

Academic Programs, Support and Services for International Graduate Students

by

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Abstract

This study investigates whether international students enrolled in a graduate program at Southeastern University, knew, used, and were satisfied with the Academic Programs, Support, and Campus Services offered by this institution. Additionally, it was investigated whether these programs and services were an important instrument to support and integrate into their journey as international graduate students. 126 participants completed the survey during the Fall 2020 Semester. The results indicate that the students are familiarized with the academic programs, support, and campus services; however, the utilization of these services are concentrated in the University Libraries, the Miller Writing Center, the ePortfolio Project, and the Biggio Center (Academic Programs, Support) and University Medical Clinic, Recreation and Wellness Services, Cross-Cultural Programs (Campus Services).

In general, the international graduate students are satisfied with the Academic Programs, Support. The student satisfaction can be noted in the positive feedbacks and comments from these students mentioned in the survey. For these students, the services are “moderately to very helpful”. They recognized the importance of Academic Programs, Support which guides them to understand the U.S. Academic system. Additionally, the international graduate students consider that when they used the Campus Services, they felt more included and welcome at this University. However, despite the helpfulness of Academic Programs, Support, and Campus Services, the utilization of these services by international graduate students remains low. In conclusion, this study suggests some strategies to Southeastern University has to develop strategies to improve the utilization of these services by international graduate students to provide them a competitive advantage in recruitment and retention.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|--|
| AU | Auburn University |
| APS | Academic Programs, Support |
| COVID-19 | CO (Corona), VI (Virus), D (Disease) |
| CS | Campus Services |
| ECA | The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs |
| I-20 | FORM I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Students Status |
| IIE | Institute of International Education |
| ISSS | The Office of International Students and Scholar Service |
| MWC | Miller Writing Center |
| NAFSA | National Association of Foreign Students Advisers |
| OIP | Office of International Programs |
| SEVIS | Student and Exchange Visitor Information System |
| UIS | Unesco Institute for Statistics |

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The number of international students that want to obtain higher education in the United States has been increasing significantly in the last 35 years (Hunter-Johnson, 2016). The United States is the leading destination of foreign students, and these students contributed \$38.7 billion into the U.S. economy in 2019/2020. There were 415,996 direct and indirect jobs created or supported in 2019/2020, and 1,075,496 international students (IIE open door, 2020; NAFSA, 2019/2020). Furthermore, international students are advantageous not only for the hosting country, but the host universities as well (Martirosyan et al., 2019). Both students and universities have benefitted from the financial contributions of international student enrollment, as evidenced by colleges and universities in some countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and Western Europe (Martirosyan et al., 2019).

To an international student, being accepted in an American university after a long selection process is an honor. It is necessary to face a complicated and multistep process when deciding to study in the United States (Berdan & Goodman, 2018). These students need to prove through tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exams and the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE), recommendation letters, and an extensive application form that they are excellent students. However, that is not the end of the process for attending school in the U.S. They also need government permission for entry into the country. Consequently, many documents are required by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Department of State rules and regulations (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.).

It is evident that this difficult application process coupled with language and culture barriers to integration can cause great stress for international students. Efforts to recruit

international students must be matched with preparation of the campus community to support these students (Arthur, 2017). However, some large campuses with a considerable number of foreign students were unsure and unprepared to support the accelerated expansion of international students on the campus (Choudacha, 2016). In addition, small to medium sized campuses were not able to invest infrastructure, resources, and skills needs to assist the international students (Choudacha, 2016).

International students have left their home countries and are learning to integrate into a new culture and at the same time, they are making a large step in their education. Thus, these students will likely need assistance from the time they arrive on campus until past the time they graduate. These students will need help not only when on-campus and completing their education, but they will also need support after graduation when looking for jobs or applying for other graduate programs. The importance of academic programs, campus services, and social support are vital for these students as they study in a new cultural context, adjust to new a way of living, and work to achieve academic and professional excellence (Andrade, 2006; Arthur, 2017; Chavajay, 2013; Hulstrand, 2018). These programs must develop their services by analyzing the students' different backgrounds and the different needs of each institution (Hulstrand, 2018).

