



International Student Initiative

External Review

August 2016

An external review of the International Student Initiative (ISI), sponsored by Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Enrolment & Academic Facilities, *pro tem*, UBC Vancouver, Dr. Pam Ratner and Provost and Vice-Principal Academic, UBC Okanagan, Dr. Cynthia Mathieson was undertaken in April 2016.

The purpose of the review was to:

- Ascertain the current status of the unit, its programs, operations and performance in relation to the Faculties it serves and relative to peers in Canada and the US
- Identify the unit's current opportunities and challenges
- Obtain advice regarding the continuing improvement of operational quality, and
- Obtain advice regarding future direction, mandate, and structure.

Dr. Kedra Ishop, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, University of Michigan and Ms. Carmel Murphy, Executive Director, International, The University of Melbourne, supported by Dr. Paul Harrison, Associate Dean, Student Services, Faculty of Science, University of British Columbia, comprised the review panel.

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- The executive summary of the external review, completed by the review panel (pp. 1-2)
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Executive Summary of the External Review -International Student Initiative
University of British Columbia

Dr. Kedra Ishop of the University of Michigan and Ms. Carmel Murphy of the University of Melbourne were commissioned to review the International Student Initiative of The University of British Columbia in April 2016.

This review, nearing the twentieth anniversary of the ISI was initiated to assess and determine the appropriate future direction and/or continuation of ISI services within the current context of The University of British Columbia. The questions for examination, as charged to this review panel, are as follows:

- Should the charge of ISI be enhanced to undertake work currently not part of their role? For example, should graduate coursework recruitment or the ongoing engagement with enrolled international students be within the scope of ISI?
- In addition does this team have competing priorities that are not able to be met within the current resource and recruiting engagement strategies? For example, the recruitment for the Okanagan, Vantage College and the English Foundation Program – often students of different educational backgrounds from the majority of students entering undergraduate courses directly in Vancouver, may require different, channels, resources and approaches than currently facilitated by ISI.
- Does ISI function as a fully encompassed and autonomous initiative or functionally overlap with other areas of campus?

This report puts forth nine strategic, organizational, and operational recommendations intended to provide guidance and to support the framework for future state considerations. They are as follows, followed by the full report:

- **Recommendation 1:** The development of a comprehensive international strategy, currently being undertaken by the Executive Director International, should include a five year UBC international profile plan to be negotiated and clearly articulated. This needs to be developed in conjunction with an overall student profile plan for the University.
- **Recommendation 2:** Technology resources should be investigated and invested in alignment with the strategic plan.
- **Recommendation 3:** Strategically organize the development of articulation/cohort agreements through a proactive approach. These could link better to an overall International engagement strategy if a single area has responsibility/sign off.
- **Recommendation 4:** The Okanagan Campus utilises the UBC brand but needs a clearer identity to promote its strengths and differentiation.
- **Recommendation 5:** A senior enrolment manager should be appointed to the Okanagan campus to enable a consolidated view to be developed and implemented. Okanagan is optimally primed to benefit from such an organizational structure.
- **Recommendation 6:** Vancouver should consider a single reporting structure for the function of student recruitment which in turn could enable greater strategic recruitment planning. The function could report to a Director of Recruitment with a reporting line to Enrolment Services.

- **Recommendation 7:** The ISI name should be changed to clearly reflect time, mission and structure. Whilst ISI could have been considered an initiative when it commenced 20 years ago it is now providing core business services that are very important to the strategic direction of UBC.
- **Recommendation 8:** Assessment of resource commitment and return needs to be undertaken for yield process including events.
- **Recommendation 9:** There appears to be great scope to increase Graduate coursework program enrolments, possibly with International enrolments, and the appropriateness of this scope needs to be determined and aligned through to the five year plan.

Report of the External Review -International Student Initiative
University of British Columbia

Report prepared by the review panel:

Dr Kedra Ishop, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, University of Michigan
Ms Carmel Murphy, Executive Director, International, the University of Melbourne

This report was commissioned to review the International Student Initiative, University of British Columbia and undertaken 4th-7th April 2016.

The information provided prior to the review in the self-assessment, the willingness of staff to discuss the positives and areas for improvement and the genuine desire to engage in the process made our task as reviewers more rewarding. The University of British Columbia is an impressive institution, with a student centric focus that encourages great experiences.

Background

The International Student Initiative (ISI) was established as a unit in 1996. It reports to the vice-provost and associate vice-president, Enrolment and Academic Facilities on UBC's Vancouver campus, and to the provost and vice-principal, Academic on UBC's Okanagan campus. The ISI recruits international undergraduate students for 12 faculties – seven on the Vancouver campus and five on the Okanagan campus – as well as for UBC's pathways programs, such as the new Vantage College on the Vancouver campus and the English Foundation Program on the Okanagan campus. The ISI recruits in 78 countries and 22 US states. It also recruits international undergraduate students in Canada as well as Canadians living in the US or overseas.

