

Internationalization Plan, 2016-2020
University of Regina

Executive Summary

- This internationalization plan builds on the University new strategic plan, *peyak aski kikawinaw*: Together We are Stronger, with the aim of setting key targets and goals to strengthen and enhance four pillars of internationalization by working in an integrated and organic manner.
- First, we recommend that the University develop a strategy for diversifying international enrolments, while increasing the number of international visa students to roughly 14% of the undergraduate population, as well as increasing the number of international graduate students by 20% and the number of ESL students by 35%, as compared to numbers in Fall 2013.
- In order to retain these students and ensure in their success, and the success of permanent residents and new Canadians, we believe that the University needs to invest in the creation of appropriate transition and support programming for all international students and new Canadians, including expansion of Global Learning Centre support for those students, and the allocation of resources to the line Faculties teaching these students to aid in the creation of support for these students, and for instructors teaching them. Such investment will repay itself by retaining successful, tuition-paying students.
- Second, we recommend a 25% increase in the number of international experiential learning opportunities for domestic students, with the goal of increasing the total number of students taking advantage of these opportunities by 50%.
- Third, we will work to engage faculty and staff in the process of further and deeper internationalization by increasing international research opportunities, including providing more opportunities for international opportunities for faculty and work exchanges for staff.
- In order for this recommendation to succeed, we will need to provide the funding for travel, and strengthen the recognition for faculty and staff when they contribute to international activities. In addition, we recommend deepening our strong existing international partnerships, as opposed to exploring new ones.
- Fourth, we recommend that by the end of 2020 each major at the University include an opportunity for students to have an internationally focused course within their degree program, with international concepts and methodologies integrated within the curriculum.

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This internationalization plan builds on the University of Regina 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, *peyak aski kikawinaw: Together We are Stronger*, whose objectives include enhancing “services and academic supports to assist international and new Canadian students transitioning to Canada, with particular emphasis on English Language proficiency, Canadian culture, and university expectations” (p. 8), as well as fostering international experiences for our students, faculty and staff, including expanding and promoting “experiential and service learning opportunities, including international learning...” (p. 9). We are also inspired by the overall national and international trend of universities working to develop future global citizens from their faculty and student body by providing them with an international experience on the campus and abroad.

This plan aims to achieve the above goals by identifying key targets and goals that will strengthen and enhance the following four pillars of internationalization:

- Enrolment, retention and success of international students and new Canadians.
- Mobilization of our students to opportunities abroad.
- International opportunities (primarily teaching and research) for faculty and staff.
- Internationalization of the curriculum.

To achieve these goals and take advantage of interactions between the four pillars, we must work in an integrated and organic manner that encompasses both the faculties and administrative units, facilitated primarily by UR International. The recruitment of all international undergraduate students should be a centralized activity coordinated by UR International in partnership with the Faculties and Federated Colleges. UR International will also support the Faculty of Graduate Studies in the recruitment and exchange of international graduate students and the establishment of international agreements. It will also work with the Vice President Research and the Office for Research, Innovation and Partnership to build on our strengths as an international research university in supporting international research opportunities where appropriate.

Successful internationalization requires a team of people that are creative with an entrepreneurial attitude towards management, heavy academic involvement and strong administrative coordination. The team also requires consistent support in processes and procedures with a vast knowledge of intercultural communications. This means that all the sectors of the academic community, board members, senior management, faculty, students and administrative staff are involved and educated about their appropriate roles. Consistent messaging of the importance of internationalization as a vehicle to enriching the campus and the community is paramount.

1. Enrolment, Retention and Success of International Students

Enrolments at the University of Regina have flourished in the last five years from 564 undergraduate visa students at our university, to 1471 undergraduate visa students in Fall 2015 (11.6% of the undergraduate student population). International graduate student numbers have increased from 218 three years ago to 494 in Fall 2015, and have increased their share of graduate student numbers from 15.7% to 28.3% of the graduate student population. In addition, our ESL Program has been successful in enrolling 328 full-time students in the EAP program Fall 2015 semester (almost double from 9 years ago), as well as students in customized shorter programs throughout the year.