Even within the United States, there are a plethora of different needs from international students across the nation. The state of Alabama has several universities that host international students. According to the most recently available data, Auburn University-Main Campus is the highest-ranked university in Alabama regarding international student enrollment, job numbers, and economic contribution (IIE 2019; NAFSA, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that the University provides ample and abounding Academic Programs, Support, and Campus Services (*Auburn University | Academic Programs and Support*, n.d.) there have been limited studies examining what international graduate students know about these services or how often they use them. At this University, Academic Coaching (a sector of Academic Programs, Support) and the University Career Center (a sector of Campus Services) were the only two programs who reported the number of the students who visited, attended presentations and workshops, participated in programs or utilized their services in general without specifying the number of undergraduates or graduate international students in an Annual Report (*Auburn University Career Center Annual Report 2017-2018*, n.d.).

However, there are multiple programs such as University Libraries, the Miller Writing Center, the Student Counseling, Psychological Services, Speech and Hearing Clinic, and more that did not report these statistics. Furthermore, the Career Center Annual Report analyzed the type of students that were using these services (e.g., undergraduate, graduate majors of study, etc.); however, they did not differentiate between international and domestic students (*Auburn University Career Center Annual Report 2017-2018*, n.d.) Based on this information, it is unclear as to what percentage of international students use these services, if international students are aware of these services, and which of these services are most important to international students. This hinders the ability for these services to communicate with international students if they are unaware of their availability or benefits.

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of this study was to investigate whether international students, enrolled in a graduate program at Southeastern University knew, used, and were satisfied with the

Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services offered by the institution. Additionally, it was investigated whether these programs and services were an important instrument to support and integrate into their journey as an international graduate student. Contributions of other universities in the state of Alabama was noted in the literature review; however, these universities were outside the scope of the present study.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do demographic variables (Academic level, Age, Gender, English as a Second language, and Length of time in Graduate School) impact awareness of Academic Programs, Support, and Campus Services for international graduate students at Southeastern University?
2. What Academic Programs, Support are most utilized by international graduate students at Southeastern University?
3. What Campus Services are most utilized by international graduate students at Southeastern University?
4. What is the perceived importance of Academic Programs, Support to the international graduate student at Southeastern University?
5. How satisfied are international graduate students with Academic Programs, Support at Southeastern University?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is supported by the University's mission to educate the students and prepare them for life. Furthermore, the strategic goals of the Graduate School

include preparing graduate and professional students for productive careers and leadership in their fields through excellent educational experiences, professional development training, and broadening social experiences (About Us, n.d.). The international students are not excluded from this mission and strategic goals.

This research examines Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services offered by the Southeastern University and their use by international students who are enrolled in a graduate program. The results from the information collected can be used to spread awareness about Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services among international students at the university, improve their academic results and motivation, and reduce their stress. Awareness and use of the services offered by the Southeastern University could help these students develop their academic life and success, as well as improve the experience of living and studying in the U.S.

Limitations of the Study

While the researcher controlled for as many factors as possible, there were limitations to the study. Firstly, data was collected during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. This pandemic, according to the Institute of International Education, has affected “global student mobility on U.S. higher education campuses” (2020, p. 11). On March 16, 2020, an alternate operations model was initiated to guarantee safety to students, faculty, and staff and it continued until the end of summer session 2, June 23, 2020. During this period, the students were not able to access the campus; all university events were canceled, all university domestic and international travel was suspended, and the Study Abroad programs were canceled. Consequently, dining facilities, libraries, residence halls, recreation center, Study Center and more were closed. The students had classes remotely until session 2. During Session 3,

beginning June 29, 2020, students had an option to attend course delivery remotely or on-campus (*A Healthier U | Auburn University*, n.d.). This directly impacted all Academic Programs, Support, and Campus Services and their use by students because some services were only available remotely, while others were briefly unavailable. This study will not be investigating the impact of COVID-19 on the use of Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services.