The ISI's portfolios

The ISI's portfolio profiles as outlined in Section 2 of the self-assessment report are as follows:

- 2.1 International Student Financial Assistance and Awards
- 2.2 ISI Okanagan (note both Vancouver and Okanagan teams recruit for all programs for both campuses)
- 2.3 Regional Recruitment (covering Asia, Europe, the Americas, the Middle East and Africa, and international students in Canada)
- 2.4 Asia Pacific Regional Office
- 2.5 Recruitment Marketing and Prospective Student Engagement
- 2.6 Strategic Operations: eRecruitment, Client Services, and Logistics
- 2.7 Client Relationship Management (CRM) System(s)
- 2.8 On-Campus Recruitment in Vancouver (including the management of campus tours on the Vancouver campus)
- 2.9 ISI Strategic Partnerships (including the management of third-party recruitment agents and sponsorships)

Offshore staff

In addition to staff located in Canada, two ISI recruitment staff work at UBC's Asia Pacific Regional Office in Hong Kong. The office is managed by the vice-president Research and International (VPRI) and also serves the Development and Alumni Engagement portfolio. The ISI collaborates with the VPRI on UBC's India Liaison Office in New Delhi, as well. In the past three years, the ISI has established dedicated in-country advisors – called “basecamps” – in the United Kingdom, in the United Arab Emirates, and in India. In 2016, new basecamps are being established in Kenya, Indonesia, and the eastern United States.

International Student Recruitment and the work of ISI

UBC is one of the world's most international universities and this is increasingly reflected in the number of international students enrolled. In 2015, UBC hosted 13,366 international undergraduate and graduate students, constituting 21.8% of the 61,113 students enrolled across the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses. The Okanagan enrolled 1056 international undergraduate and graduate students, constituting 12.5% of its 8,392 student body. Vancouver enrolled 11,156 international undergraduate and graduate students, constituting 21.1% of the 52,721 Vancouver student body.

In meeting with over a 100 staff across the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses it was very evident that the work that has been done by ISI and their engagement with staff and students has been extremely positive. It has enabled strong, strategically developed, depended upon growth, and enhanced diversity of the International undergraduate student population on both campuses. Since 1996, at the inception of the ISI, the population of international undergraduate students at UBC has grown from 450 – or just 2% of undergraduate students – to 9,821 – or 19.3% of 50,654 undergraduate students enrolled on both campuses. In 2009, 4,417 international undergraduate students were enrolled at UBC's Vancouver campus; by 2015, that number had grown to 8,984. In 2009, UBC's Okanagan campus enrolled 297 international undergraduate students; by 2015, that number had grown to 857. ISI was continually praised for their professionalism, relationships and outcomes.

Nonetheless, twenty years later, whilst successfully operating under the original mandate under which they were charged, it is timely to consider the appropriate future direction and/or continuation of services. The question is particularly poignant as it relates to the original mandate of the ISI and the current state of the UBC. The questions for examination, as charged to this review panel are as follows:

- Should the charge of ISI be enhanced to undertake work currently not part of their role? For example, should graduate coursework recruitment or the ongoing engagement with enrolled international students be within the scope of ISI?
- In addition does this team have competing priorities that are not able to be met within the current resource and recruiting engagement strategies? For example, the recruitment for the Okanagan, Vantage College and the English Foundation Program – often students of different educational backgrounds from the majority of students entering undergraduate courses directly in Vancouver, may require different, channels, resources and approaches than currently facilitated by ISI.
- Does ISI function as a fully encompassed and autonomous initiative or functionally overlap with other areas of campus?

There were varying understandings of the work being undertaken by ISI, which is not a problem in itself, but perhaps creates some tension and possible duplication of effort or gaps in service delivery.

For this report we have separated recommendations under the headings of Strategic, Organisational and Operational. Whilst it is understood that this may be an artificial separation for some recommendations it is intended to support a framework for future state considerations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

STRATEGIC:

Recommendation 1: The development of a comprehensive international strategy, currently being undertaken by the Executive Director International, should include a five year UBC international profile plan to be negotiated and clearly articulated. This needs to be developed in conjunction with an overall student profile plan for the University.

