

MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES OF CHINESE STUDENTS

Tuesday, May 30th
8:00am to 12:00pm

Presenters



Patricia Burak

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Slutzker Center for
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Syracuse University



Jennifer Frankel

International Director
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Co-Founder, Massachusetts
General Hospital Center for
Cross-Cultural Student
Emotional Wellness
Assistant Professor of
Psychiatry
Harvard Medical School



Xuhua Qin, PhD

Psychologist, Multicultural
Specialist
Counseling and Mental
Health Services
Tufts University

Agenda



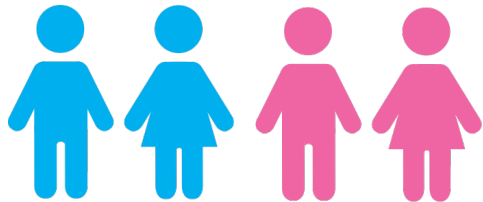
- ❑ What's Going On With Our Students?
- ❑ Understanding the Unique Challenges
- ❑ Helping Chinese Students Seek Treatment
- ❑ Effective On-Campus Programming
- ❑ Resources to Take Back

What Is Mental Health?

Mental health is “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

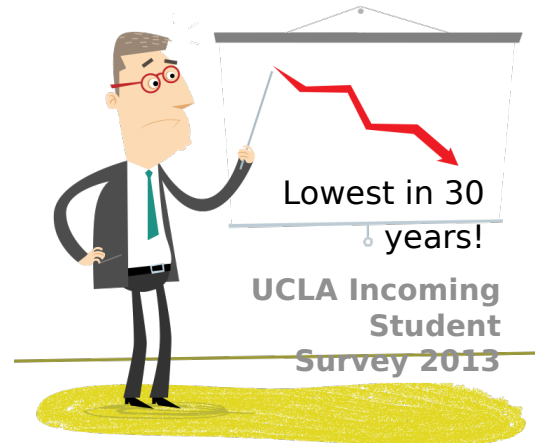
- CDC

What's Going On?



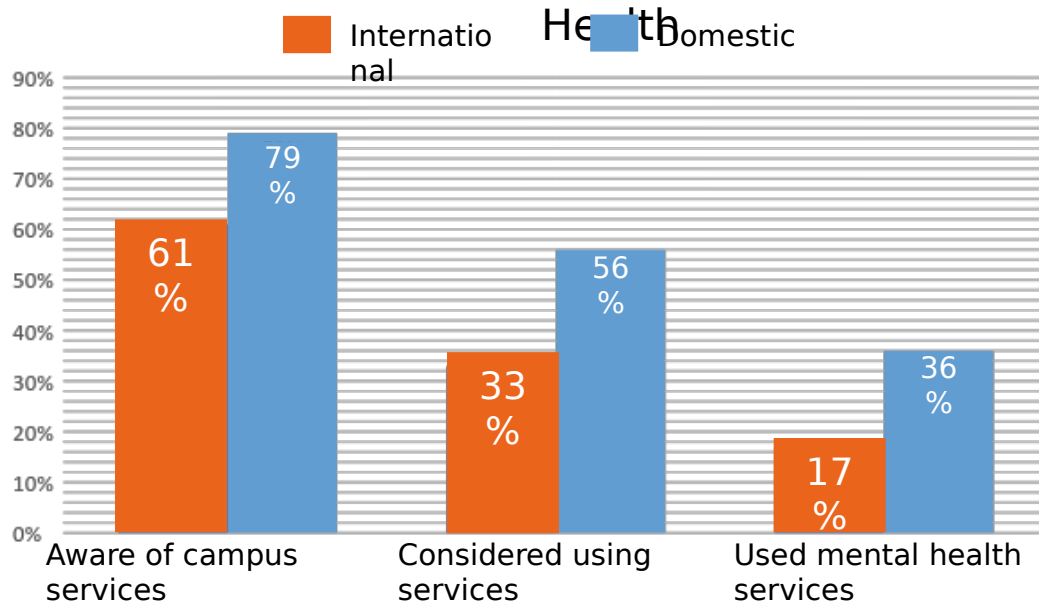
46% Diagnosed

NIMH, 2013



Mental Health Care – Underutilized

Mental Health Need, Awareness, and Use of Counseling Services Among International Graduate Students, Journal of American College Health



Source: Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lusting, 2010

Why We Care?

