International Students and Mental Health
Presenters:

**CAPS:**
- **Aki Kawamoto:** Coordinator of Data Management and Research/Staff Psychologist
- **Huan-Hsiang Ueng:** Staff Psychologist
- **Jamie (Juemei) Yang:** Embedded Psychologist, College of Pharmacy

**IC:**
- **Jacob Koelzer:** Program Advisor, Global Engagement and Education Abroad
- **Kate Zheng:** Assistant Director for Global Engagement and Education Abroad
Student Life

- **Student Life Mission**
  - Student Life is committed to facilitating student learning and the development of the whole student while cultivating a diverse and inclusive campus community. Through our programs, services, facilities and partnerships, we provide opportunities for students' transformation and enrich their education.

- **Areas of Student Life**
  - [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) - On-campus psychological counseling
  - [International Center](#) - Resources for international students and global education
  - ...

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What Is Student Life? | Get Help | Parents & Families
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

- Brief Individual Therapy
- Couples Therapy
- Group Therapy, Lunch Series and Workshops
- Crisis Intervention
- Consultation
- Outreach & Education
- Embedded Programs

CAPS home page: http://caps.umich.edu/

Location
Tappan Street Auxiliary Building
609 Tappan Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(734) 764-8312
- International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)
- Faculty and Staff Immigration Services (FSIS)
- Global Engagement & Education Abroad (GEEA)
- Compliance, Technology, and Health Insurance
- Office Operations, Front Desk, and Budget Management
## International Students in the U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Total International Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Top 25 Total</td>
<td>$251,972$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>New York University</td>
<td>$17,552$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>University of Southern California</td>
<td>$16,075$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Northeastern University - Boston</td>
<td>$14,905$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Columbia University</td>
<td>$14,615$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Arizona State University - Tempe</td>
<td>$13,459$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>$13,445$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>University of California - Los Angeles</td>
<td>$12,017$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Purdue University - West Lafayette</td>
<td>$11,044$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>University of California - San Diego</td>
<td>$9,883$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Boston University</td>
<td>$9,742$</td>
</tr>
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</table>

16 University of Michigan 8,442
## International Students Enrolled at U-M

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FALL 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total University</strong></td>
<td>46,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total International</strong></td>
<td>6,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<em>Representing 120 countries</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment by country:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.R. China: 3342</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India: 927</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea: 484</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada: 262</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan: 278</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2106 undergraduate students</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4685 graduate/professional degree</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>185 non candidate for degree</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment by career:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature, Science &amp; the Arts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture &amp; Urban Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International Percentage</strong></td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Between- and Within-Group Differences in Symptomatology at University Counseling Centers

A Study by Aki Kawamoto, SooJeong Youn, Louis Castonguay, & Ben Locke
Introduction

● Universities are becoming global
  ○ U of M is the 16th leading institution (Institute of International Education, 2018)
● Growing interest in understanding the needs of international students and providing services accordingly.
Challenges Among International Students

- Adjustment, developmental, and academic challenges among college students in general.
- International students experience additional difficulties related to unique stressors and cultural adjustment (kaczmarek et al., 1994; Pedersen, 1991).
Past Counseling Service Utilization Study Findings

- International students tend to under-utilize counseling services (Brinson & Kottler, 1995; Frey & Roysircar, 2006; Yakushko, Nilsson et al., 2004; Davison & Sanford-Martens, 2008; Zhang & Dixon, 2003).
- Report unique problems - academic and somatic problems are commonly reported by international students (Lippincott & Mierzwa, 1995; Yakushko et al., 2008).
- International students are more likely to terminate treatment prematurely compare to U.S. domestic students (Nilsson et al., 2008; Pedersen, 1991; Yakushko, 2008).
Past Utilization Study Findings (cont’d)

- International students tend to seek mental health help as a last resort after trying other sources for help (Aubrey, 1991; Yakushko, 2008).
- International students are more likely to have been hospitalized for psychiatric reasons, to use crisis hours, and to express suicidal ideation at intake (Mitchell et al, 2007).
Factors Affecting Help-Seeking Behaviors Among International Students

● Language barriers
● Stigma around mental health illness - a sign of character weakness
● Unfamiliarity with counseling
● Resistance toward western medicine and treatment
● Traditional cultural values and negative attitude towards counseling

(Tedeschi & Willis, 1991; Yakunina & Weigold, 2011)
Within-Group Differences

● Asian international students have a significantly more difficult time than European and Canadian students (Church, 1982; Tomich, McWhirter, & Darcy, 2003).
● European international students were better adjusted to life in the U.S. than Asian, African, or South American international students (Sodowsky & Pike, 1992).