- Establish a campus wide, high level, and long-term steering committee to oversee the implementation of the redefined scope of ISI.
 - Ensure that the advisory committee complement the current cross-campus working group
 - Consider a sub-committee specifically focused on the needs of Okanagan through the development of a Strategic Enrolment Committee specific to the Okanagan campus.
- The 5 year plan should include observable and measurable campus, cohort and diversity goals.
- Review the plan against current outcomes to drive resource allocation to recruitment and program initiatives. Resource allocation should be tied to strategic visioning.
- Review the strategic intent of the Pathways programs – Vantage and Program at Okanagan to determine if and how the current design fits into the international student profile in the five year plan.
- Clearly articulate the strategic intent of Agent use and develop strategies to enable outcomes.
 - This may include further integration with base camps and staff roles.

Recommendation 2: Technology resources should be investigated and invested in alignment with the strategic plan.

- A fully integrated CRM, in support of student recruitment services is a realistic investment with significant opportunities for benefit. This can be done exclusive of an enterprise wide solution that is more significant and resource intensive.
- When appropriate, properly integrate e-Recruitment options through CRM and technology interventions to aid in programming.

- Assessments and business practices should be examined and aligned before technical solutions are employed to avoid recreating inefficient approaches in a new environment
 - Allows for already high level communications to be raised at scale
 - Allows for opportunity of more student-friendly navigation through the recruitment process
 - Connects sensibly, aspects of the Enrolment Services Programs and related services, through an integrated communications system; particularly to more efficiently connect scholarship disbursement and communications.

Recommendation 3: Strategically organize the development of articulation/cohort agreements through a proactive approach. These could link better to an overall International engagement strategy if a single area has responsibility/sign off.

Recommendation 4: The Okanagan Campus utilises the UBC brand but needs a clearer identity to promote its strengths and differentiation.

- How does it utilise the UBC Brand but have an identity that promotes its strengths and comparative advantages?
- Strategic planning for Okanagan should focus on brand identity and growth strategy.
- The strongest assets of the ISI can differently support the 'growing' Okanagan than the 'sustaining' Vancouver and should be distinctly charged to support these unique needs.

ORGANISATIONAL:

Recommendation 5: A senior enrolment manager should be appointed to the Okanagan campus to enable a consolidated view to be developed and implemented. Okanagan is optimally primed to benefit from such an organizational structure.

Recommendation 6: Vancouver should consider a single reporting structure for the function of student recruitment which in turn could enable greater strategic recruitment planning. The function, could report to a Director of Recruitment with a reporting line to Enrolment Services.

- The different reporting lines for Domestic and International student recruitment contribute to a siloed market facing approach and do not enable stronger expertise and resource sharing.
- Within a single student recruitment function, the remit of each team could then be refocused based on geographical location, not fee type.
 - The domestic team (or onshore team) could recruit from all undergraduate students studying in Canada –both international and domestic. Having a broader remit in the domestic team would enable greater engagement across Canada that in turn would support a greater profile for UBC for the domestic student market.
 - The international (offshore team) would focus around strategically assessed countries and regions of the world with appropriate resource allocation in support of university initiatives. A single recruitment function with two teams recruiting by geographic markets would require a review of current resources and a reallocation to enable appropriate market engagement.

- A single structure requires, but both structures suggest a need for, consideration of standardization of practices related to recruitment but also to compensation, professional development, and categorization. Consistent development of staff between the teams will provide more opportunity for cross unit support and expanded expertise.

Recommendation 7: The ISI name should be changed to clearly reflect time, mission and structure. Whilst ISI could have been considered an initiative when it commenced 20 years ago it is now providing core business services that are very important to the strategic direction of UBC.

- Within a broader recruitment function some suggested names for the services that would be undertaken include: International Student Recruitment (Services), International Student Market Engagement, Office of International Recruitment, etc.

OPERATIONAL:

Recommendation 8: Assessment of resource commitment and return needs to be undertaken for yield process including events.

- The current Yield event process appears to be very resource intensive – both at the University team and Academic division level.
- Review the current practices against outcomes and determine where other forms of interaction, possibly virtually can be used to minimise travel.

Recommendation 9: There appears to be great scope to increase Graduate coursework program enrolments, possibly with International enrolments, and the appropriateness of this scope needs to be determined and aligned through to the five year plan.

- Recruitment engagement and outcomes for this currently being undertaken for Graduate Coursework programs should be mapped. This will inform consideration of the roles of Graduate Schools and the University Recruitment teams in this engagement.
- From the mapping process it will be clearer if and how the central team could engage in graduate coursework programs and where the handover would occur.
- Clearly articulated recruitment strategies for undergraduate and graduate enrolments need to be established if a combined approach is utilized.
If the University recruitment teams are given an agreed role for Graduate coursework recruitment resources would need to be allocated to support this.

In summary:

As shown by the growth of international students at the UBC and the regard in which the ISI is held, as evidenced by the many conversations that were part of this review, it is obvious that the ISI has successfully accomplished its original mandate. The strengths of the ISI, collaboration, business acumen, strategic approach and investment, should now be leveraged against the needs of the current UBC. The aforementioned recommendations are intended to provide a framework for the UBC to establish a next-generation initiative that propels the university into its next 100 years with the support of a strong international student recruitment structure.