Why We Care?

32%



of all international students studying in the United States are Chinese

Chinese Mental Health Statistics

4-8% of China's population suffer from depression, and it's increasing by 10% each year.

Approximately 200,000 people commit suicide every year in China



Students at breaking point: Hong Kong announces emergency measures after 22 suicides since the start of the academic year

Twenty-two young people have taken their lives so far this academic year. Is the city's pressure-cooker education system solely to blame – or is it more complex?

PUBLISHED : Saturday, 12 March, 2016, 1:25am

UPDATED : Monday, 14 March, 2016, 12:05pm

COMMENTS:

20

“Since the start of the academic year, a spike in the number of students in Hong Kong who have committed suicide has seen 22 young people – one just 11 years old – take their lives. The four most recent cases occurred over just five days.”

MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA IN CHINESE STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

Justin A. Chen, MD, MPH

Case #1

- 17 y/o Chinese boy brought to ED from Midwestern boarding school after altercation with dorm staff and revealed suicidal thoughts
- 10-day hospitalization; difficulty establishing diagnosis/treatment plan, in part due to language barrier
- After discharge, school refused to refund tuition as family had not disclosed mental illness prior to matriculation
- Family did not follow hospital's advice to establish psychiatric treatment; transferred to another boarding school, this time did disclose mental illness
- Cross-cultural psychiatrist consulted



Feature

Text:



Print

Chinese students under mental pressure overseas

2016-05-06 09:40 Global Times Editor: Li Yan



The sign hanging above the desk of Xiao Lu, a Chinese student at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, read "Perseverance prevails. Never give up." The 28-year-old seemed to have a bright future ahead after finishing his MBA at one of the best business schools in the U.S. and returning home.

But Lu's life ended in the icy waters of Lake Michigan earlier this year. A police investigation found no evidence of homicide, and that instead he chose a higher spot at the lakeside before ending his own life, reported the World Journal newspaper.

Lu's mother told media nothing seemed to be wrong when she and her son talked on video chat three days before his death.

Lu's tragedy is not an isolated one.

In recent years, as the Chinese upper class has gotten richer, many parents have chosen to send their children abroad. Statistics from Open Door Data show the number of Chinese students studying in the U.S. surpassed 300,000 in 2015.

But Lu's has not been the only suicide. Li Yangkai, 20, who studied at Johns Hopkins University, jumped from the roof of his apartment building one year ago, after suffering from insomnia and depression. Lin Xu, a 22-year-old student at California State University in Fullerton, jumped from a five-storey building in his school after failing to complete a language project.

What issues come to mind when you think about Chinese international student mental health?



Respond at Pollev.com/jenniferfran436



Text **JENNIFERFRAN436** to **+1 (747) 444-3548** once to join, then text your message



No responses received yet. They will appear here...



What issues have you seen? (5-

10 min)

- Within your tables, discuss some of the challenging cases you have managed involving Chinese international student mental health (de-identified, please!)
- Make sure everyone who wants to has a chance to talk!
- Select one of the cases to share with the larger group. The speaker does not have to be the person who came up with the case.



EDUCATION

ALIENATION 101

There were hopes that the flood of Chinese students into America would bring the countries closer. But a week at the University of Iowa suggested to Brook Larmer that the opposite may have happened

BROOK LARMER | APRIL/MAY 2017

East meets West on campus

- 1978: China's economic opening to the West
- Pedagogical differences
- Communication styles
- Social norms
- Vulnerable transition period for individuals of all cultures



Pinder-Amaker S, Bell C. Harv. Rev. Psychiatry. 2012; 20:174-188

Chen J, Liu L, Zhao X, Yeung A. J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry. 2015 Nov;54(11):879-880.

Common Issues

"Some nights, Haddy goes to bed and realises she hasn't spoken a word of English all day."