Secondly, based on the investigation using the survey, the researcher relies on the presumption that the participants are sincere and honest in their responses since it is not possible to confirm their responses. Lastly, the participants selected were graduate students at the University. This implies that this group of students met different and higher demands and self-directed learning.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions were used for the purpose of this study:

- **Academic Programs, Support:** “an interconnected collaborative system of services that support student development and success.” (Kramer, 2003, p. xi).
- **Campus Services:** “is a variety of departments and staff that the students can appeal to help in their everyday needs” (*Auburn University | Campus Services*, n.d.)
- **FORM I- 20:** Form I-20 is the primary document to show that the international student has been admitted to school in the United States and they are authorized to apply for admission to the United States in F-1 class of admission. (*I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status*, n.d.).
- **Grade Point Average (GPA):** a standard way of measuring academic achievement in the U.S., (*EducationUSA*, n.d.).

- **Graduate Record Examination (GRE):** a standardized test that measures the skills students need in graduate, business, or law school, as determined through tests of verbal reasoning, quantitative reason, and analytical writing that measures readiness for graduate-level study (*About the TOEFL IBT Test (For Test Takers, n.d.); (EducationUSA, n.d.)*).
- **Graduate student:** someone who has earned a bachelor’s degree and is pursuing additional education in a specific field. (*EducationUSA, n.d.*)
- **International student:** a student who carries a passport and visa to study in a country other than his or her birth (Bista & Foster, 2016).
- **International student in the US:** an individual, “non-immigrant” that migrates to the U.S. for the purpose of obtaining higher education and does not have citizenship or permanent residency at such time. (Hunter-Johnson, 2016).
- **Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL):** a standardized test that measures the proficiency of non-native English speakers to use and understand English as it’s read, written, heard and spoken in the university classroom. (*About the TOEFL IBT Test For Test Takers, n.d.*)

Organization of the Study

This study will be subdivided into five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the background, statement of the problem, purpose, significance of the study, study limitations, definition of terms and organization of the study. Chapter 2 contains a literature review subdivided into eight principal topics: 1.) Introduction 2.) Purpose of the Study 3.) Research questions, 4.) International Students Globally, 5.) International Students in the U.S., 6.) International Students in Alabama, 7.) New possibilities Learning Overseas, and 8.) Academic Programs, Support and

Campus Services. Chapter 3 will detail the methods used in this research. Chapter 4 will provide the results. Finally, Chapter 5 will present a discussion, general conclusions, and suggestions for further study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review highlights the reasons international students enroll in graduate programs in another country, which countries these students select, why they select these countries, and the different recruitment methods and policies employed by these countries (as well as how this impacts enrollment of international students). In addition, this literature review explores the benefits international students bring for universities in the United States in different aspects, including economically (jobs and finances), culturally, and academically (the academic community and environment). To explore these relationships on a smaller scale that relates to the population of the current study, international students in the state of Alabama are described and compared to other states in the United States. This section closes with a definition and a short explanation about Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services, as these services are an important tool for success for international graduate students. These services are compared between the most populated (in terms of international students) universities in Alabama. The literature review did not bring a deep definition of Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services because these topics are broad. As mentioned by Winston, R. B. "providing a concise definition of academic services is more complicated than it appears" (2003, p. 9).

This chapter is organized into the following sections: 1.) Introduction 2.) Purpose of the Study 3. Research questions, 4.) International Students Globally, 5.) International Students in the U.S., 6.) International Students in Alabama, 7.) New possibilities Learning Overseas, and 8.) Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services.

Purpose of the Study

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5. How satisfied are international graduate students with Academic Programs, Support at Southeastern University?

International Student: Global

Defining “international student”

According to the glossary of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics’ (UIS) Global Education Digest (2009), an internationally mobile student is someone who leaves their country or territory of origin and moves to another country or territory with the objective of studying.

They can be defined according to the following characteristics:

1. Permanent residence: they are not permanent residents of the host country in which they pursue their studies.
2. Prior education: they obtained the entry qualification to their current level of study in another country. Prior education refers typically to upper secondary education for students enrolled in tertiary programs.
3. Citizenship: they are not citizens of the host country in which they pursue their studies (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010, p. 36).