Cultural similarity with the host country seems to play an important role in cross-cultural adjustment.
Overview

- Symptomatology at intake (47 university counseling centers).
  - Between-group differences: International, ethnic minority, and White students.
  - Within-group differences among international students: 5 continents of origin
- Measured by CCAPS-62 (Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms)
  - 8 subscales: depression, generalized anxiety, social anxiety, academic distress, eating concerns, family distress, hostility, and substance use.
Results

- International students were divided into five continents of origin: Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe.
- Students from Asia reported significantly greater concerns in almost all domains (Depression, Generalized Anxiety, Social Anxiety, Academic Distress, Eating Concerns, Hostility) except for Family Distress and Substance Use.
- Students from Africa also reported significantly greater concerns on Depression, Social Anxiety, and Academic Distress.
- Substance use concerns were more prevalent among students from Europe and North America.
Implications for Programming

- Academic distress is the most frequently endorsed concern by all groups
  - Outreach activities and workshops on study skills, time management, and test anxiety
- Explain counseling as a way to:
  - Promote academic and career success
  - Learn how to better cope with stress in life
- Emphasize client confidentiality
- Explain difficulties international students tend to face, including academic difficulty, depression, anxiety, discrimination, homesickness, and loneliness, and normalized their experience
- Raise campus awareness regarding the impact of discrimination on international students’ mental health
Recommendations

● Make our counseling center more accessible
  ○ Increase familiarity with CAPS through outreach activities
  ○ Offer support groups, workshops
  ○ Reduce stigma associated with counseling and mental health conditions
● Help students detect early signs of psychological distress and use effective coping skills
● Understand ongoing needs among students
College Student Mental Health Survey

OUR GOAL

Since 2004, CAPS has been conducting the College Student Mental Health Survey (CSMHS) to:

1. Understand mental health trends of UM students
2. Explore featured topics to assess mental health needs among students
3. From implications, provide recommendations for student mental health and treatment/outreach
3,112 students

Mean Age: 21.84

Sexual Identity: 57% female, 42% male, and 2% transgender/gender-fluid

For the analyses of mental health trends, data were adjusted to accurately represent UM Students.
**RESULT: MENTAL HEALTH TRENDS**

### Psychological Concerns among Students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalized Anxiety</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Anxiety</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Distress</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Distress</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Use</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating Concerns</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostility</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULT: MENTAL HEALTH TRENDS

Single Item Response

- Significantly decreased in 2012/13 and 2016/17
- Significantly increased in 2016/17

Thoughts of Suicide

- 26% of overall students reported some degree of suicidal thoughts.
- Students who are at risk (reporting significantly higher rates of such thoughts: subgroup %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transgender/Gender-Fluid</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Self-Identified*</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA &lt; 2.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Financial Stress</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Therapy Experience</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently in Therapy</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULT: PERFECTIONISM
MEASURED BY THE ALMOST PERFECT SCALE-REVISED (SLANEY ET AL. 2001)

Adaptive Perfectionist: Individuals with high goals, standards, and expectations without high self-criticism for their performance

Maladaptive Perfectionist: Individuals with high goals/expectations and high self-criticism for their performance

Non-Perfectionist: Individuals without extremely high goals, standards, and expectations for their performance

21% 36% 44%
Adaptive perfectionists reported significantly lower psychological distress levels in all domains of concerns as compared to maladaptive and non-perfectionists.
RESULT: SELF-COMPASSION
MEASURED BY THE SELF-COMPASSION SCALE (NEFF, 2003)

Elements of Self-Compassion

1. Self-compassion scores had **significant negative correlations** with each of the psychological distress scores.*
   - Depression ($r = -.66$)
   - Generalized Anxiety ($r = -.54$)
   - Social Anxiety ($r = -.54$)
   - Academic Distress ($r = -.51$)
   - Eating Concerns ($r = -.35$)
   - Hostility ($r = -.46$)
   - Family Distress ($r = -.33$)
   - Substance Use ($r = -.16$)

2. Adaptive perfectionists had **significantly higher** self-compassion scores than maladaptive and non-perfectionists.*
"At the UM, how often have you experienced exclusionary (e.g., shunned, ignored), intimidating, offensive, hostile, and/or abusive (e.g., insulting, threatening, bullying, harassing) conduct directed towards you based upon your following characteristics?"