"For many Chinese students, the language barrier can be tough to overcome, and culturally, it's simply more comfortable to cluster together. But the largely monolingual American students don't make much effort, either."

Second language anxiety

Communication styles

- Verbal vs. non-verbal
- High-context vs. low-context

Career

- Finances
- Area of study
- Planning

Planning

Identity

- Acculturation
- Social class
- Race
- Discrimination

- Daily routine
- Communicating
- Coordinating a living situation
- Asking for help

"[Haddy's] professor has already warned her about the improper use of footnotes and borrowed text - academic niceties unfamiliar to Chinese kids taught at home to regurgitate facts for their exams."

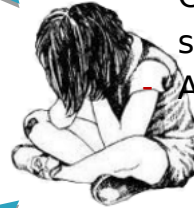
Academic

- Formal vs. informal classroom
- Presentation styles
- Outcome vs. process

"Haddy has never felt comfortable participating in the more decadent rites of American university life - the frat parties and binge-drinking."

Interpersonal

- Boundaries
- Parental expectations



"Chinese students who return with an American degree, known in China as 'sea turtles,' used to be all but guaranteed an accelerated career path in China."

"I hate how the Asians here talk in the library and cheat on their tests. Like get the f--k out."

"Like many Chinese students, she was a city girl in a country town. 'I wondered where the subway was.'"

Common Issues



“All decent parents want to do what's best for their children.

The Chinese just have a totally different idea of how to do that.”



- Amy Chua

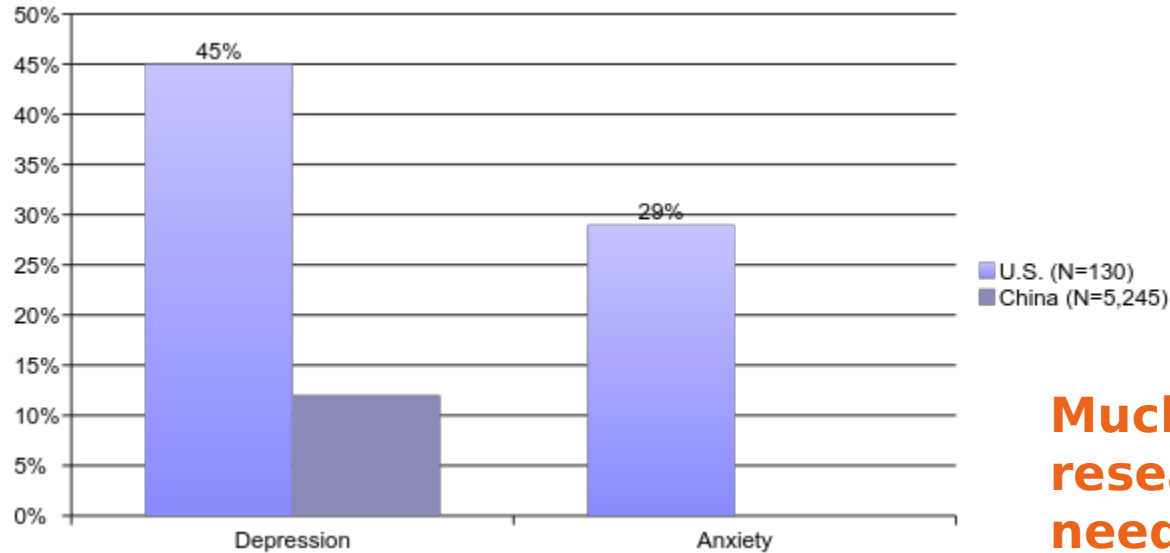
Battle Hymn of the Tiger
Mother

A day in the life: Chinese high school

- Mon-Fri (or Sat) school all day; some 'til 9:30pm
- Note taking, memorization, test-driven
- Gaokao is the only thing we should have on our minds because that's our future
- Extracurriculars? Sure! (Math; English; Chemistry; Biology etc.)
- “What is your passion or interest for the future?” Who asked that question? I didn't even have time to finish my



What are the data?