Response to the External Review of the International Student Initiative

Karen McKellin
Executive Director
International Student Initiative

July 2016

A. Strategic Recommendations

Recommendation 1

A comprehensive international strategy, currently being undertaken by the Executive Director International, should include a five-year UBC international profile plan to be negotiated and clearly articulated. This needs to be developed in conjunction with an overall student profile plan for the University. Sub-recommendations are:

- *Establish a campus-wide, high-level, and long-term steering committee to oversee the implementation of the redefined scope of ISI.*
- *Review the strategic intent of the pathways programs (Vantage and English Foundations Program) to determine if and how the current design fits into the international student profile and five year plan*
- *Clearly articulate the strategic intent of Agent use and develop strategies to enable outcomes*

Comments

The office of the Vice President Research and International (VPRI), guided by an International Advisory Committee, is in the process of renewing the University's 2011 International Strategic Plan. Deans, associate deans, heads of departments, faculty members, staff and executives of service units, emeriti and alumni have been consulted. A survey of graduate and undergraduate students is planned for this fall.

Early results of the consultation indicate that high on the list of the University community's priorities are ensuring a diversity of international students, monitoring the effect of recent increases in international tuition fees, balancing the University's social responsibility with revenue-generation, providing quality support for international students, and recruiting high-caliber international graduate students. The renewed International Strategic Plan is expected to be finalized by the end of 2016, following consultation with the new President.

Renewal of the International Strategic Plan will allow the University to take a more intentional approach to setting UBC's international enrolment targets, to define a broader spectrum of diversity that could potentially guide international student recruitment and admissions, and to align the recruitment of graduate as well as undergraduate international students, particularly for emerging course-based professional master's programs.

The ISI welcomes the External Reviewers' recommendation that a high-level committee be established to provide broad strategic direction for the international student program. There is precedence for such a committee. From 1996 to 2011, strategic oversight was provided by an ISI Steering Committee, chaired by the UBC Vancouver Provost and composed of several Deans, the VP Finance, VP Students, the Registrar and others. During that same period, an ISI Advisory Committee composed of associate deans and representatives from the International Student Association, alumni, and student development services met monthly to provide advice and direction to the ISI on a number of recruitment, admissions, and financial assistance issues, and addressed other matters related to international student support and retention issues.

In 2011, these two committees were disbanded and their functions were added to the terms of reference of the newly-constituted Enrolment Executive Committee (EEC) for the Vancouver campus and to the Strategic Enrolment Management Committee (SEMC) for the Okanagan campus. These two Committees deal primarily with undergraduate enrolment management and admissions issues, domestic and international, as well as receive reports from programs or initiatives from across campus that may impact undergraduate enrolments.

A high level committee composed of senior members of stakeholder units would enable sharing of information across a number of portfolio areas, and would strengthen the overall international student program both in terms of recruitment and admission as well as retention and support for international students throughout their sojourn at UBC.

With regard to the recommendation about the Vantage One program and the English Foundation Program (based at UBC Okanagan): Both programs are still in growth mode. Vantage now offers a first year opportunity for international students entering the Okanagan Engineering or Management programs, as well as entrée to Year 2 of Arts or Science in Vancouver. An integral part of the program is to seek greater diversification of students and ensure they are well-supported in their journey through their programs of choice. Opportunities to leverage other UBC programs, such as the English Language Institute, to develop a pathway or conditional admission to the Vantage One program could offer a more seamless package of services to foreign government sponsors, for example, which seek placements for funded students who often require a period of concentrated English language instruction before they are ready to enter their degree program.

ISI is developing a centrally-managed Strategic Partnerships and Agent Management program, to support the University's international diversity goals and to expand our reach into new and emerging markets. The strategic intent of agent-based recruiting is to broaden the prospective student funnel to include students we may not be accessing through other recruitment channels. This will be an important measure of the success of the program. ISI is working closely with the Office of the University Counsel and contributing to the emerging Senate policy framework governing appropriate use of third-party recruitment agents at UBC.

[Recommendation 2](#)

Technology resources should be investigated and invested in, in alignment with the strategic plan.

Comments

Given the hyper-competitive international mobility arena and the complexity of the international student market, the ISI has become an early adopter of new recruitment technologies. In 2008, ISI invested in a CRM, ezRecruit, that currently serves both international and domestic recruitment. This system is no longer stable nor able to meet either recruitment team's needs. IS has spearheaded the initiative to replace this ageing system with a more robust and state-of-the-art solution that will more effectively enable us to engage prospects from each of our different markets and market segments. Once a vendor and software integrator has been selected, and approval is granted by the Board of Governors, UBC IT will be tasked with guiding the implementation of this essential new recruitment technology that will support undergraduate recruitment in Canada and around the world.