- Age
- Race/Ethnicity
- Disability
- National Origin
- English Accent/Proficiency
- Physical Characteristics
- Political Views
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Socioeconomic Status
- Gender Identity

“If you have, please also rate how stressful it was for you.”
Discriminatory experiences were significantly positively correlated with all areas of psychological distress.

Analyses by subgroups of students revealed:

- Traditionally marginalized groups of students reported greater discriminatory experiences on campus.

*US Students    **International Students
IMPLICATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

• CAPS clinical and outreach services, and psychology/social work training program

• University-wide programming

• Mental health needs among vulnerable groups of students

1 Future programming that addresses students’ self-compassion in relation to their goal setting will be effective to promote students’ psychological well-being.

2 Results highlight the importance of our continuous efforts to achieve a more equitable campus climate, especially for those with marginalized identities.
Economic Impact of International Students to the U.S.

Total Contribution: $39 billion
Number of Jobs Created or Supported: 455,622
Economic Impact of International Students to Michigan

**Michigan Benefits from International Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Contribution</td>
<td>$1.2 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs Supported</td>
<td>14,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Students Enrolled</td>
<td>34,049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Top Higher Education Institutions (Dollars and Jobs)**

1. University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor  
   - $350.7 million  
   - Supporting 4,954 jobs
2. Michigan State University, East Lansing  
   - $341.6 million  
   - Supporting 4,715 jobs
3. Wayne State University, Detroit  
   - $72.8 million  
   - Supporting 932 jobs
4. Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo  
   - $64.4 million  
   - Supporting 812 jobs
5. Lawrence Technological University, Southfield  
   - $58.5 million  
   - Supporting 330 jobs
6. Michigan Technological University, Houghton  
   - $32.4 million  
   - Supporting 411 jobs
7. Saginaw Valley State University, University Center  
   - $26.8 million  
   - Supporting 152 jobs
8. University of Michigan - Dearborn, Dearborn  
   - $26.1 million  
   - Supporting 147 jobs
9. Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant  
   - $24.5 million  
   - Supporting 317 jobs
10. Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti  
    - $23.3 million  
    - Supporting 306 jobs
Common Challenges International Students Experience

- Homesickness
- Loss of support systems
- Lack of meaningful relationships
- Unrealistic expectations from family & self
- New approaches to learning
- Language difficulties
- Changing sense of identity
- U.S. immigration regulatory restrictions
- Financial problems
- Difficulties in home country
- New ways of doing things
  - International students are sometimes a target of crimes due to their vulnerabilities (i.e., unfamiliar with American laws, rights, protection of personal information)
Pre-departure Orientation in China

The China Pre-Departure Orientations are designed to help students and their family members gain valuable information about the University of Michigan, which will include, but is not limited to:

- Traveling to the United States
- Immigration/Visa Information
- **Health Insurance and Wellness Services**
- Housing Information
- Banking Information
- **Cultural Adjustment Tips**
- **Tips for Academic Success**
- Job/Internship information
Summer Orientation Workshop Examples:

- Cultural Differences in the Classroom
- Cultural Adjustment Roller Coaster
- Communicating with Your Academic/Research Advisors
- Healthy Relationships and Dating in the U.S.
- It’s Not Just a Good Idea...It is the LAW!
- Making Friends in the U.S.
- Stress Less for Success (*presented by CAPS*)
- **International Center Staff:**
  - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
  - Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
- **International Center Student Council (ICSC):** QPR
- **Campus Suicide Prevention Grant**
  - International Wellness Fair
- **International Center Blog**
- **Meet, Eat, and American Life (MEAL) at Michigan**
  - an opportunity for U-M faculty and staff to host international students at their home for dinner.
- **International Center Grant Fund for Departments:**
  - support international student voices, interests, and needs.
International Student Lunch Conversation (ISLC)

- Monthly event series for international students to talk about life as an int’l student in the US and AA, make friends, support each other, and eat food
- Facilitated by 1 IC staff member and 3 CAPS international staff members
- Different cultural foods
- Different topics each event:
  - Academic stress
  - Surviving a Michigan winter
  - Homesickness
- Special ISLCs
  - Messages of Hope
  - Response to false active shooter incident
Eating Disorder Intervention Group in Chinese

If your student:

- Is struggling with food intake, weight, and body image
- Prefers speaking Chinese
- Is a female student

This workshop might be for them

Ask them to email juemeiya@umich.edu if interested
A weekly process-oriented group that will provide a supportive space for international students pursuing graduate degrees to explore their relational concerns and personal difficulties. In process groups, the group will establish a strong, collaborative, safe and confidential space to receive multiple perspectives, feedback, and support from other international graduate students.
Think about a situation you have encountered that an international student was having a difficult time.