**Much more
research is
needed in this
area!**

Han X, Han X, Luo Q, Jacobs S, Jean-Baptiste M. J Am Coll Health. 2013;61:1-8.

Chen L, Wang L, Qiu XH, et al. PLoS One. 2013;8.

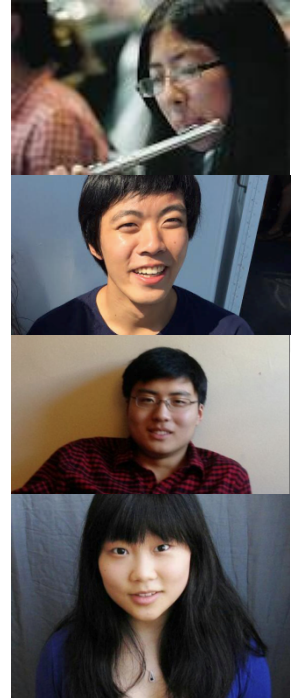
AAPI College – Mental Health

- ❑ Suicide is a leading cause of death for all Americans age 18-24
- ❑ Asian Americans more likely to have suicidal thoughts and to attempt suicide than Whites
- ❑ Asian American women age 15-24 have the second-highest rate of completed suicide of any race/ethnicity in that age group



AAPI Suicides

- ❑ Cornell University
- ❑ Of 21 on-campus suicides from 1999 to 2006, 13 were Asian
- ❑ Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- ❑ 26 percent of undergraduates are Asian
- ❑ Asians accounted for 42 percent of student suicides in the last 15 years



Psychological challenges



Top 4 Psychological Challenges

1. Separation from parents
2. Face and shame
3. Clash of cultures
4. Identity formation



1. Separation from parents

- ❑ 4/2/1 Generation (421 时代), “Little Emperors” (小皇帝)
- ❑ Parental expectations
- ❑ “Compensation syndrome”
- ❑ Boundaries/separation
- ❑ Vision does not always match reality



2. Face and shame

- “Face” (面子 / 臉)
- “Men cannot live without shame. A sense of shame is the beginning of integrity.” – Mencius (孟子)
- Comparisons
- Focus on external
- Shame linked to suicide



Chen J, Liu L. “Four unique challenges facing Chinese international students.” Sampan. 5 Sept. 2014.

McNeal JU, Yeh C-H. Development of consumer behavior patterns among Chinese children. J

Chinese Cultural Narrative



Chinese	Western
Diligence Obedience Harmony	Natural talent Independence Pursuit of individual fulfillment and happiness

3. Clash of Cultures

勤能補拙



“Diligence can make up for lack of intelligence.”

不能輸在起跑線上



“Do not lose at the starting line.”

光宗耀祖



“Bring honor to your ancestors.”

American Cultural Narrative



4. Identity Formation

- First time living away from home for many students
- Experimentation with identity
- “Delayed adolescence”
- Self-consciousness



Jonathan Hou, a 21-year-old Chinese student with a shock of bleached-blond hair, is cruising through the campus in his newest toy: a sparkling white \$86,000 Mercedes Benz C63S. “It’s the only one in Iowa City,” he says... He wants to show off his car – but not, it seems, to the baseball-capped American students crossing the street in front of us. As the young men walk past, they stare at the car and its Chinese driver, and snigger.

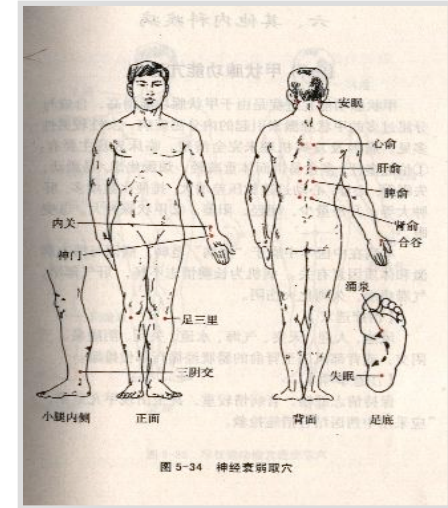
Barriers to treatment

- Role of psychiatry in many Asian countries
- Low mental health literacy
- Unaware of services
- Language barriers
- Stigma