Executive sponsors for the project have been established, as well as a Leadership Team, and an Implementation Team. The project is governed under the umbrella of the larger project to renew UBC's student information system (SASI), but is proceeding in parallel and slightly in advance of the SASI request for proposal (RFP) and procurement processes. The focus of the CRM will be on recruitment of undergraduates; it is not intended to be an enterprise solution. However, instances of the program may be applicable to other units that need a CRM to support their work, including Career and Professional Educational programs (CPE).

The CRM Working Group, made up of content specialists and including domestic and international recruiters, marketing coordinators, Enrolment Services Professionals, international awards advisors, faculty advisors, and others, is analyzing and assessing current business processes to prepare to take full advantage of the new technology in terms of communications, tracking student engagement and behaviours, event management, awards nominations, predictive analytics and more. New functionality in eRecruitment, as well as digital marketing campaigns and strategic use of social media for recruitment purposes, will also be supported by the new CRM technology.

A staged RFP for a new recruitment CRM is in progress and submissions are expected this month (July 2016). Board I and II approvals have been received as per requirements for IT Capital Projects. Board III approval will be sought in December 2016, and if all goes according to plan, implementation will commence in January 2017.

[Recommendation 3](#)

Strategically organize the development of articulation/cohort agreements through a proactive approach, to link better to an overall international engagement strategy.

Comments

Articulation of programs, joint degrees, and so forth, at both the graduate as well as undergraduate levels, are currently initiated and managed within individual faculties, schools, or departments. Although they are supported by the International Office and Provosts' Offices, there is at present no central policy or directive for developing articulation programs at UBC, other than the articulation that functions within the Province as part of the BC Transfer System for community colleges, universities and other post-secondary institutions.

Although developing articulation/cohort agreements with international institutions is not part of ISI's mandate, we agree that such partnerships should be linked to an overall international strategy, and that UBC could better capitalize on the opportunity to develop 1+3 or 2+2 articulation agreements internationally. This could have great benefit for our international student program, and afford greater visibility and enhancement of UBC's global brand.

B. Organizational Recommendations

[Recommendation 4](#)

The Okanagan Campus utilizes the UBC brand but needs a clearer identity to promote its strengths and differentiation.

Comments

From its beginnings in 2005, the Okanagan campus has had to consider how best to balance the benefits of identification with the pre-existing UBC brand, with promoting its own distinctive characteristics, both in terms of program offerings as well as the student experience. Given that the campus is relatively new, some of its most innovative programming is currently in “beta mode.” The campus has made great progress on developing value-added program enhancements, such as co-operative education and other experiential learning opportunities this past year.

UBC Okanagan’s University Relations (UR) division is currently undertaking a promotional campaign to support the launch of a number of these new programs. This promotional campaign will leverage system-wide expertise to develop a consistent message in which to frame the UBC O experience. The Recruitment Marketing and Communications team is working closely and collaboratively with UR to advise on key messages and approaches for prospective undergraduates, domestic and international. In effect, stakeholders at both campuses are integral to the success of this initiative.

While it is important for UBC Okanagan to further define and articulate its campus identity, international students and their parents often seek assurances that UBC Okanagan is indeed UBC, and offers the same UBC degree that is recognized by employers and graduate schools anywhere in the world. The message of “One University – Two Campuses” resonates well internationally. However, we recognize that as a newer campus, UBC Okanagan benefits from additional exposure in each of our international markets to further the awareness of the campus and the unique learning environment it provides. In addition to working together with the Vancouver-based ISI team to recruit for both campuses and all UBC programs, the ISI Okanagan team also executes a number of focused recruitment and promotional activities to highlight the Okanagan campus, such as bringing groups of international guidance counselors and students to Kelowna for familiarization tours, commissioning videos showcasing outstanding Okanagan faculty, students, and successful alumni, and investing in paid social media promotions focused on the unique features of the campus.

[Recommendation 5](#)

A senior enrolment manager should be appointed to the Okanagan campus to enable a consolidated view to be developed and implemented. Okanagan is optimally primed to benefit from such an organizational structure.