In the United States., Hunter-Johnson (2016) defined an international student as, “an individual, non-immigrant that migrates to the U.S. for the purpose of obtaining higher education and does not have citizenship or permanent residency at such time” (p. 159). In addition, the U.S. government defines an international student, “as a student who is enrolled at an institution of higher education in the United States who is not a U.S. citizen, an immigrant (permanent resident) or a refugee” (Bista & Foster, 2016, p. xxi). International students who intend to study in the U.S. need to apply for an F-1 (Academic student), M-1 (Vocational student), or J-1 (Exchange visitor) visa (Todoran & Peterson, 2020).

Bista and Foster (2016) argued that visa and immigration terminologies can be different according to each country. For example, the government of Canada defines an

international student as someone that studies in “Canada on a visa or refugees, neither of which have a permanent residency” (p. xxi). They also consider international students as students enrolled in a Canadian program from a Canadian institution that is not located in Canada, for example distance education (Bista & Foster, 2016).

Australia, on the other hand, defines international students as “full-fee paying students studying in Australia on a student visa” (Bista & Foster, 2016, p. xxi). An international student can be called foreign student, exchange student, non-immigrant student, temporary student, and visiting student. These three countries, the United States, Canada, and Australia, were selected to define international students because they are classified as top destinations.

For this literature review, the operational definition of international student is derived from terminology developed by Bista and Foster (2016), “a student who carries a passport and visa to study in a country other than his or her birth” (p. xxiv) will be utilized when discussing international students across the globe. This definition was selected due to its broad nature; thus, it applies to discourse in this literature review regarding international students outside of the United States. The Hunter-Johnson (2016) definition mentioned above will be used when speaking more narrowly of international students in the United States, in addition in the purpose of this research.

Decision-making process

Many nations have become interested in student movement across borders in the past couple of decades, especially industrialized countries (Altbach, 2004). These countries “recognized they need to provide their students with a global consciousness and with experience in other countries in order for them to compete in a global economy” (Altbach, 2004, p. 19). To demonstrate the impact of this mobility, in 2015 the Organization for Economic Co-Operation

and Development (OECD) estimated that 4.6 million students crossed borders to pursue an international educational experience (Bhandari, 2017). These were some examples of the reasons students crossed borders for education analyzed from the perspective of countries, but what are the reasons for this mobility that are provided by the students, especially graduate students? One study explained that this movement is influenced by a combination of push and pull factors (Mazarrol & Soutar, 2002). Push factors operate within the initiative of the student who has made the decision to pursue an international experience, and Pull factors operate within the host country to attract international students to attend their country's universities (Mazarrol & Soutar, 2002). From 1996 to 2000, Mazzarol et al., (2002), produced a study that focused on the factors which may influence international students' choice of country of study. This research analyzed student movement from Taiwan and Indonesia in 1996, India in 1999, and China (Mazzarol et al., 1996; Mazarrol & Soutar, 2002). In all, a total of 2,485 students with diverse degree and levels were surveyed. This research identified six factors:

1. The overall level of knowledge and awareness of the host country in the student's home country.
2. The destination's reputation for quality and recognition of its qualification in the student's home country.
3. Personal recommendations that the select country receives from parents, relatives, friends, and other.
4. Cost (fee, living expenses, travel, and social costs, such as crime, safety, and racial discrimination).
5. Environment factors such as physical climate, and lifestyle.

6. Geographic proximity, social links, which related if the student has family or friends living in the destination country (Mazzarol & Soutar; 2002).

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) identified a three-step process that students followed to decide whether they would study abroad and where. First, they decided whether to go abroad or not; second, they selected the host country; third, they selected the host institution. In later research, it was supported that these three steps were influenced by level and type of education of the student plans to pursue their education. Students who were pursuing a graduate or certificate degrees selected the host country before choosing a course and then institution (Wadhwa, 2016).

The decision-making process for international graduate students is influenced by what they are planning for their future. Gribble (2008) noted that in the past these students desired to return home as leaders or diplomats after receiving their education abroad. During this time, these students considered the opportunity to study a collective project rather than individual gain. Now, international students are interested with future job implications of their studies, thus shifting the focus to individual gain (Gribble, 2008; Wadhwa, 2016). In addition, they were considering “overseas study a steppingstone to permanent residency in a country offering higher standard of living along with better employment and research opportunities” (Gribble, 2008, p. 25).