Culture and stigma

- ❑ Mental illness is highly stigmatized in Chinese culture (~ psychosis)
- ❑ Implications for marriage
- ❑ “Neurasthenia”(神经衰弱)
- ❑ “Somatization”



Differences in presentation

- May not acknowledge depressed mood
- Increased somatic complaints (disruption in sleep and appetite, stomachaches, headaches, dizziness)
- Avoidance, procrastination, academic decline
- Cross-cultural bridge: “Stress” (压力)



Common mental health myths

I can handle my own mental health problems. If I can't, that means I'm weak.

Counseling is for crazy people

I could lose my visa status

Everyone will know I saw a counselor

Only someone from my homecountry will understand my problem.

What can we do?

- Practical strategies
- Research
 - Utilizing existing datasets: ACHA-NCHA, Healthy Minds
 - Original research: Survey of educators/administrators (if interested, email me at jchen37@partners.org)

Questions?



mghstudentwellness.com



[/mghstudentwellness](https://www.facebook.com/mghstudentwellness)



[@mghwellness](https://twitter.com/mghwellness)



info@mghstudentwellness.com

Please feel free to email me directly:

jchen37@partners.org

Break

PROVIDING CULTURALLY ATTUNED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO CHINESE STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS ON THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

Xuhua Qin Ph.D.

Counseling and Mental Health Services
Tufts University

Road Map



- Highlights of unique presentation
- Case study
- Preventive approach --- Outreach programs

Unique style and challenges

- Little Emperor Syndrome (one child generation)
- High expectation, high stress
- Academically ambitious, energetic, competitive
- Dependency, self discipline
- Inclusion, isolation
- A sense of loss
- Identity confusion and development

The change of trends in studying abroad

- Younger generation
- Globalized experience
- “Third culture kid”
- Different attachment

International Students' experience



Themes:

- Feeling isolated, outside, invisible, disabled, lonely
- Needing connection, acknowledgment, empowerment

Case Study



Grace is a 25 year-old international student in the 2nd year of her doctoral program. She is from China and has been in the U.S. for about a year. She recently “disappeared” from her classes and did not respond to emails or phone calls. Her advisor eventually located her and walked her to your office. In your office, she has difficulty communicating in English. She said she had difficulty in classes and had been sick recently. She needed more time to work on her assignments but felt she could not ask for it. She felt shame because she was a top student in China, and homework was never a problem for her. She felt guilty for not having successful results on her research project either. She had been avoiding her advisor for a long time.

Question to audience

- What do you further ask/observe at this point?
- How do you approach her language barrier?
- Any cultural considerations?
- What would be resources/support for her that you could think of at this point?

Some Cultural Considerations

- It is okay (important) to ask
- Somatic focus vs. psychological focus
- Cultural specific symptoms, cultural explanation of illness
- What it means by “making progress”

Case Study (continues)

Grace said she felt very overwhelmed, and had not been sleeping and eating well for weeks. She thought of “what if she does not need to worry about all these difficulties any more”. She said she missed home much, but did not tell her parents about her difficulties. She felt very isolated. She never had counseling before, and was not sure what it can help her with. She is concerned what record it will save to her file.

Question to audience

- What would be resources/support for her that you could think of now?
- What are challenges you may have when trying to connect her to resources?

When to Refer



- Things to watch for:
 - Deterioration in Personal Hygiene or Dress
 - Dramatic Weight Loss or Gain
 - Noticeable Changes in Mood
 - Excessive Absences
 - Academic Problems
 - Social Isolation and Unusual Behaviors
 - Drug and Alcohol Abuse
 - Threat of Harm to Themselves or Others

Introducing Counseling

- Introducing counseling
 - As building a relationship and extending network
 - As gaining knowledge about oneself, learning skills, connecting to resources
- Emphasizing it is a sign of strength
- Explaining confidentiality
 - Not on school record/transcript
 - Friends, family and sponsor will not know
- Won't affect visa status

