifically to your department's response to the pandemic.*

For Spring 2021, Fitchburg State had 35 new international students which was the highest number of new international students as compared to all our sister state institutions

**IX Action Plan 2021-2022:**

<p>Planned Initiatives for 2021-22 rows as needed</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Add more</p>	<p>Associated Strategic Plan Goal &amp; Strategy</p> <p>Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 3.2</p>	<p>Indicate if a DEI initiative</p>
<p>Virtual and in-person new international student orientation for Fall 2021 and Spring semester. During orientation, reach out to students for academic/emotional transitions, google meets and WhatsApp during semester, keep them updated with campus events, introduce them to fun spots and good eats in the area. Orientation for new students, include student accounts and other departments especially career services</p>	<p>Goal 2</p>	
<p>Collaborate with campus departments on cultural programming, ex. International Women's day, international events and programs, such as Diwali, global Village on international week and Cultural Night to be offered in the Fall and Spring to make the community aware of different cultures and promote cultural exchange.</p>	<p>Goal 3</p>	<p>DEI</p>
<p>Submit the ESL program proposal to SEVP. Approval process takes almost a year so it is ready to accept international students by Summer 2022. With the ESL program in place, there be more international students who would want to study at Fitchburg State. This can be a source of revenue and diversify the student population</p>	<p>Goal 6</p>	
<p>Meet the needs of underrepresented students by partnering with EHP and other campus departments to encourage these student population to study abroad.</p>	<p>Goal 2</p>	<p>DEI</p>
<p>Develop partnerships in regions like Latin America and Africa, cost would be the same and more students are likely to go for heritage study abroad</p>	<p>Goal 1</p>	<p>DEI</p>

Start the conversation with AASCU and the French Embassy for possible partnership for dual degree or short term study programs	Goal 1	
Work closely with Career Services on how to articulate skills and experiences for study abroad alumni and international students who are interested in jobs in the USA. Start the collaboration with Career Services during the new students' orientation.	Goal 4	
OIE goal is to have 40 new international students Fall 2021 and 30 new students in the Spring 2022. For student recruitment, utilize alumni and current students to refer international students' friends and relatives to Fitchburg State.	Goal 5	
Prepare for the 2022 Study Abroad Faculty-led program to achieve the goal of 10 faculty-led programs to run and 100 students participating. Utilize returned study abroad students to recruit their friends and classmates to study abroad. Word of mouth is the most efficient recruiting strategy (10 students minimum for the faculty-led program to run).	Goal 5	
OIE staff will attend more departmental meetings (which meet roughly once a month) to establish some type of contact with each department for the purpose of letting the department know about international initiatives and programs, especially faculty-led programs.	Goal 1	
Cultural training and awareness for frontline staff	Goal 4	DEI

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 22-23 academic year that you did not already capture above.
- 2) Reflect on how the department adapted to the pandemic. Reflect on actions that surprised you and on lessons learned that will help in the future.

**Reflection:** It has been a challenging academic year for everyone. Some international students went back home and we do not have an idea if they will come back to Fitchburg State. Some students who stayed indicated they were very lonely not seeing many of their friends and classmates. With the availability of vaccines in the US, and an administration that is friendly to international students, we hear that parents of prospective international students are now favoring USA as the study destination for their children. We hope that Fitchburg State will have a share of this enthusiasm from international students.

For Study Abroad programs. We are very optimistic that by 2022, study abroad programs will run and students are not deterred from travelling.

During the pandemic, there were many challenges but there were also opportunities that came with it. As the saying goes, "In every challenge, there is an opportunity."

I think this is a good time to rethink our approach to recruitment of international students. We can also think about retaining some of the changes that happened that have positive results and retain them post pandemic; e.g. virtual meetings, virtual orientation, etc.