
Health and Wellbeing

& The International Student Experience

Presenters:

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**See where
experience
takes you.**

Agenda

- *Who we are - Supports and students demographic*
- *Understanding international students*
- *Survey tools and mediums of dialogue*
- *Outcomes and Future Goals for Programs*

Services and Global Experience

SaGE supports international and internationally-minded students, staff and faculty in finding:

- Personal &
- Academic &
- Professional success

We do this by creating meaningful programs, services and partnerships that allow students, staff and faculty to internationalize their Centennial experience.



Who are International Students

International students are:

- Foreign nationals who hold a valid study permit issued by IRCC.

An international student does **not**:

- Hold permanent residency status in Canada
- Hold Canadian citizenship
- Hold refugee or protected persons status

Who is on Campus

22K Students on Campus

8,000 + International Students from 133 countries (Fall 2017)

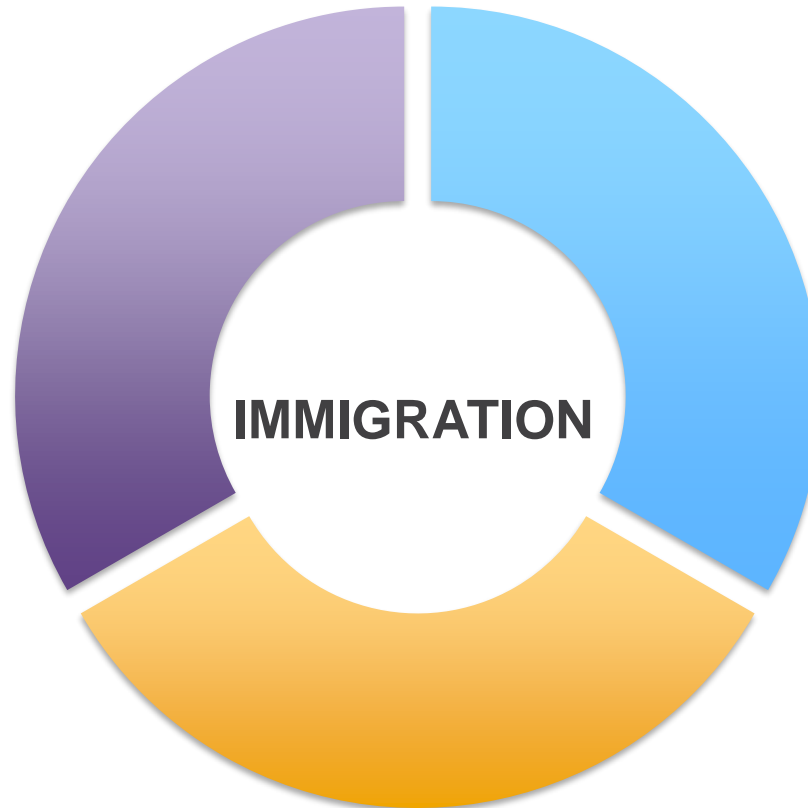
Top Ten: India, China, South Korea, Jamaica, Nigeria, Vietnam, Venezuela, Brazil, Panama & Ukraine



Understanding International Students

Academic

- Different education systems
- Course load
- Previous education



Professional

- Financial, family pressure
- Unclear career path
- Immigration restrictions

Personal

- Finances
- Well-being and health
- Family and relationships
- Culture shock

Informing our Practice

The ACHA-National College Health Assessment II (ACHA-NCHA II) is a national research survey organized by the American College Health Association (ACHA)

- n= **473** Centennial students (9.5% response rate)
- 294 female (62.16%), 170 male (35.94%), 9 unknown (1.90%)
- Homesickness, Loneliness vs Depression , Nutrition

International Student Barometer & Student Engagement and Satisfaction Results

- Students are well connected but only within specific cultural groups
- “Orientation is confusing”
- Connecting with support services- International Office, Counselling, Careers, Athletics and Rec.
- Low Enrollment for Students with Disabilities

Our Priorities

- Themes of health and wellness incorporated through the International Transition Programs to address loneliness, homesickness, nutrition
- Partnerships with other departments on campus and off campus community partners
- Addressing the growing population- making the most of our locations & resources

Health and Wellness Outcomes

- Development of the “Wellness Facilitator” Role
- Mindfulness for Staff & Student Volunteers
- Our Transition Program Offerings (Centennial Babels, Tea with Roma, Mindful Origami)
- Global Experience – SaGe Outbound Wellness Kits
- Partnerships with Counselling and CSD, Careers, Athletics
- Cross Promotion of Health and Wellness Events and Programs

Stories of Resilience



JOURNEYS

A PROJECT BY 
SaGE
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
Services and Global Experience

Where do we go from here...

Success

- Event turnouts
- Feedback from students
- Partnerships and interests from on and off campus allies.

Goals

- Reaching out to all campus locations
- Internationalizing Wellness and Health related topics
- More opportunities for talking, listening, sharing stories
- Leveraging existing off campus relationships

Let's hear from you...





Increasing Mental Health Support for International Students

February 28, 2018

Ali Dohadwala, M.A., R.P.

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The Journey Abroad





Factors Influencing International Student Mental Health

- Homesickness and loneliness
- Culture & Weather “shock”
- Language barriers
- Financial barriers
- Social or cultural isolation
- Housing difficulties
- Cultural misunderstandings
- Educational system adjustments
- Racial discrimination
- Lack of support from peers
- Student visa limitations
- Fraud



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Barriers to Access

- International students tend to underutilize mental health care supports available compared to their domestic counterparts.
- International students typically have a negative view of counselling and often feel uncomfortable talking about their feelings to strangers
- Some international students feel that counselling is only for “weak” or “crazy” people.
- Some international students don't see the value in discussing their issues with a Canadian counsellor who they worry might not understand their problems because of cultural differences.
- The impact of a diagnosed mental health issue on their immigration status and ability to remain in Canada causes additional anxiety for international students



Current Strategies to Increase Access and Awareness

1. Orientation workshops on mental health and stress management
2. Pamphlets about counselling designed for international students
3. Integrating counselling services into the International Centre
4. “Let’s Talk” focus groups to identify international student needs
5. Workshop series focussing on common issues of this population
6. Alternative counselling options – Good 2 Talk, Tranqool & Aspiria



Case Studies

Sue-Lyn (Business diploma student)

- Family related trauma
- Shame and fear of accessing services
- Expired study permit
- Sexuality and relationships
- Despite these struggles, she successfully graduated!



Case Studies

Sunil (Computer Technology student)

- History of addiction and trauma
- Multiple suicide attempts since being a student
- Passport and study permit issues
- Concerns for safety led to involving his family
- Currently in final semester



Moving Forward

- Piloting walk-in hours specifically for international students
- Pre-departure module on mental health and wellness
- Peer Coach program
- More group based counselling and support groups
- Thoughts and ideas?



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THANK YOU!

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