How to Refer

- Make the call, walk in together
- Make no assumption and ask their preference
- Build a relationship with counseling center

After the Referral

- Set a reminder to follow-up with the student
- Ask questions:
 - How did the visit go?
 - Do you have a follow-up appointment?
- Be sure to listen, and see if any barriers
- Encourage to go consistently
- Counseling is voluntary

Why outreach programs



- Prevention rather than remedy
- Help to remove barriers
- The goals are to: increase awareness, improve the overall campus climate, facilitate connections, raising visibility of services, and destigmatize mental health issues
- Focus: decrease isolation, build connection, promote a sense of belonging

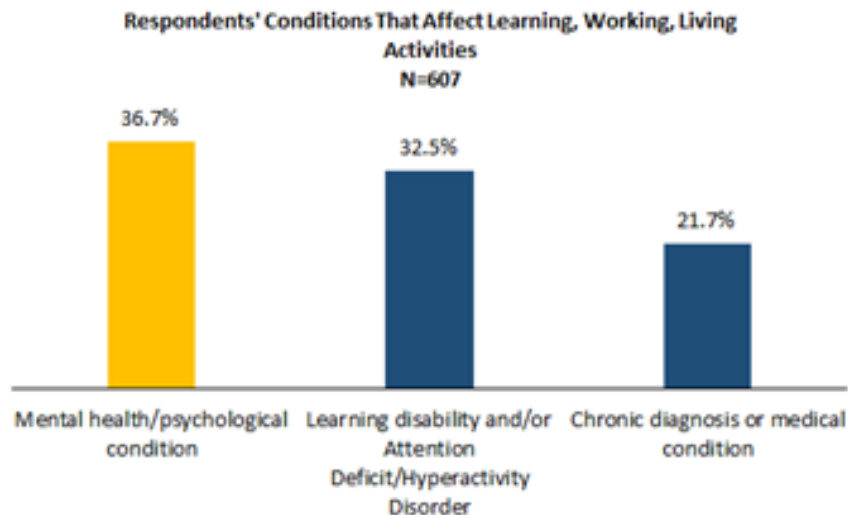
Sample of Innovative Programs



Questions?

- For more comments/questions regarding this topic, contact Xuhua Qin at xuhua.qin@tufts.edu

The number one condition affecting undergraduate student activities on campus was mental health/psychological conditions.



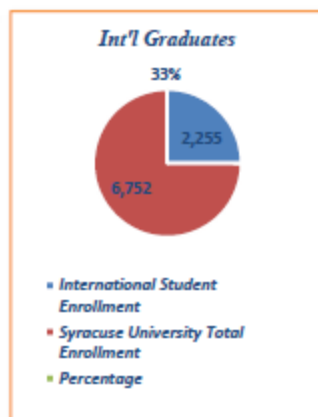
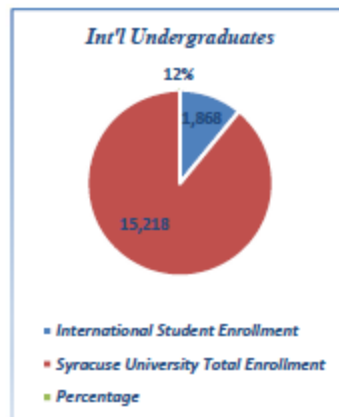
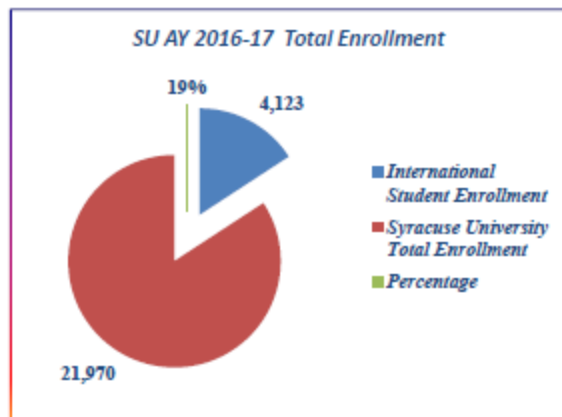
Source: Rankin and Associates. (September, 2016). *Assessing our learning, living, and working environment*. Syracuse University. Syracuse, NY. Table 7, page 30.