Comments

The processing and evaluation of applications for undergraduate admissions for programs on both campuses is centralized in Enrolment Services in Vancouver. The Associate Registrar, Student Recruitment and Undergraduate Admissions is responsible for domestic recruitment for both campuses, and also functions as the undergraduate enrolment manager for both campuses, assisting UBC Okanagan faculties on the Strategic Enrolment Management Committee (SEMC) in managing their

domestic and international enrolments annually. SEMC is also supported by UBC Okanagan's Deputy Registrar and the Okanagan's Office of Planning and Institutional Research. In Vancouver, enrolment management occurs within the Enrolment Management Committee (EMC) as well as the Enrolment Executive Committee (EEC) composed of Associate Deans, and other stakeholders. The current emphasis at this time is on bolstering system-wide connections and lines of communication through key individuals whose portfolios serve both campuses. However, it is fair to say that there are issues that arise from time to time in these various committees that have cross-campus implications. Common issues would likely benefit from fuller discussion among all UBC faculties with a view to optimizing international and domestic undergraduate enrolments for both campuses.

[Recommendation 6](#)

Vancouver should consider a single reporting structure for the function of student recruitment which in turn could enable greater strategic recruitment planning. The function could report to a Director of Recruitment with a reporting line to Enrolment Services.

Comments

Before questions related to organization or reorganization can be answered, the University's strategic enrolment goals and other University-wide goals pertaining to the desired mix and diversity of domestic and international students, graduate and undergraduate, should be well articulated, as called for in the External Review's Recommendation #1. Once determined, the strategies and implementation plans, including effective organizational models, either one or several, that best meet those goals can be established.

The new international strategy is poised to provide some guidance and direction, this year, with regard to the international student program, and the University's desired level of international engagement. In addition, broad discussions by the Senate, within the Faculties, and by other members of the University community are necessary to identify the diverse undergraduate student population of high caliber students (e.g., international/domestic, on-shore/off-shore, urban/rural or remote, all Canadian provinces and territories, first-generation learners, refugees, Aboriginal students) that the Faculties wish to attract and retain.

However, it is important to bear in mind, given the University's dependence on international tuition revenues, that it takes deep international expertise and consistent recruiting enterprise to attract the scale of academically competitive international students from a diversity of regions and cultures that the Faculties have come to depend on year over year. The entering class for both campuses plus Vantage was over 3,000 international undergraduate students this past year. This is a large number of new students to attract each year, let alone grow, even by small percentages. Most four-year public research universities in the US would consider an entering freshman class of 500 international students to be extremely large. The Faculty of Arts alone enrolled more than 800 new international students this past year. International students at UBC pay many more times the domestic tuition, they come from a more complex array of secondary schools and curricula, and changing demographic, economic and/or political conditions can affect international student flows more suddenly and severely than within the more homogeneous and stable Canadian market. Other international market conditions that ISI must contend with include fluctuating currency exchange rates, changing federal student visa policies and rights to work, safety and security issues, and fierce and perennial competition from other Canadian, US,

Australian, UK/European international higher education providers seeking to attract the same highly qualified and self-funded international students that UBC wishes to enrol.

As indicated in the self-study, one of the reasons for ISI's success has been its relative autonomy under successive Provosts, who have given the unit scope to respond nimbly to rapidly changing market demands in order to meet faculty enrolment targets and revenue goals. The ISI has also developed a relatively stable, cohesive internal structure that has been able to withstand some of the more disruptive organizational upheavals and competing priorities occurring elsewhere, while managing the rapid growth necessary to achieve the scale, diversity and quality of students Faculties have required.

ISI's particular strengths, as noted by the External Reviewers, including deep international experience, business acumen, its collaborative and strategic approach and the ability to achieve results, is currently dedicated to supporting Faculties and Vantage College's international undergraduate enrolment goals. The question is whether those strengths should be deployed to also support other units seeking to engage internationally at the graduate level as well as for revenue-generating non-degree programs.

Alternatively, ISI's expertise in customizing recruitment approaches to the needs, realities and cultures of distinct regions and market segments and its strong student-centric approach could be combined with domestic recruitment activities to strengthen undergraduate recruitment across Canada in addition to recruitment in the Americas, Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe.

If a centralized strategic recruitment arm were to be established for the University's campuses that coordinated all recruitment, for domestic, international, graduate, and undergraduate students, including for professional and non-degree programs, the reporting line(s) would be best placed within the Provosts' Offices with strategic direction setting and monitoring being provided by a Steering Committee of the different stakeholders, from Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, to Continuing and Professional Education, VP Research and International, in addition to the existing or newly configured recruitment units, Enrolment Services, and representatives of the Faculties and Vantage College.

[Recommendation 7](#)

The ISI name should be changed to clearly reflect time, mission and structure. Whilst ISI could have been considered an initiative when it commenced 20 years ago it is now providing core business services that are very important to the strategic direction of UBC.

Comments

A name change for the ISI has been suggested at various times over the years as international enrolments have grown in size and strategic importance for the University. However, the unit has lived up to its name in terms of maintaining a student focus, while taking initiative, experimenting with new recruitment approaches, opening up new markets, identifying new business opportunities, and resourcefully meeting faculty objectives year over year despite changing and sometimes challenging external circumstances. The acronym "ISI" is also now used pervasively across the University to refer to international undergraduate visa students who are subject to differential international tuition fees.