Our students currently come from more than 60 countries, but our largest cohorts come from China, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, India, Mexico, Pakistan, South Korea, USA, and Bangladesh. These enrolment increases have been crucial in enhancing and diversifying our student population and tuition revenues, and have also brought our faculties many strong students as well as helping internationalize the experience of our domestic students, but have also brought some challenges related to the cultural differences of the students and their English language preparation.

By the end of 2020, we recommend that the University increase the numbers of

- Undergraduate international visa students from the current level of 11.6% of the undergraduate population (1471 students) in fall 2015 to roughly 14% of the undergraduate population (roughly 1775 students) by fall 2020, an increase of roughly 300 students over the 5 years.
- Graduate international students by 20% (from 494 students in Fall 2015 to roughly 590 students in Fall 2020).
- Students in the Regular ESL Program by 35% (roughly 100 students per 13-week semester).
- Students in the customized (short-term) ESL programs by 50% (roughly 150 students in total, each in 3-5 week programs).

The primary destination faculties and programs for current students, both graduate and undergraduate, reflects international demand and the success of these programs:

- Business, Engineering, Nursing, Kinesiology and Health Studies, Justice and Police Studies, Social Work, Education.
- Computer Science, Economics, Film, Geology.
- ESL Program short and long term.

We recommend working to diversify our recruitment strategy for international students, while still maintaining our current levels of recruitment into the above areas. Based on a review of our international undergraduate enrolment data, we will focus on recruiting

- Into faculties and programs that are under-subscribed.
- Students that have a higher chance of retention and success.
- Students from cohorts that traditionally have a better GPA at the University.

Such diversification will have two positive impacts. First, we will be strengthening academic areas (such as the liberal arts and sciences) that are currently suffering in student numbers, and which are identified in the University Strategic Plan as a crucial part of our academic mission. Secondly, by recruiting stronger students, we will reduce the burden on the Faculties of teaching students who struggle to succeed, and we will be teaching international students who can succeed and not only achieve their own personal goals, but also in most cases return to their home countries to with the benefits of their education and training.

Turning to retention and student success, based on the University's experiences over the last several years, and based on feedback and consultations, we see a strong academic and business case for investing more in the success of our international students after arrival in Regina, as well as in our permanent resident and new Canadian students. This investment should include expanding the services provided centrally by UR International and the Student Success Centre, but crucially it should also include direct support for line Faculties teaching international and domestic ESL-speaking students. (See Appendix II for a partial list of current academic and non-academic supports for international students.) If we invest more in our students' success, we will be more than repaid, most importantly by our students' improved success rates, but also monetarily. We will save costs from less needed future intervention with these students; we will improve our reputation as a university where students can succeed, improving student recruitment; and we will retain more students who will continue taking classes and pay more tuition.

In order to meet our targets to increase the recruitment, retention and success of international visa students and domestic ESL-speaking students, we propose that the University consider the following resource allocations and policy changes:

- First and foremost, in order to expand retention levels for international students, the University of Regina needs to build a better data set and understanding of the current retention levels of international students, across different national cohorts, different programs, and different levels within programs.
- Maintain and expand the Global Learning Centre and all of its programs (see Appendix II for a partial listing of current programs).
- Provide UR International with more resources to open and consolidate recruitment markets.
- The University will work to create more coordinated recruiting and marketing between UR International and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.
- In alignment with the University's new strategic plan, we will work with La Cité universitaire francophone to expand our links with francophone partners to bring more francophone international students to the University of Regina.
- In addition, we will work with First Nations University of Canada to build international partnerships and bring more international indigenous students to the University of Regina.
- Building on existing academic support programs in partnership with the Faculties, provide more support in these areas to the line Faculties and departments, both the Faculties that the students major in, as well as the Faculties where they take their key

elective courses. This support will include specialized programs (such as the Academic Recovery Program and the Arts Transitions Program), more advising support, more instructors (and related supports) if appropriate, more laboratory space in affected areas, more support for teaching international visa students and domestic ESL-speaking students.¹

