The 2019-2020 academic year was a challenging and difficult year for all with the unexpected disruption of the global pandemic. In March 2020, International Student Scholar & Services was able to successfully adapt and transfer almost all office services to an online virtual format to allow students to continue to receive face to face advising, document processing, and general support. The staff’s ability to adapt quickly as well as maintain quality services unexpectedly over much of the year has been a great accomplishment which demonstrates the dedication and care of ISSS staff for our international students.

Despite the many challenges faced this year, the following highlight some of the many accomplishments of the 2019-2020 year:

- Successfully transitioning all of New Student Orientation into a completely virtual setting, beginning in Summer 2020
- The U Asia Campus saw an impressive increase in enrollment with a total of 190 students
- Fall 2019 International Night was an incredible success with a total of 768 tickets sold, 92 performers, and 20 student groups participating

The ISSS Staff currently includes 13 full-time employees, 2 Graduate Assistants, and 6 part-time student employees.

This report provides an overview of our office’s impact across campus as well as internal office accomplishments for the 2019-2020 academic year.
MISSION
TO SUPPORT THE ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF TO INCORPORATE AN INTERNATIONAL, CROSS-CULTURAL AND GLOBAL DIMENSION INTO THEIR ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES.

seeks to foster and support a positive, interactive learning environment for international students and faculty through programming and services.
supports the concept of the global community through an international network of individuals with academic and economic ties to Utah.
promotes institutional and public awareness of the value of international educational exchange.

VISION
THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES OFFICE FOSTERS AND SUPPORTS A GLOBAL CAMPUS COMMUNITY AS PART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH’S TRANSFORMATION INTO A GLOBAL UNIVERSITY.

VALUES
International educational exchange constitutes the mobility and interaction of students and scholars across borders and cultures. The International Student and Scholar Services office believes international educational exchange develops global competence and other essential skills and awareness to be successful in today’s interconnected world and global society.

The International Student and Scholar Services provides the following services to international students, exchange visitors, and University of Utah departments.

SERVICES FOR DEPARTMENTS
- Guidance on inviting J-1 exchange visitors to the University of Utah
- Support for international student or exchange visitor emergencies
- Assistance with second approver e-forms and internship course approvals
- Advising on general international student and exchange visitor questions, including workshops on immigration topics

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION
- Pre-arrival communication
- Immigration guidance
- American classroom overview
- Campus resource fair

STUDENT & SCHOLAR ADVISING
- Immigration policies and maintaining status
- Processing immigration requests
- Guidance on student life and overall student wellness
- Emergency assistance

CAMPUS RESOURCE REFERRALS
- Campus activities
- Intercultural programs
- Ambassador program
- Campus safety
- Cross-cultural adjustment

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS
- Curricular Practical Training (CPT)
- Academic Training (AT)
- Post-Completion Optional Practical Training (OPT), and STEM OPT extensions
- On-campus employment

STAFF EDUCATION & TRAINING
- National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA) National and Regional
- The Utah Board of International Educators (UBIE)
- University Academic Advising Community (UAAC)
- Registrar’s Office Summit
The F-1 and J-1 visa population at the University of Utah make up approximately 8% of the student body. From the moment they arrive on campus, international students and scholars interact with the ISSS office in order to maintain their immigration status. Many students on F-1 visa remain in the United States for OPT and STEM OPT opportunity even after graduation. ISSS provides immigration advising and support for this population for up to 3 years after graduation.

**Students Come From 88 Countries**

- China: 26.7%
- India: 10.9%
- South Korea: 9.2%
- Other: 48.6%
- Saudi Arabia: 2.1%
- Vietnam: 2.5%

**3,174 International Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>2019-2020</th>
<th>2018-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA/BS</td>
<td>1,287</td>
<td>1,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA/MS/PHD</td>
<td>1,309</td>
<td>1,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On OPT</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Top 5 Fields of Study**

1. Computer & Information Sciences - 649
2. Engineering - 442
3. Business, Management, Marketing - 303
4. Liberal Arts & Sciences, General Studies & Humanities - 282
5. Biological and Biomedical Sciences - 94
ISSS Year in Review

Students and scholars visit the ISSS office for many reasons. Whether they’re meeting with an advisor, picking up documents, or have a question about where to find resources, the office welcomes students from 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday. Student employees, or peer advisors, primarily manage the ISSS front office, assisting visitors in-person, via e-mail, and over the phone with their various needs.

