

[Notes from the Strategic Planning Group (March 21, 2008). The plan below does an excellent job of (1) making a clear, concise action plan; (2) stating quantifiable goals that can be assessed; and (3) listing costs that pertain to each piece of the plan. As this plan is refined and others are developed, we would like to see a grid that lays out tasks, timelines, and persons responsible for various aspects of the plan. Then, as the campus builds a true strategic plan for the university, we can summarize more easily the action plans that will drive the overall directions of the campus.

The Planning Group asks that readers not be overly distracted by enrollment numbers and costs. These may change. For instance, we agreed we would like to see more aggressive international enrollment goals than are listed here. However, refinement of numbers can be done when we put together an overall, consolidated plan for the campus.

If you wish to comment on this plan, please send your comments to [PresidentsOffice@sou.edu](mailto:PresidentsOffice@sou.edu)

### **Strategic Plan for International Recruiting**

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#### **Executive Summary**

This strategic plan looks at increasing the number of international students at SOU. International students contribute to campus cultural diversity and enrollment revenues, and directly impact SOU's mission to develop "responsible global citizenship."

Since 1999-2000, SOU international student enrollment has steadily declined from an average of 142 students per term to an average of 80 students per term in 2006-07. The vast majority of these "lost students" are fee-paying "independent" students, as opposed to international students on official exchange programs which involve tuition/fee waivers. The SOU decline cannot be explained by the national trends; SOU's declining enrollment begins earlier, is steeper, and lasts longer. Indications are that SOU's decline has been a direct result of the rise in total costs (including tuition) for international students, from \$18,000 in 1999-2000 to \$28,000 in 2006-07. At the same time that these costs have increased by 56%, SOU scholarship dollars available for international students has decreased by 11%. The combined increase in costs and decrease in scholarship budget has severely impacted international enrollments.

In the past, SOU did not engage in international student recruiting. SOU relied on word of mouth, a general non-targeted web presence, and informal networking to attract international students. Clearly, the current declining enrollments and contributing factors

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<sup>1</sup> This document was prepared with input from the International Affairs Council (2006-07 and 2007-08 membership) and after consulting the "International Task Force Report and Recommendations" (Jan. 2006) and "Report and Plan of the International Affairs Council (IAC) on International Student Recruiting at SOU" (Fall 2007).

is evidence that such an approach is no longer a feasible way to maintain our international student population.

In addition, historically over half of SOU's independent international students came from Japan. Because of the shrinking university-aged population in Japan, this market is no longer the best target for recruiting. SOU needs to systematically study the international student market to determine which countries have a growing middle class (like China and India) and would be the best places to find new independent international students.

The below plan recommends a combination of 1) direct recruiting, 2) marketing, 3) establishing key relationships, and 4) bolstering scholarships and support for international students in order to reach targeted goals for international enrollments.

### **Outcomes and Goals**

- To increase the number of international students by 10-15 each year for the next five years. (Note: timely adoption of this plan will determine if increases are possible in 2008-09)
- To reach stable enrollment with an average of 150 students per term by 2013-14.
- To maintain international student enrollment at 3-5% of the SOU student body thereafter.

### **Key Activities and Budget/Staff Implications**

Commitments and activities are necessary in four main areas: direct recruiting, marketing, key relationships, and scholarship and support.

#### **A. Direct Recruiting:**

Any direct recruitment effort for international students must seriously consider the following:

1. Web page redesign is crucial to attracting international students. SOU needs to have a strong, clean, attractive web presence. The most important issues are prominence and ease-of-use. International students need an easy "quick link" from the SOU's main page and they need their own "one stop shop" for that has information on admissions criteria and procedure, housing, scholarships, the International Students Association, visa status, etc. The webpage should also feature success stories from SOU international students.  
**Cost:** Quick Solution – 20 hours of content changes and fixes within our current web structure; should not be left up to OIP and Admissions staff.
2. Print Ads with web inquiry partnership  
SOU should engage in a series of publication/web-based spots that allow students to inquire directly. Services like this can be found through Peterson's, Hobsons, and Study USA, among others. These services often give access to contact data for students interested in studying particular majors or in specific regions, etc. SOU needs to have consistent messaging in several online directories used by international students.