● How did you know the student was having difficulty?
● How did you support/assist the student?
● What could you have done differently?
● What other resources that could be helpful?
Example 1: Students Not Meeting Deadlines

- Get to know where the student got stuck, with curiosity and cultural awareness
  - Seeing authority figures as someone to be complied with, not resources
  - Asking questions can be seen as disrespectful
  - Never asked for help this way before, so don’t know when to do that
  - Worrying about appear to be incompetent/weak, and to lose face
  - High context vs. Low context cultures consideration
    - Showing signs of distress, but not asking questions directly, expecting others to reach out to them

- Give coaching on how the student can meet your expectations
  - i.e., Be prompt, clear, concise, etc…be specific!

- Use positive reinforcement when the student try to change or succeed
  - “This makes me happy…”, “I love it when you…”

- Understand the frequency and the need for coaching, mentoring, and feedback
Example 2: Students Struggling with Group Projects

It seems a student is not participating in a group project, and is not talking when group presents.

It’s helpful to know:

- Group projects and class presentations might be new experiences
- The student might be struggling with communication and presentation skills
- The student may be feeling vulnerable due to difficult experiences: from covert exclusions/microaggressions to overt discriminations and prejudice
- Work share may not be fair: the student did a lot of “off-stage” work, but feels less comfortable with presenting
(continued) Students Struggling With Group Projects

What can you do?

- Stay curious with their past experiences and current struggles
- Help students develop the skill and language
  - Encourage them to express different thoughts and opinions
  - Help them set boundaries when being mistreated
  - Encourage them to create a support system; i.e., students can let their teammates know their struggles, and have those teammates on their side in supporting them
- Validate that this is a new set of skills to develop, and it’s hard
- Recognize that there are cultural difficulties
  - Don’t want to appear vulnerable, to make others lose face, want to be nice, etc
- Encourage them, it can be done
The Power Of Looking Beyond The Surface

- Do not judge too quickly as if the student is lacking motivation, capacity, etc.
- Get to know them, learn about their culture.
- Be supportive and understanding towards them: their way is not wrong, just may not be working well in this environment.
- Introduce different ways to operate, why do you think it’s efficient/important.
- Help them leap the cultural barriers, bridging the gap to succeed.
What Else Might Be Helpful?

- Consult with or refer to colleagues.
- Look for sudden changes/signs of depression. Refer to CAPS; walk them over to the office if mentioning signs of hopelessness/death.
- Be explicit about expectations for tasks/assignments.
- Allow students to volunteer as cultural ambassadors for their own country; do not assume they are comfortable doing so.
- If student is not attending classes/work, request a wellness check through DPSS/Dean of Students.
- Learn students’ names, and try to pronounce them properly or use the preferred name they give you. Not sure how? Ask!
- Consider your cultural references when giving examples in classroom/workshops/events.
- Find different ways for participation in classroom/workshop settings.
- Don’t underestimate your power in helping.
Table Discussion

Questions:

Think about a situation you have encountered that an international student was having a difficult time.

- How did you know the student was having difficulty?
- How did you support/assist the student?
- What could you have done differently?
- What other resources that could be helpful?
Campus Resources

- **UHS**
  - Medical
  - Nutrition
  - Wellness Coaching
- **Dean of Students**
- **Student Services with Disabilities**
- **SAPAC**
- **Campus MindWorks**
  - Self-help resources
  - Groups
- **U-M Psychological Clinic**
- **Wolverine Support Network**
- **Student Organizations**

- **SmartPhone Apps**
  - Stressbusters
  - Insight Timer
  - UCLA Mindful
  - HeadSpace
- **Wellness Dog @ UHS**
  - Suite 0210
  - M: 2-4; W: 10-12
Campus Resources

More specific to international students

- Counseling services at CAPS can be offered in: Mandarin, Hindi (Urdu), Marathi, Gujarati, Japanese, Spanish, and Arabic.

- Sweetland Center for Writing (https://lsa.umich.edu/sweetland)

References


References