6,664 STUDENT & SCHOLAR VISITS
THE ISSS OFFICE IN PERSON 2019-2020

Advising Appointments

On average, students scheduled 249 advising appointments per month. Advisors for F-1 students routinely see 85% of their appointment slots filled up.

The ISSS office provided 1,102 tax codes to students to cover the filing of their taxes in 2020.

Beginning March 18, we closed our office to the public due to COVID-19, but still continued to advise our students.

**Aug 19 to Mar 17**

- PICK-UP DOCUMENTS: 1,776
- CHECK-IN FOR SCHEDULE: 1,181
- GENERAL QUESTION: 920
- TRAVEL SIGNATURE: 626
- OPT/CPT QUESTION: 338

**Mar 18 to Aug 3**

- OPT/OPT STEM: 560
- OTHER: 316
- COS: 134
- PERSONAL: 116
- ACADEMIC: 88

**Top 5 Reasons Students Visit The Office**
F-1 and J-1 visa holders are required to maintain up-to-date records with the U.S. government. They do so by submitting requests to the ISSS office, where they are reviewed and processed in the student’s immigration record. Requests range from a simple address update or change of major to more complicated issues such as employment authorizations or program extensions. Once a student’s record has been updated, a new I-20 or DS-2019 is often produced for the student to reflect the update has been made.

**TOP 10 REASONS F-1 STUDENTS REQUEST UPDATES**

1. Address Updates
2. Last Semester Notifications
3. I-20 Reprints
4. STEM OPT 6 months/annual evaluation
5. OPT I-20 requests
6. Letters
7. STEM OPT I-20 request
8. CPT requests
9. SEVIS Portal access
10. STEM OPT Employment Update
Upon program completion, F-1 students have the opportunity to apply for work authorization known as Post-completion Optional Practical Training (OPT) for one year. If they have graduated from a STEM major and are eligible for SETEM OPT, they can request additional two years of work authorization to USCIS.

While these students are no longer considered active University of Utah students who pay tuition and fees, ISSS is still required to maintain, track, and update their F-1 student visa records, while continuing to advise on visa regulations and benefits up to 3 years post graduation.

**TOTAL E-FORMS REQUESTS RELATED TO POST-COMPLETION OPT AND STEM OPT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019-2020</th>
<th>2018-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPT I-20 requests</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM OPT I-20 request</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM OPT 6 months/annual evaluation</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM OPT: Emp. Update/Change in training plan</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEVIS Portal access</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPT: Report no longer on OPT or loss of employment</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cap Gap I-20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With anywhere from 400-500 students on OPT or STEM OPT status year round, this unique group of former students requires specific advising, processing, and government reporting from ISSS, as immigration rules and regulations are often more time-consuming and complex during this time. After the one year period of OPT, ISSS continues to provide services for students in a STEM major who may be approved for an additional 24 month employment extension.
The ISSS office is mandated by the U.S. government to provide orientation for all new F-1 and J-1 visa holders. New student orientation is held three times per year just before the start of a new semester. During this orientation, students receive vital information about maintaining, learning, and meeting their visa status, learn about University resources and regulations, and meet other new students. In the fall, a welcome BBQ party is held for all new international students. Orientation is often a student’s first point of contact with the ISSS office.