- We also recommend providing the Faculty of Graduate Studies with resources continue and where appropriate to expand targeted graduate scholarships for international students to offset the increased financial burden of higher fees for international students on faculty members and also provide needed resources to handle the increasing number of international applications.
- Work to change Faculty criteria documents to reflect positive support for internationalization work.
- CCE/ESL will be generally be self-supporting due to its cost-recovery nature, but currently faces classroom and office capacity and most especially instructor capacity constraints, and will need access to more of each if it is to expand as envisioned.
- Expand residences, food services and prayer space for international students, including more services 24/7 and 365 days per year.² In addition, we will work to expand on-campus health services for international students.
- It is recommended that we carry out a thorough re-examination of our scholarships, with a goal of considering a focus on specialized discounts for high level students and increasing the accessibility of international students to scholarships.
- The labels/names of many of our degree programs are sometimes confusing to international students – we recommend the development of a concordance mapping our programs to the names of identical or similar programs.

2. Mobilization of Domestic Students to More Opportunities Abroad

It is our responsibility as a University to provide our students with a Global Education, that gives them the skills and experience to enter a highly diverse and competitive job market. Such an education enhances the academic experiences of our students, by exposing them to alternative cultures and experiences that provide “a vibrant, challenging and stimulating learning environment” (to quote the University Strategic Plan). It is the individual components of international education that provide domestic students with an international enriching experience at home, while providing international students an invigorating learning experience through the knowledge gathering process of another culture, and its unique values and concepts of the host country. All of these combined factors promote an invaluable international learning experience that prepares the participant students to live, work and succeed in a globalized world.

¹ It should be noted there are many domestic students struggling with English as a Second Language in addition to international students.

² Although it is potentially a large and complex project, we recommend that the University consider the creation of student family housing, with minimum space held for international students with families. Such support will help the transition of international students with families.

In the last three years the University of Regina has increased dramatically the number of students going to study abroad from 30 in 2009, to 450 in 2013. The increase has been remarkable, however we must continue to promote the study abroad experiences to all our students, to increase the number even more.³

By the end of 2020, compared to Fall 2013 we will increase the number of

- International experiential learning opportunities (study, work and volunteer) for domestic students by 25%.
- In addition, work with the Faculties to increase the number of students participating in those international experiential learning opportunities by 50%.

3. International Opportunities

International opportunities for faculty members (and staff) to do research, to teach and to do exchanges with University partners around the world will help to engage faculty members and staff in the process of further and deeper internationalization and create their support for that process.

An important, indeed critical, component of these international opportunities are international research opportunities.⁴ The cross-fertilization of research ideas, data, and methods contributes to a broader understanding of the globe as well as a better understanding of our own domestic context. Establishing these partnerships is complex and often initially done organically between researchers, but is more likely to be successful if supported by a coordinated and strategic effort between the researchers, their faculties, the Vice President Research, UR International, and the Office of Research Innovation & Partnership.

By the end of 2020, compared to Fall 2013 we will

- Double the number of international research partnerships for faculty.
- Increase by 25% the number of grants with international partners.
- Increase by 25% the international sabbatical and visiting scholar opportunities for faculty (using our strategic partnerships around the world).
- Increase the awareness of the University's international research profile.
- Provide the opportunity for at least 5-10 non-academic staff a year to engage in work exchanges that can enhance their work with internationalization.

Realizing the above opportunities will help support the goal of increasing by 25% the number of publications with international partners.

³ The University of Regina International has currently \$270,000 in scholarships for students seeking experiences abroad the vast majority of students who obtain this funding are students traveling with a professor as part of a class. Maintaining and enhancing such scholarships is crucial to allow the average student to participate in such programs without taking on excessive debt.

⁴ This section draws upon documentation provided by the Vice-President Research.

These goals will imply the need for:

- More direct funding for travel to allow affordable opportunities for faculty and staff.
- Tracking the number of publications, grants, and other forms of collaborations with international partners in order to document and promote our international research activity.
- Strengthening of recognition for faculty and staff of their international activities and development projects, including special recognition by Faculty peer review committees of the importance of international research projects.
- Stronger linkages between faculty members with international research programs and links to international universities and institutions and UR International, with the goal of bringing these faculties members and their linkages into the operational planning of UR International.