Syracuse University

Slutzker Center for International Services
Total Enrollment
AY 2016 - 2017

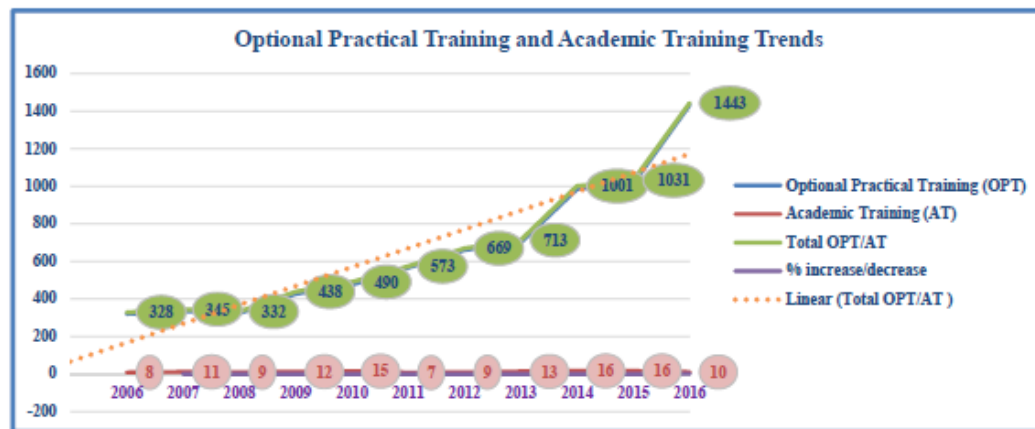
	Total Enrollment
International Student Enrollment	4,123
Syracuse University Total Enrollment	21,970
Percentage	19%
	1% decrease from AY 2015-16

	Graduates	Undergraduates
International Student Enrollment	2,255	1,868
Syracuse University Total Enrollment	6,752	15,218
Percentage	33%	12%
	4% decrease from AY 2015-16	No % change from AY 2015-16

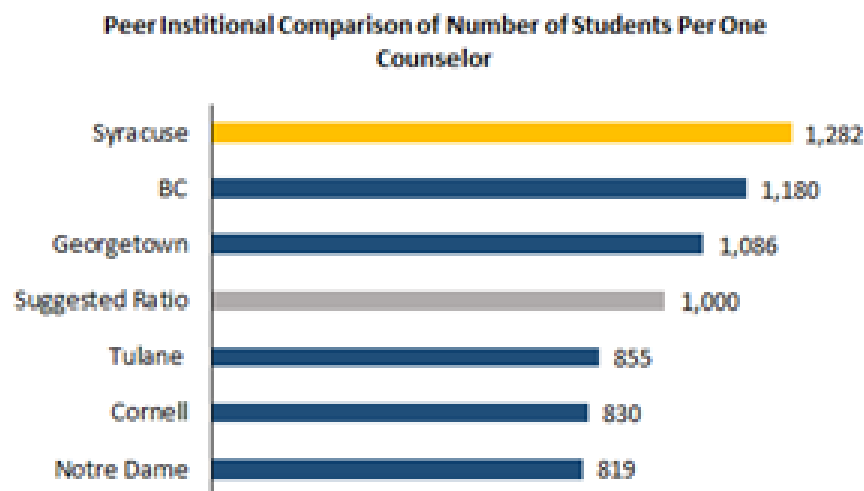


Slutzker Center for International Services
Employment Authorization Trends
2006 - 2016

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION TYPE	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Optional Practical Training (OPT)	320	334	323	426	475	566	660	700	985	1015	1433
Academic Training (AT)	8	11	9	12	15	7	9	13	16	16	10
Total OPT/AT	328	345	332	438	490	573	669	713	1001	1031	1443
% increase/decrease		4%	-3%	32%	12%	19%	17%	6%	41%	3%	41%
340% OPT/AT Increase in 11 years											