**SCHOLARSHIPS PROVIDED TO AMBASSADORS**

$14,250

**15 ORIENTATION DAYS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>192</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**38 STUDENT AMBASSADORS**

**30 DEPARTMENTS, VENDORS, AND STUDENT GROUPS INVOLVED IN ORIENTATION**

**FALL 2019 BBQ**

Estimated Attendees: 400

Due to COVID-19, International Student Orientation was shifted to a completely virtual model for Summer 2020

Due to the pandemic, all ISSS operations were forced to transition to fully online platforms, including the International New Student Orientation. Normally an operation spanning multiple events over the course of a week or more, ISSS found creative ways to continue to engage new students with an orientation experience and create a semblance of a welcoming environment amidst a global pandemic. Orientation aspects such as presentations that were typically done in-person were recreated as voiced-over PowerPoint presentation videos with students taking an online quiz after watching each video. To limit contact, but still provide tangible care and service, the ISSS staff distributed Campus Store Welcome Bags filled with informational literature and branded U of U items. Students scheduled specific time slots to safely pick up their Welcome Bag from members of the Orientation Team to provide an in-person touch point. Additionally, in partnership with the Department of Public Safety, a campus police officer and K-9 partner also attended the pick-up sessions which fostered a welcoming atmosphere and encouraged students to familiarize themselves with campus officers. Other changes to orientation included the several pre-arrival webinars hosted by ISSS in partnership with the Career and Professional Development Center, International Student Ambassadors, International Student Council, Office of the Dean of Students, Student Health Center, Housing and Residential Education, etc. which successfully allowed us to guide students through their transition towards a new environment.
ISSS Town Hall in July 2020

University of Utah Leadership and ISSS hosted a Town Hall for international students on July 17, 2020. A panel of experts joined in the webinar to present information and answer questions. Panelists included: President Ruth Watkins; Senior VP of Academic Affairs, Dan Reed; Associate General Counsel, Katie Carreau; Director of ISSS, Chelsea Wells. The event was moderated by Chief Global Officer, Chris Ireland.

The purpose of the event was to provide information about the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s COVID-19 policy guidance issued on July 6, 2020, which would force all F-1 international students to take classes in person, regardless of the COVID-19 status of a particular university and its local community. Furthermore, the guidance stated that if a university would need to pivot to all online education during the semester due to rising COVID-19 cases in the area, then F-1 international students would need to immediately leave the U.S.

The ISSS office supports students by providing information and resources on immigration policy and university resources. Our office frequently reviews immigration policy and ensures all policy materials are up-to-date as well as accurate. Additionally, our website offers campus and community resources for students in need. When changes occur, ISSS staff works to communicate to students as quickly and accurately as possible.

This guidance was quickly rescinded on July 14, 2020, primarily as a result of litigation against the guidance, in which the University of Utah was listed a plaintiff, along with other PAC-12 institutions. The new policy exception guidance due to COVID-19 was issued, reverting the policy exception guidance back to original guidance received in March 2020. The new guidance allowed for continuing students to enroll in classes in any modality and remain in the U.S. New incoming F-1 students must be enrolled in at least one in person or hybrid course to obtain a visa and enter the U.S.

The Town Hall saw great attendance, with 279 students attending the event live. The panel provided updated information about the newest guidance, the impact to U of U international students and scholars, updates about U of U litigation and legal advocacy for F-1 international students, and answered questions submitted in advance as well as live questions during the event.
The CARE team is an internal office team that provides specialized assistance to students who may face academic, economic, and/or health issues. The CARE team collaborates with many other on-campus offices that are necessary for the student’s well-being.

**TOP ISSUES**
1. Academic Concerns
2. COVID-19
3. Financial Concerns
4. Depressions, Anxiety, Isolation
5. Domestic Abuse

**RESOURCES ON CAMPUS**
- Counseling Center
- Registrar’s Office
- Academic Advising Center
- Utah Global
- Department of Public Safety
- Academic Departments
- Office of Admissions
- The Women’s Resource Center
- University Neuropsychiatric Institute (UNI)
- Housing & Residential Education
- The Office of Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Title IX
- Center for Disability Services
- Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)
- English Language Institute
- And Many More

**MEDICAL**
- Reduced Course Load Requests Were Approved
- 2020: 40
- 2019: 39

**ACADEMIC**
- 2020: 6
- 2019: 8

**ISSS Collaborates With**
- Dean of Students
- Student Health Center
- And More
**Outreach Activities**

**SOCIAL MEDIA REACH**

- 1,176 Instagram Followers
- 1,867 Facebook Followers

**11,206 visitors to ISSS website were within the U of U campus network**

118,711 unique page views on ISSS website

The Outreach I team focuses on ISSS’s online presence as well as advertising in and around the office. Our goal is to make information easily accessible to students and departments through our website, social media, and email outreach efforts.