Our current international opportunities for students, faculty and staff draw upon our longstanding partnerships around the world. The range of partnership encompasses universities, government and funding agencies, industry among others. Within more than 161 active agreements in the world, we recommend working on expanding these programs as opposed to exploring new programs.

4. Internationalization of the Curriculum

The internationalization of the curriculum happens when all of the above are well communicated to faculty and staff and when there are real opportunities presented to all parties at the University. This is the result of an engaged faculty who enjoys and benefits from international partnerships, projects, research and students. In order to achieve this stage we must work together to achieve the first three goals of our plan in a consistent and systematic way that delivers clear results in an organized structure.

By the end of 2020, every major in the University of Regina will

- Include an opportunity for students to include an internationally focused course within their degree program.
- Integrate international concepts and methodologies within their curriculum.

Both increased internationalization of the curriculum and more Study Abroad participation would be encouraged by the promotion of the learning of international languages. We recommend the further development of concentrations or clusters of international languages and culture.

The resource implications of these recommendations primarily include the time of faculty and staff related to curriculum reform within the faculties and Registrar's Office, as well as the costs of updating calendars and websites. However, depending on the state of current library resources, those may need to be supplemented as well.

With development of exchange and articulation agreements bringing students from around the world to our campus, we are well prepared to consider deeper, transnational

partnerships. Such partnerships could involve articulation agreements where University of Regina programs are entirely delivered to students on the campuses of institutions abroad. Faculty from the University of Regina and the partnered institution would provide in-class content towards satisfying University of Regina degree requirements to students registered in our programs, without the need for students to be on the University of Regina campus.

We recommend that the University strike a small task force to explore the costs, benefits and risks of developing and delivering off-shore University of Regina programs.

Livia Castellanos and Harvey King

(With advice from Andrew Gaudes, David deMontigny, Franzvolker Greifenhagen, Shanthi Johnson, Hairuo Qing, Armin Eberlein, Monika Çule, Shaun Fallat)

Appendix I Consultations

University Executive Team
Deans' Council
First Nations University Academic Council
Faculty of Engineering
Faculty of Science
Faculty of Arts
Faculty of Fine Arts
Faculty of Business Administration
Faculty of Education
Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies
ESL Program, Centre for Continuing Education
Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy
Luther College Academic Council
Faculty of Nursing
Faculty of Social Work
Council Committee on Academic Mission

We have also attended presentations and seminars by the provincial government on their goals and plans for international students in Saskatchewan.

a) Academic Support Programs currently offered to International Students

Global Learning Centre, CW 115 (UR International)

The Global Learning Centre is the facility designed to assist all international students with their academic and non-academic needs. This includes free, focused English language services, as well as organizing activities and events for successfully transitioning and adjusting to learning in a new post-secondary environment at the University of Regina.

English Coaching (UR International)

Students have the opportunity to book 30-minute individual coaching appointments with senior University of Regina students to receive assistance with questions regarding assignments, essays, and the English language.

Walk-in Hour (UR International)

Walk-in Hour gives students a one-on-one opportunity to receive English Coaching or assistance with their questions regarding school work or the English language.

Conversation One-on-One (UR International)

Students can book daily individual appointments to strengthen and advance their English language conversation skills with one of our senior student volunteers.

Conversation Club (UR International)

Conversation Club is a daily group setting for students to join, in which they are given the opportunity to meet other students and participate in activities that will assist with their group English conversation skills. Daily topics are planned and relate to Canadian culture, common practices in health and safety, and language uses

Study Assistance (UR International)

University of Regina international students who give back to the campus community by providing free study assistance with various university subjects, such as Math, Computer Science, Statistics, Economics, Japanese, Korean, etc.

Workshops (UR International in partnership with faculties)

In coordination with other faculties and units on campus, URI has created several workshops that are available for students to attend. Some of the workshops include: Undergraduate Rights & Responsibilities, Graduate Rights & Responsibilities, What is Plagiarism?, How to Avoid Plagiarism, Grammar 1 & 2, Critical Writing, Citation & Quotation, and Poetry Analysis.