<http://www.hobsons-us.com/international/useduguides.html>

<http://www.studyusa.com/>

<http://www.petersons.com/acuus/code/psector.asp>

<http://www.collegeview.com/>

**Cost:** Depends on the size of the spots and regions. We are currently partnered with Hobsons for our Domestic Student Ad/Web presence. They offer this service for international students at \$12,000 annually. One other partnership would cover our needs and may take our annual cost here above \$20,000. Proper sourcing and evaluation will determine the level of success with this strategy. Two to three years of consistent use should be enough to assess the strategy and help with making smaller, more strategic purchases down the line.

3. Fairs

Large commercial tours can be extremely expensive and yield very little but they are often a way to build a presence in a region. Unless SOU can partner with other, well known, institutions it may take a few years as a member of a large tour to find the most successful tours. Again, consistency is important; this should be thought of as at least a three-year commitment before reassessing.

**Cost:** One tour, which may include 8 to 10 stops in Asia, could cost as much as \$15,000 not including overseas airfare and meals.

Alternately, SOU could find some regional peer institutions, team up with other OUS institutions on a recruiting tour, or join an ELS sponsored tour.

**Cost:** This strategy is cheaper than the large commercial tours because it is designed to be more intimate and focused on a specific student population. It may cost up to \$10,000 all inclusive.

4. Agents are seen as a viable option in higher education however, agents not associated with educational institutions can be problematic in that they are working in their own self-interest rather than the students'. SOU will be best served using individuals abroad who know the university well. SOU needs to ensure that such agents are correctly representing both the university and the prospective students. An OUS partnership with trusted agents would be the most appropriate strategy to employ with these types of influencers.

**Cost:** More investigation needs to be done to ascertain going rates for such agents. Agents would be paid on a per-student basis after students actually enroll in SOU.

The following tasks and guidelines are also part of a coherent direct recruiting strategy:

5. Admissions Office recruiters should focus on international students already in the U.S. and finishing community college. Recruiters should travel to community colleges and fairs in Oregon and California, especially the Santa Monica Community College and Marymount College. Recruiters need to specifically target international students and have the appropriate promotional materials. Partnerships with these, and similar institutions, will be part of a successful international student recruitment plan.

**Cost:** This will consist of additional time and travel cost. It is seasonal and may

- be part of the typical Fall/Spring recruitment travel that is currently part of our traditional undergraduate recruitment plans.
6. SOU must establish outreach to international alumni. International alumni should be authoring letters and email, attending fairs, exploiting existing business/educational relationships, etc. International alumni living and working in the U.S. can also be helpful in recruiting students from their home countries. Historic international alumni data is lacking and staff should contact partner institutions to see if such information can be recreated. OIP and the Alumni office need to collect address information from graduating students and make sure that such students are tagged appropriately by Raiser's Edge and other tools. OIP should create a regular newsletter targeting this alumni base. Such mailings could also include study abroad alumni and other internationally-minded alumni.  
**Cost:** Staff time in excess of current OIP/Alumni office may be needed to do this properly. Newsletter could be sent electronically.
  7. The Office of International Programs (OIP) should distribute a short survey during international student orientation, to determine how students learned about SOU and what factors prompted them to apply and attend. This will allow SOU to hone marketing techniques and discover what is most successful.
  8. SOU should maintain membership in Study Oregon (joined 2007), but should assess whether this membership and web-presence has aided in attracting international students. **Cost:** \$600/year
  9. Traveling abroad needs to be strategic and purposeful. Consistency is extremely important for recruitment abroad. Sending individuals abroad should include annual visits with trusted agents/influences in order to build solid relationships with over time.
  10. Recruiting efforts should target countries with growing middle-class populations, such as China and India; the countries of Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe should continue to fit into this group..

## **B. Marketing:**

1. Web page redesign as noted above under Direct Recruiting is also the most important aspect of marketing.
2. SOU needs to develop specific a marketing piece to recruit international students and highlight the international dimensions of SOU. The piece can be lighter than a viewbook, but has to outline the information international students need to make an informed decision about Southern Oregon University. This publication would be the item that recruiters travel with, send internationally, and use to build the foundation for our international communication flow. Materials should promote the beauty, safety, friendliness, small size, welcoming people and cultural wealth of the community.  
**Cost:** Staff time in publications, design and printing costs could be approximately \$10,000 with mailing costs of \$3,000+ annually, including the entire International Student Communication Flow.
3. All admissions marketing materials should begin referencing our commitment to internationalizing the campus and specifically the diversity international students add to the campus. All marking publications should reference our international

- student percentage the same as we do In State/Out of State, etc. SOU should include representation of people of color and international students in the bookmark.
4. OIP should speak with international students on campus and find which online communities are used most and which they think could add to our recruitment strategies.
  5. SOU should approve an English as an International Language Certificate Program to further attract international students.
  6. Academic programs should be vigorously promoted. A good way to start this would be to invite programs to self-identify their attractiveness to international students, and undergraduate and graduate programs of special interest receive special emphasis in advertising. Programs may need assistance in identifying their attractiveness to International Students.