International Student: U.S.

In 2016, Bista and Foster classified three levels of study abroad destinations, including:

1. Top destination: U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.
2. Middle destinations: Germany, France, Norway, Finland, Netherlands, Spain and Italy.

3. Emerging destination: China, Dubai, India, Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore.

The recruitment of international students to the U.S. “is becoming an increasingly competitive export industry” (Nicholls, 2018, p. 597). Many students have chosen the U.S. as the best study abroad destination and have considered it to be the leading destination of foreign students (Choudaha, 2016). Since 1988, the U.S. Department of State established the Education USA, and there are 430 international student advising centers in 178 countries and territories (EducationUSA, n.d.). The Education USA has the mission to promote U.S. higher education around the world and offer information about accredited postsecondary institutions. Furthermore, they contribute to U.S. Institutions’ recruitment and campus internationalization goals (EducationUSA, n.d.). It is a relevant tool for international education of the United States.

In 2017, the Trends in Global Student Mobility reported that the U.S. attracted 24% of all the globally mobile students followed by the United Kingdom, China, Australia, France, Canada, Russia, and Germany. The last Report on International Educational Exchange, Open Doors 2019, produced by the Institute of International Education, showed that the number of the students increased 0.05% in the United States between the years 2018 to 2019. In 2019, the number of the students was 1,095,299, with almost 300,000 at the graduate academic level (IIE, 2019). The top three countries representing international students studying in the United States are China with 369,548, India with 202,014, and South Korea with 52,250 (IIE, 2019). Also, countries with emerging economies such as Vietnam, Brazil, Nigeria, and Bangladesh have considerably increased their participation in the United States’ education in the last 10 years; Bangladesh grew more than 205%, Nigeria 114%, Vietnam 90%, and Brazil 83% (IIE, 2019). Engineering, Math, and Computer Science are the top fields of study and 52% of all international

students' study in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields (IIE, 2019).

Recruitment

An important aspect highlighted by researchers is related to countries that are trying to attract global talent; they consider international students as a preferred labor force and the U.S. is an example of that (Arthur, 2013; Ziguras and Law, 2006). The United States of America is a powerful global economy with many employment opportunities. So, the possibility to immigrate and find a good job after graduation is a high motivation for international students. In fact, it has been evidenced that, “estimates of Chinese and Indian students choosing to not return home after their study in the United States ranges from 66 to 92 percent for Chinese students and 77 to 88 percent for Indian students.” (Altbach, 2004, p. 21).

Chinese students are the largest international student population in the U.S. (IIE, 2019). Research has shown that parents greatly influence international students' decision to study in the U.S. (Rafi, 2018). Chinese students must balance their own interests with the interests of their parents (Rafi, 2018). In this research, one Chinese student gave the testimony: “Ever since I was little, my parents have always wanted me to study in the U.S., I think just because it was U.S. the education has a lot of colleges that are really famous, well known around the world. Everybody knows that the U.S. provides the best education” (Rafi, 2018, p. 1685). She continues to say, “A lot of people wanted to send their kids to the U.S. and then use it as a way to hopefully move to the U.S. someday” (Rafi, 2018, p. 1685).

While Chinese students value tangible factors such as the variety of programs, language, academic support services, and the building and grounds on campus; to the parents, immigration and employment prospects after graduation are the most important factors when

selecting a study abroad country (Rafi, 2018). Another influential factor for these students is higher education marketing (Rafi, 2018). The U.S. universities invest in advertisement on the popular websites in China such as Baidu, Qihoo 360, and Sogou (Rafi, 2018).

The second largest group of the international students population in the U.S., Indian students, have other perspectives when they attend university in the U.S. They utilize two criteria for their decision: “quality education or career advancement and the other for immigration” (Wadhwa, 2016, p. 38). Quality education motivated students to go abroad to obtain career advancement opportunities through study in institutions of excellent quality. One factor that may have influenced this decision is the inadequate higher education infrastructure and poor-quality courses for these students (Wadhwa, 2016), in their home country.