English Needs Assessment Test

(UR International, in coordination with the English Department and ESL Program)

The longer-term goal is that this test is implemented each semester in English 100 classes, with the aim of evaluating specific categories of students and assessing the English proficiency of University of Regina undergraduate students, and finding out where students' English skills are lacking the most. The test focuses on Reading (with listening embedded in that) and Writing (with grammar embedded). Upon completion, the tests are marked and data is collected and evaluated, determining which categories of students require the most assistance. The continued development and implementation of an exam such as this will hopefully provide yet another opportunity to assist our students by way of assessing their needs and then ensure that they are enrolled in courses that would allow them to excel and be successful as a student.

ARTS 010

(Faculty of Arts, jointly with UR International and the Student Success Centre)

This non-credit academic reading strategies course is offered to students at no cost and is designed to foster critical reading skills in undergraduate students which can be applied in their additional courses. It is open to any undergraduate students, both domestic and international, who wish to improve their critical reading skills as part of preparation for future English courses or if they are enrolled in the Academic Recovery Program.

Academic Recovery Program (Student Success Centre)

For international and domestic students who are placed on forced withdrawal or are on academic probation, this program provides them with the opportunity to improve their academic situation over 2 semesters, and potentially increase student academic success. Students who choose this option acknowledge having their probation extended during the length of the program. The benefit for our students is that, by enrolling in this program, they will be able to maintain their full-time academic status and continue to be eligible for student loans, scholarships, and visa and study permit applications.

Arts Transition Program

(Faculty of Arts with UR International and the Student Success Centre)

This collaborative program between UR International and the Student Success Centre assists students who are in the process of transferring into the Faculty of Arts due to their academic standing. Students who qualify for ATP will learn the skills required in order to be successful as an Arts student via a series of requires courses, workshops, and sessions that are designed to facilitate the students' learning in regards to cultural, social, and academic abilities. In order to successfully complete this program, students must achieve a minimum grade of 60% in each course, attend all scheduled workshops, complete weekly reflection journals, and receive a P (pass) in ARTS 010.

ESL Regular Program

The University of Regina English as a Second Language (ESL) Program offers a Languages Canada accredited program that gives students the English language skills they need to succeed in their undergraduate studies, graduate studies or career. Students who complete Advanced EAP (ESL 050), the highest level of the program, will meet the English language proficiency requirement for admission to an undergraduate or graduate program at the University of Regina.

ESL Fundamentals for Success

Supplementing the ESL Regular Academic Program, these are part-time, paid evening classes. Fundamentals for Communicative Success works on listening and speaking skills, while Fundamental for Writing Success working on writing skills, including grammar and style. ESL is also developing a UR Transition "Fundamentals for University Success" program for incoming credit students, to be offered half-days in the latter half of August 2016.

b) UR International's Current Non-Academic Support Programs

Life Skills Advisors assist with academic support by connecting students with their faculty and Academic Advisors; assist with a wide variety of non-academic needs, such as guiding students in maintaining their status in Canada, finding housing, being of assistance in emergency situations, and answering general questions about life in Canada; facilitate

obtaining of a Saskatchewan Health Card. They are available to assist students with emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.

Airport Welcome Booth

Student volunteers greet our new international students at the Regina International Airport each Fall and Winter semester.

Orientation Day

This free, day-long event provides new international ESL, Undergraduate, and Graduate students with all of the information they will need in order to be academically successful. Orientation day begins with offering our students a chance to meet other international undergraduate, graduate, and ESL students, as well as their deans, academic advisors, and staff from other units on campus, and also to learn about what services are available for them.

International Peer Advisor Program

Our International Peer Advisors are connected with new and current international students and are a resource for navigating the U of R. They provide valuable information and support to our new international students and are motivated to assist them with their successful transition to their new life at the U of R.

Student Associations, Societies & Clubs

Year round, our office assists with the facilitation, organization, and promotion of events and sessions that are held by student associations and clubs on campus. Numerous events are organized each semester, including the Chinese Festival, International Night, and Lunch & Learns, which are open to all of our students, both international and domestic, new and current.

Living Learning Communities (LLC)

Coordinated with Residence Services, our Living Learning Communities strive to provide forums for themed programming and valuable resources for students with similar interests, personal values, and academic goals. These communities allow students with shared interests to live together and form meaningful connections on campus and within the community.