Some examples of what we do:
- Update and maintain the ISSS website, including working on an upcoming redesign
- Liaise with the Office of Global Engagement for marketing purposes
- Maintain social media accounts to keep students and scholars engaged and informed
- Create monthly email blasts with important updates and reminders for students and scholars

The Outreach II team focuses on campus outreach with a desire for ISSS to be more visible and present across campus. Our goal is to be more accessible to departments, build collaborative relationships, and increase campus awareness of our international student population and the roles of ISSS.

Some examples of what we do:
- Formal presentations with department advisors/staff on international student regulations
- Cross-cultural trainings for department advisors/staff
- Customized workshops (CPT/OPT/Last Semester/Thesis Defense) for departments.
- OPT/CPT workshops for students
- Tabling Opportunities to conduct outreach across campus

**Total Presentations: 41**

- 10 CPT/OPT Workshops
- 19 departmental presentations
- 23 additional workshops/info events were held

20 types of presentations were presented around campus
To help promote International Night 2019, Jenny Huynh (ISC President) joined Mary Dickson on the show “Contact with Mary Dickson” for PBS Utah. Jenny appeared on the program on October 16, 2019 to talk about the upcoming event and how the public could get involved. Before the taping of the show, Jenny filled Mary in on the details of the event and about the international student community at the U. Mary was very interested in ISC’s mission, and even told Jenny that she had hosted several students from Saudi Arabia during their studies at the U in past years. Jenny represented ISC incredibly well, especially considering this was her first time on television!
The purpose of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program is to increase mutual understanding between citizens of the United States and the rest of the world by means of educational and cultural exchanges and assisting the Department of State with its foreign diplomacy efforts. The objective of the program is to provide exchange visitors with opportunities to participate in research, teaching, educational and cultural programs during their stay and to share their experiences upon their return, as well as to encourage Americans to participate in educational and cultural programs in other countries.

**Exchange Visitors in Active Status**

In 2020, there were 478 Exchange Visitors from 47 countries, of which 77% were Research Scholars and 10.8% were Students.

- **Research Scholar**: 352
- **Student**: 77
- **Short Term Scholar**: 53
- **Student Intern**: 174
- **Professor**: 47
- **Exchange Visitor Dependents**: 2019: 53 Countries, 2020: 47 Countries

- **DS-2019s ISSUED FOR 2020**: 352

**50 FUSC EXCHANGE VISITOR COACHES IN 2020**

**COUNTRIES**

- **TOP 5**
  - China
  - India
  - South Korea
  - Japan
  - Germany

**DISCIPLINES**

- Engineering
- Computer Sciences
- Natural Sciences
- Medicine/Health & Wellness
- Physical Education (FUSC)
The Sponsored Student Program (SSP) facilitates and assists with admission, arrival, orientation, and immigration documentation for students at the U whose tuition, fees, and/or living expenses are funded by a financial sponsor. The SSP team, headed by the Sponsored Student Coordinator, acts as a liaison between sponsors, the U of U, and both prospective and current sponsored students. Through one-on-one advising and campus-wide coordination, the SSP Team is committed to assisting students in achieving their academic goals in tandem with the objectives of their sponsored program.

The following illustrates the countries represented by our SSP population:

**220 SSP STUDENTS IN 2017-2018**

**31 SPONSORS**

- **Russia**
  - Fullbright - FLTA
- **India**
  - Fullbright - FTA
- **Thailand**
  - Ministry of Finance
  - Royal Thai Embassy
- **Japan**
  - Doshisha University
  - Japan Study Abroad Foundation
- **Vietnam**
  - VEF
- **Indonesia**
  - LPDP
- **Malaysia**
  - MARA
  - Petronas
- **USA: Dept. of State Funded Programs**
  - Fulbright Foreign Student Program
  - Facilitators:
    - IIE
    - LASPAU
    - AMIDEAST
- **Univ of Utah**
  - Learning Abroad Exchange Students
- **Mexico**
  - CONACYT
- **Colombia**
  - Central Bank of the Republic of Colombia
  - ICETEX - Columbia Cientifica
- **Brazil**
  - Fullbright FLTA
- **United Arab Emirates**
  - AFAQ Leadership
  - Scholarships Office
  - Abu Dhabi Police
- **Qatar**
  - Qatar Foundation
  - Embassy, Defense Office
  - Higher Education Institute
- **Kuwait**
  - Kuwait Cultural Embassy
  - Fullbright FLTA
- **Saudi Arabia**
  - SACM
- **Oman**
  - Embassy, Cultural Division
**FEB 2019**
The SSP Team (Kendra Taylor and Cassandra Clark) travelled to Los Angeles, CA and Washington, DC to meet with sponsor partners from several US embassies and nonprofit originsations based in those cities.

Los Angeles - they visited the Kuwait Cultural Office and met with Cultural Counselor/Director of the Cultural Office and Director of Program Evaluation & University Outreach to discuss the University of Utah’s support services for Kuwaiti sponsored students, as well as outreach strategies for recruiting prospective students from Kuwait.

Washington, DC - Attended the World Education Services “Working with Sponsoring Organizations (Fulbright placement advisors from AMIDEAST, IIE, and LASPAU and nonprofit organizations such as IREX, World Learning, American Councils, and Ashinaga) and Embassies (Egypt, Oman and UAE)” – a combined training and networking event which aimed to assist US universities strengthen their international enrollment management and diversity through sponsored student recruitment.

**OCT 2019**
Kendra Taylor spent two weeks representing the University of Utah in the Middle East as part of a tour led by Linden Educational Services, where she joined representatives from several public and private universities across the US.

In addition to visiting around four to five high schools per day, the tour included two large Linden university fairs in Kuwait City and Dubai. These fairs attracted talented students with from across the Middle East and North Africa who are interested to learn more about studying at an American university as well as the academic programs, student services, and admissions processes offered at the U of U. At the Kuwait City fair at the Marina Hotel, Taylor was visited by U of U alumnus Musab A., who dropped by her table to say hello and share stories of his experience at the U with prospective students.

The tour also included several occasions to meet with Education USA advisors from the US State Department. In addition to visiting their offices at the US Embassy in Kuwait City, Taylor had the chance to participate in a unique event at The Cooking Academy in Doha, Qatar with local high school counselors and Melissa Deschamps, Regional Educational Advising Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa. At the event, Taylor presented on the importance of campus involvement for international students new to the US.
ISSS seeks to serve the international population through participation in campus-wide initiatives for expansion in order to increase student enrollment, success, and experience.

The ISSS office helps to ensure student success by offering immigration support and orientation for students transferring to the Salt Lake City campus. In 2019, the University of Utah Asia campus saw a substantial increase in enrollment and anticipate continual future growth at the Asia campus.

The University of Utah Asia Campus is located in Songdo, South Korea and has been offering highly-ranked undergraduate and graduate programs since 2014. Students who choose to begin their studies at the Utah Asia Campus are required to complete one year of study at the Salt Lake City campus, providing them with a well-rounded education and a chance to experience a new culture.
Utah Global is a pathway program that provides exclusive opportunities and support tailored to students' academic and English-language level. The number of students participating continues to grow each semester as more students choose to take advantage of these benefits which range from tailored academic courses, in depth orientation programs, to English language support.

The ISSS office works closely with Utah Global each semester to ensure students are oriented and supported throughout their time at the University.

**UTAH GLOBAL PROGRAM COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

- China: 61.5% ▲3%
- South Korea: 8.3% ▲1.3%
- India: 6.4% ▲1.4%
- Vietnam: 4.2%
- Saudi Arabia: 3.8%
- Other: 15.8% ▲3.2%

**ENTRY PROGRAM LEVEL BREAKDOWN 2019-2020**

- 32% International Direct ▲3% 2 Semesters
- 25% Extended Accelerator ▲4% 3 Semesters
- 35% Academic Accelerator ▼1% 2 Semesters
- 8% Pre-Sessional English ▼6% 2 Semesters

**265 STUDENTS**