### **C. Establishing Key Relationships**

1. SOU should adopt the Bridge Program to enable ELS Level 10, 11, 12 students to concurrently enroll in 1 SOU courses per term, and monitoring their success carefully. A proposal has been sent to the Faculty Council regarding the Bridge Program.
2. SOU should negotiate with Liaoning Province, China, and sign a written agreement for a 2+2+0.5 degree program. SOU should manage this relationship carefully to ensure the academic quality of the dual degree. Such a program will likely contain a \$1000 tuition remission scholarship during the second term of each student's enrollment. Best practice may be to target a portion of the revenue from each Chinese student to re-invest in scholarships for Oregon students.  
**Cost:** International student revenue will more than compensate for tuition remission expenditures. Suggested tuition remission budget of \$25,000 for the first year of this agreement.
3. SOU needs to continue to partner with ELS Language Center – Ashland and should continue to engage ELS students on campus. They are familiar with the campus, the culture, the geography, and should be considered “low hanging fruit” in any recruitment model.
4. SOU should use membership in the American Education Center (AEC) aggressively during the trial year, and evaluate the results pending renewal of the relationship in 2008-09. The ELS/SOU director should be invited to explore all avenues of matriculation with SOU via her membership on the IAC.
5. Relationships with partners such as AEC, Liaoning Province, Kawaijuku, and others should be prioritized. Travel and face-to-face relationships may be necessary in order to build solid relationships with over time. Such trips can hopefully be multipurpose, serving needs for study abroad programs and other endeavors.  
**Cost:** This strategy is designed to be intimate and focused on a specific student population. It may cost up to \$10,000 all inclusive.

### **D. Scholarships and Support**

1. The budget for international student scholarships (ICSP and ISS programs administered by OIP) should be increased so as to support more students. The ICSP program grants students \$3000/term in tuition remission money. The current budget of \$115K supports slightly under 13 students. Increasing the budget to \$160K would support 18 students. The ISS program provides \$2300/term in tuition remission money and has a current budget of \$38K. An increased budget of \$14.8K would support 8 students. These increases would bring the ICSP/ISS budget to \$212.8K. NOTE: In terms of total cost at SOU to scholarship budget ratio, with these increases, the scholarship budget is still below the level for 1999-2000.  
**Cost:** An increase of \$45K for ICSP and \$14.8K for ISS; total \$59.8K in new tuition remission dollars. SOU could set up a budgetary mechanism to “capture” the revenue from international students and direct it to these scholarships. As the international student enrollment increases, so would the money available to support students.
2. SOU should provide a budget to the Associate Vice President for Residence Education to grant housing scholarships to international students who live in SOU housing.  
**Cost:** Rates for a double room in Susanne Homes and Meal Plan 2 are \$7722. Ten scholarships of \$3500 each would cost \$35K, to be provided in the form of remissions, monetary support from Foundation scholarships, or other sources.
3. SOU should continue the special tuition remission scholarships offered by the Music Department and should investigate the possibility of granting other departments similar scholarships.  
**Cost:** Vary depending on new tuition remission scholarships established.
4. SOU should launch a fundraising campaign working with international alumni and internationally-focused local business in order to provide scholarships for international students. SOU has not had an internationally-targeted fundraising campaign since 1992.
5. As international student enrollment increases, the Department of Language, Literature, and Philosophy must commit to teaching E101 and E102 regularly, so as to serve the population. This may mean adding sections of E101 in the fall and E102 in the winter.  
**Cost:** Potential cost of adjunct instructor or shifted workload.
6. OIP will not need increased staffing until the number of international students approaches 150. At that point, OIP may need a second international advisor or some other type of staff support. Adequate student support should be closely monitored to make sure that international students are being well-served.