Wadhwa (2016) emphasized the strong competition in the best Indian institutions such as Indian Institutes of Management (IIM), which in 2012 received almost 200,000 applications for 15,500 seats. It shows that these students faced high competition, and they need to study abroad because there is not an opportunity in their country for all those who wish to pursue higher education (Wadhwa, 2016). In addition, Indian students use this education abroad as a pathway to immigration (Wadhwa, 2016). Furthermore, most international students in the U.S. are degree-seeking graduate and professional students (Altbach, 2004). The U.S. academic system prepares the students to develop their leadership, develop critical thinking skills, and learn how to be objective. In the U.S., students learn through self-directed learning and making decisions quickly. The quality of teaching of U.S. universities is recognized and valued in many countries with emerging economies.

In the U.S., students feel safe and have access to essential and supplemental services that improve their quality of life (Arthur, 2017). This researcher who studied international

student decision-making processes concluded by stating that “there are complex macro, personal, family, and institutional factors that influence the decision to become an international student” (Arthur, 2017, p. 892).

Application Process

During the admission process to be accepted in higher education institutions, an international student may need to follow five steps to study in the U.S. according to The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). They are: research options, finance studies, complete application, apply for student visa, and prepare for departure (Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study, n.d.). It is a long and an expensive process. They need to pay for nonrefundable application fee, Test (TOEFL), (GRE), translation of official transcripts, passport and visa issuances, immigration documents (F1 and SEVIS), and immunizations. After being admitted, these students start the process of registering at the universities. This process includes cost of attendance, tuition fees, living expenses, and insurance.

Contributions of International Students in U.S.

International students contribute an incredible wealth of information and economic gain. The people, culture, as well as the economy of the United States benefit greatly from international students arriving to the country. (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2013; Manzano, 2019).

Financial. In 2018, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, the contribution of international students to the United States’ economy was \$41 billion, and 458,290 direct and indirect jobs were created or supported in 2018/2019 (The U.S. Department of Commerce, 2019; NAFSA, 2019). Ye, Leon, and Anderson (2016), stated that the sectors benefited with this market were “higher education, accommodations, telecommunications, retail, transportation, dining, and health insurance” (p. 18). Nearly “one-quarter of the founders of \$1 billion U.S. start-

up companies first came to America as international students” (NAFSA, 2020). One relevant datum is 62% international student’s primary source of funding is not the U.S.; 57% are funded individually is (personal or by family); 4% by foreign Government or University; 1% by foreign private sponsor; 0.1% by International Organization; 21% currently by employment/OPT; 17% by U.S. College or University, and 1% by other sources (IIE, 2019). The majority are graduate research assistants, graduate extension assistants, and graduate teaching assistants.

Cultural. The contribution of “international students are not only a valuable financial asset to universities in developed countries, they are individuals who also enrich these countries with their diverse heritage and perspectives, thus, serving to increase cultural awareness and appreciation” (Smith & Khawaja, 2011, p. 700). The international student is someone that brings an important contribution to the university, especially the academic community. Classroom discussion in a course with even one international student vastly expands the possibility of the discussion. International students provide different perspectives on course content because they have different backgrounds and cultures, which impact their points-of-view. Sharaievska and Mirehie (2019), wrote: “the presence of international students improves campus culture and intellectual life by exposing domestic students to a diversity of lifestyles, ideas and information, a wider network system” (p. 120).

According to Ye et al. (2016) an “international student brings a background with them, and continue to develop their identities, influenced now only by the culture of a new country, but also a number of sub-cultures existing on their campuses and communities” (p. 18). An illustration of this integration at the University is the organization International Buddy Program (IBP). This program promotes meaningful friendships between international students and domestic students in the interest of facilitating a tranquil transition into American culture and

college life (International Buddy Program at Auburn University, n.d). Through some events such as the IBP Formal dance, games nights, and cultural holiday celebration, buddy pairs have the opportunity to start a friendship. Domestic students learn more about another culture and countries without leaving their country and help the international students to be integrated into the Auburn family and learn English (International Buddy Program at Auburn University, n.d).