Should the scope of the unit expand to encompass graduate recruitment, or to become even more integral to the University's international strategy, then a name such as *Strategic International Enrolment (or Recruitment) Initiatives* might better define the organization's role within the University and retain

the unit's culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. Other names suggested by the Reviewers may find traction as well, but strategy and function should ideally precede any name change.

C. OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 8:

Assessment of resource commitment and return needs to be undertaken for yield process, including events.

Comments

Yes, we would agree that it is critically important to measure and evaluate returns on all our recruitment and yield activities. Currently, there are some data limitations due to an outdated CRM that has minimal integration with the SIS and other UBC systems, but a process of review and cost-benefit analysis is underway for this past year and indeed takes place every year before ISI invites the faculties and their advising staff to events that take place around the world each spring. Yield events are necessary in that international undergraduate students are likely to apply to upwards of ten different universities (usually a mix of the top Canadian universities, as well as other four-year public research universities in the USA, the UK, or Australia) and yield rates are approximately lower by one half those achieved in the domestic arena. Given the role international students' parents play in the decision-making process, it is important to meet with overseas parents whenever possible to assure them that UBC is the right fit for their son or daughter. This past year, international tuition for new students increased by 15% over the previous year, and the ISI and our Faculty partners took extra steps to achieve yield. Evidence from this year indicates that these efforts have paid off. Registrations are on target, with yield even higher than anticipated in some programs.

Nevertheless, ISI has increased its eRecruitment yield events, more than doubling the number that took place this year over last. These activities require a considerable investment of time and expertise to schedule, promote, broadcast and follow up with participants and presenters, so they still require resources. Evaluation of these sessions this past year is underway to determine which students participated in relation to those who participated in off-shore events and to see if there are ways to leverage this emerging indirect recruitment medium to even better advantage in coming years. ISI will also be capitalizing on the establishment of our basecamp in-country recruiter/advisors to take on some of the yield activity in their key regions earlier this spring, as a result of the earlier application deadline Admissions has proposed.

Recommendation 9:

There appears to be great scope to increase Graduate coursework program enrolments, possibly with international enrolments, and the appropriateness of this scope needs to be determined and aligned through to the five-year plan.

Comments

Currently, recruitment for course-based graduate programs is undertaken by the programs themselves, although supportive administrative services are emerging from the new Continuing and Professional

Education organization on the Vancouver campus. In the meantime, ISI has been providing international recruitment advice and direct support for individual graduate programs on an informal and ad hoc basis when asked to do so. How better to more formally utilize ISI's international market expertise, international networks and recruitment techniques to support these and other new strategic endeavours has permeated the comments to many of the recommendations listed above.

ISI's new functionality in agent management and development of partnerships with sponsoring organizations, working closely with the VPRI's International Office, could have applicability and benefits for course-based masters programs that are seeking international students for their programs. Similarly, eRecruitment initiatives, market intelligence, marketing and communication strategies, optimizing use of social media in an international context, and direct recruitment initiatives supported by ISI's growing number of in-country advisors ("basecamps") in key regions, etc. could all be of benefit to other programs seeking entrée into the global marketplace.



External Review of the International Student Initiative 2016

Scope of Review and Terms of Reference

An external review of the International Student Initiative (ISI) is to be undertaken to:

- Ascertain the current status of the unit, its programs, operations and performance in relation to the Faculties it serves and relative to peers in Canada and the US
- Identify the unit's current opportunities and challenges
- Obtain advice regarding the continuing improvement of operational quality, and
- Obtain advice regarding future direction, mandate, and structure.

The ISI unit recruits to meet the international enrolment targets set by each of the University's undergraduate teaching faculties and Vantage College. The principal goal of the external review is to provide ISI, and the Provosts' Offices, with an opportunity to reflect on its operations, performance, results and impact, in relation to the objectives and priorities of the faculties, and to obtain external advice to guide continuing quality improvement and future direction of the unit in relation to the University's strategic priorities. More specifically, the external review will assess ISI's strengths and areas for further development in serving the University's two campuses with respect to:

- International student recruitment,
- Overall quality of international students recruited
- Diversification of the student body on each campus,
- Diversification of the University's sources of revenue, and
- Impact on the University's overall international engagement goals, as first detailed in [*Place and Promise: The UBC Plan*](#).