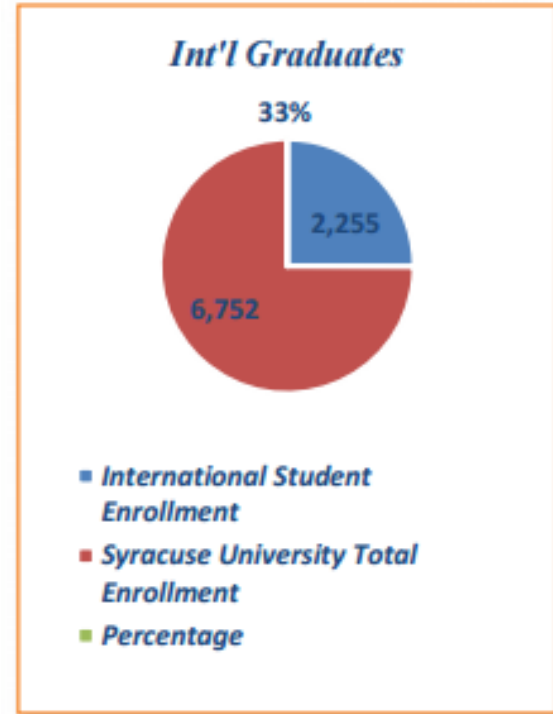


Syracuse University has a 1:1,282 counselor to student ratio.



Source: Data provided by Syracuse University Counseling Center and peer institution data offered by Counseling Centers of the institution.

International Enrollment Syracuse University



Orientation Is Where All Begins



Building the Connections



- 'Connections' mentoring program
<https://www.Facebook.Com/slutzkercenter/>
- English conversation groups
- Cultural activities
- Residence life support staff training & co-programming
- Cultural training for public safety

Laying the Foundation



- Campus behavioral assessment team
- On-call rotation 24/7/365
- Interpreters 24/7/365
- Building the relationships
- Within Student Population
- With Consulates/Embassies
- With Hospitals/Emergency Psychiatric Clinics

Case Study



Chinese female first year UG reported bullying incidents, phone/computer hacking, dissatisfaction with roommate, residence hall. Entire fall semester spent trying to help resolve this situation, while the scope and range of problematic incidents increased and affected more people. Despite counseling to take the spring semester off, student returned and had even more serious issues.

What would you/could you do in your position?

Case Study

Chinese male graduate student reported missing by family and friends. Landlord, at personal request of International Student Adviser, searches apartment and finds no evidence of foul play, but piled up mail, unpaid bills, passport, credit cards, and dirty laundry.

Calls to academic department indicate significant failure to perform or even attend many classes.

Department of Public Safety called into the investigation.

Question to audience

- What options are open to you for further investigation?
- With whom do you partner to find this student?
- What records (your office? Academic? Police? Counseling Center? Health Center? ID card office?) might help?
- What constraints do you face in trying to find this student?

Resources & Hotlines



Pre-departure, Orientation, Online

Resources

□ NAFSA Resources

- Health and Wellness for International Students
- Working with International Student or Scholars with Mental Health Issues
www.nafsa.org/Find_Resources/
- Crisis Management in a Cross Cultural Setting: ISSS
<http://www.nafsa.org/findresources/Default.aspx?id=27117>

□ MGH Center for Cross Cultural Student Emotional Wellness

<http://www.mghstudentwellnes.org/>

Mental Health Awareness Video



www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/explained/mental-health-video.php

Mental Health Awareness Video



Services & Hotlines

Services


- Crisis Text Line
 - Text 741-741
 - <http://www.crisistextline.org/>

Hotlines

- National Suicide Prevention
 - 1-800-273-TALK
 - www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline
 - 1-800-799-SAFE
 - <http://www.thehotline.org/>
- It Gets Better Project (LGBTQ)
 - 1-866-4-U-TREVOR
 - www.itgetsbetter.org/pages/get-help



“International students who reported a more **functional relationship** with their advisors were less likely to report having an emotional or stress-related problem in the past year.”



Questions?

(Source: Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lusting, 2010)