Peer Programs are efficient in promoting interaction between students. According to Geelhoed et al., (2003) these programs pair international students with U.S. host students, which had positive outcomes. One study implemented Peer programs at Midwestern University with international students and host U.S. students that occurred between Fall 1997 to April 2000 (Geelhoed et al., 2003). U.S. students that host international students were compared to U.S. students who did not host international students (Geelhoed et al., 2003). The U.S. students who participated in the experiment were volunteers recruited from university residence halls to assist foreign students in adjustment to the U.S. and campus life (Geelhoed et al., 2003). The study was divided into four sections: Pre-program, Initial contact with partner, Interactions throughout the semester, and Reflection at the close of the program. The students who hosted international student reported a sense of growth (Geelhoed et al., 2003). In the Pre-program phase (before the program began), volunteer host students felt positive, highly motivated, and excited about meeting their partners. When they had initial contact with their partner, some problems arose, such as understanding their accent, trouble pronouncing their partner's name, struggles to keep the conversation flowing, and busy schedules (Geelhoed et al., 2003). These issues were reduced throughout the semester (Geelhoed et al., 2003).

The host students reported that they hung out together, went to movies, attended the program activities, and talked over the phone (Geelhoed et al., 2003). In this part of the program,

these students mentioned that the discomfort that happened in the initial contact disappeared (Geelhoed et al., 2003). These students gained new cultural perspectives, developed empathy, and integrated the international students in their families and friends. The researchers concluded throughout the Reflection at the close of the program that the U.S. students who participated in hosting international students were grateful for and valued the experience (Geelhoed et al., 2003). Some of them made comments and suggestions to help to improve the program. One important benefit described by authors was that some students related to this experience in the International Peer Programs became aware of their biases and stereotypes. In conclusion, the U.S. students who hosted international students learned substantially with this experience and they were more tolerant and able to live in a diverse society compared to U.S. students who did not host international students.

Job Market. Contributions of international students is not limited to the exchange of cultural knowledge. The benefits of integrating and contributions of international students also is related to the job market. In recent years diversity and its management have become popular topics of discussion in all kinds of organizations (Bendl et al., 2015). Large companies such as Intel, Apple, Facebook, Google and others are invested in diverse talent and implementing policies for inclusion and diversity (Brown, 2017). The domestic students, when interacting with international students develop important skills “with increased cultural sensitivities and skills needed to work effectively with people from different backgrounds” (Luo & Jamieson- Drake, 2013, p. 87).

Another significant addition, according to Campbell et al., (2018) was that the foreign students “represent a large percentage of the student population in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)” (p. 409). The National Foundation for American Policy

informs that in 2017, the number of full-time international graduate students at U.S. universities in the course in electrical engineering was 32,736 (81%) when compared with full-time graduate students born in the U.S., it was 7,783. The same phenomenon occurred in the course of Computer Science as the number was 45,790 versus 12,539 (NFAP, 2017).

The authors indicated that there was a large debate between employers and governments on how to best promote the graduates' retention in the U.S. labor market after completing their study. Also, the report from the Information Technology Industry Council, the Partnership for a New American Economy, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (2012), reported that "the U.S. government estimates that jobs in STEM fields have grown three times faster than a job in the rest of the U.S. economy over the last 10 years and expected STEM job creation to continue to outperform over the coming decade" (p. 1). As a result, "international graduates in the STEM area a potential supply of human capital for the U.S. economy"(Campbell et al., 2018, p. 410). Stuart Anderson who is Executive Director of the NFAP, "International students are vital to U.S. employers, universities and the American economy"(Stuart, 2017, p. 3)