International Student Initiative External Review

Dr. Kedra Ishop, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management
University of Michigan

Ms. Carmel Murphy, Executive Director, International
The University of Melbourne

April 4-7, 2016

Itinerary of meetings at UBC's Vancouver and Okanagan campuses

Monday, April 4, 2016	
11:45 a.m.	Carmel Murphy travel from downtown Vancouver
3:54 p.m.	Kedra Ishop arrival at Vancouver International Airport
	West Coast Suites The University of British Columbia 5959 Student Union Boulevard, Vancouver Phone: 604-822-1000
6:15	Travel to restaurant
6:30	Dinner meeting Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Enrolment and Academic Facilities <i>pro tem</i> Associate Dean, Students, Faculty of Science
Tuesday, April 5, 2016	
7:45 a.m.	Walk to Walter C. Koerner Library, 1958 Main Mall
8:00-8:30	Breakfast meeting Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Enrolment and Academic Facilities <i>pro tem</i>

8:30-9:00	Senior Director, International Recruitment and Awards
9:00-10:00	ISI Senior Leadership Team Coordinators and Senior International Recruiter/ Advisors
10:00-10:35	Executive Director, International Student Initiative
10:35-11:30	Break
11:30-12:45	Meeting and lunch Associate Deans, Direct-entry Faculties and Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Director, School of Kinesiology Principal and Academic Director, UBC Vantage College
12:45-1:00	Break
1:00-1:30	ISI Vancouver Staff
1:30-2:00	Student Development and Services (SDS)
2:00-2:15	Break
2:15-2:45	International portfolio at UBC and UBC's International Strategy
2:45-3:15	Associate Vice-President, Enrolment Services, and Registrar
3:15-3:30	Break and return to West Coast Suites
3:40	Travel to Vancouver International Airport
5:40-6:39	Flight to Kelowna – Air Canada AC8418
7:00	Dinner with ISI Staff
	Four Points by Sheraton Kelowna Airport Hotel

Wednesday, April 6, 2016	
8:00 a.m.	Travel to UBC's Okanagan campus
8:30-9:00	Provost and Vice-Principal Academic
9:00-9:45	Associate Director, ISI
9:45-10:00	Break
10:00-11:00	Deans' Council
11:00-11:30	Associate Vice-President Finance
11:30-12:00	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
12:00-1:00	Lunch meeting AVP Students Student Development and Advising Okanagan Planning and Institutional Research International Programs Go Global
1:00-1:15	Break
1:15-1:45	Students
1:45-2:00	Break
2:00-3:00	Enrolment Services
3:00-3:30	Dean, Faculty of Management
3:30-3:45	Break
3:45-4:15	Advisor to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on International Initiatives, and Associate Dean, College of Graduate Studies
4:15-5:00	Provost and Vice-Principal Academic
5:00	Travel to Kelowna International Airport
6:05-7:03	Flight to Vancouver – Air Canada AC8421

7:10-8:30	Dinner
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Thursday, April 7, 2016	
7:45 a.m.	Walk to Walter C. Koerner Library, 1958 Main Mall
8:00-8:30	Breakfast meeting Provost and Vice-President Academic <i>pro tem</i>
8:30-9:30	Enrolment Services' Registrar's Executive Team
9:30-9:45	Break
9:45-10:45	Deans/Associate Deans
10:45-11:00	Break
11:00-11:30	Career and Personal Education (CPE) and Vancouver Summer Programs
11:30-12:00	Finance, Risk Management, University Counsel, Institutional Research
12:00-12:15	Break
12:15-1:15	Lunch meeting with international students
1:15-1:45	Faculty-based International Student Coordinators and International Academic Advisors or Managers of Student Services in the Faculties
1:45-2:00	Break
2:00-3:00	Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Enrolment and Academic Facilities <i>pro tem</i>
3:00 onwards	Report preparation
5:30-7:30	Dinner
~11:30 p.m.	Carmel Murphy taxi to Vancouver International Airport

Friday, April 8, 2016

~3:30 a.m.

Kedra Ishop taxi to Vancouver International Airport**Written submissions**

Written feedback was also invited from internal and external stakeholders. Only a few were received and provided to the external reviewers when they arrived.

ISI External Review Team – Brief Bios

Dr. Kedra Ishop
Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management
University of Michigan

With 18 years of admissions experience, Dr. Ishop directs the office of admissions for undergraduate and international admissions and the application process for graduate admissions at the University of Michigan. She is responsible for the implementation of state policy regarding admission and oversees the development, implementation and analysis of the university's admission policies.

Ms. Carmel Murphy
Executive Director International
University of Melbourne

With over 25 years in higher education, Ms. Murphy has significant leadership experience in strategic and business development in international education. At the University of Melbourne, she is accountable for strategic, business and policy development to enhance international student program outcomes.

Dr. Paul Harrison, Associate Dean, Students, UBC Faculty of Science, was consultant to the Review Team and meeting facilitator on the Vancouver campus.