International Students in Alabama

The primary states in the United States that are chosen by international students are California (160,592), New York (126,911), Texas (77,097), Massachusetts (73,695), Illinois (51,966), and Pennsylvania (50,070) (IIE, 2020). The state of Alabama has an opportunity to grow the international student population. Alabama is small compared to the number of the students present in the U.S. (IIE, 2020; NAFSA, 2019). According to the Institute of International Education (2020) and International Student Economic Value (NAFSA, 2019), Alabama ranked 27th in the U.S. (considering all 50 states in addition to Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the Virginia Islands) in the number of international students. It is estimated that

the state of Alabama had 9,376 international students enrolled during the 2019-2020 academic year who contributed \$325.9 million towards the Alabama state' economic. This population also supported 3,153 jobs (*IIE Open Doors / Alabama*, n.d.). Per NAFSA, “For every eight international students, three U.S. jobs are created and supported by spending occurring in the higher education, accommodation, dining, retail, transportation, telecommunications, and health insurance sectors”. In the state of Alabama, they are distributed across sectors; higher education (55%), accommodation (18%), dining (11%), retail (9%), and health insurance (2%). Following the table of the Top Higher Educational Institutions and their economic contribution. See table 1.

Table 1

Top Higher Education Institutions (Economic Contribution)

| Ranking | Institution | Dollars | n° Students | Jobs |
|----------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Auburn University - Main Campus | \$137.9 million | 3,034 | 1,524 |
| 2 | University of Alabama - Tuscaloosa | \$61.5 million | 1,616 | 685 |
| 3 | University of Alabama - Birmingham | \$33.5 million | 1,279 | 329 |
| 4 | Troy University | \$22.6 million | 935 | 113 |
| 5 | University of Alabama - Huntsville | \$14.2 million | 513 | 157 |

During the 2019-2020 academic year, Auburn University - Main Campus in Auburn, AL was the top-ranking school for number of international students in the state of Alabama (as noted in Table 1(*IIE Open Doors / Alabama*, n.d.). According to International Students Scholars, each year over 900 students and 300 scholars from over 80 nations participate in the Auburn experience (ISSS, n.d).

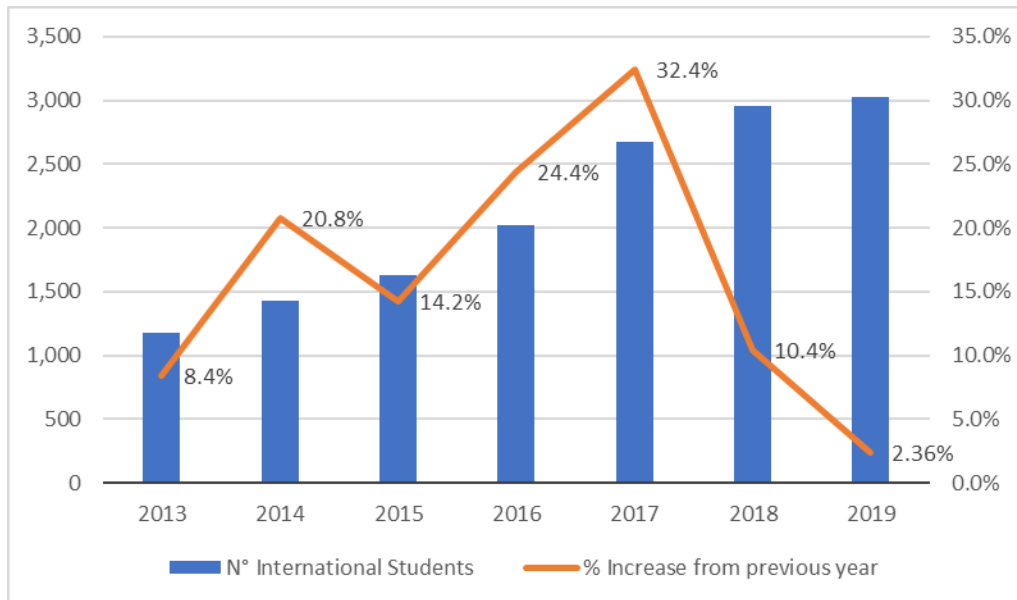
New Possibilities Learning Overseas

Decline in U.S. International student enrollment

Despite the significant numbers of international students in the U.S., in the past decade other countries, specifically Australia, Canada, and England have seen an increase in the international student population growth rate, while the U.S. has seen decline in their growth rate almost 10.8% since the Fall of 2016 for new international students (Krsmanovic et al., 2018; NAFSA 2020). A large Southeastern University in the U.S. provides an example of this growth decline. At this university, the number of international students doubled between 2012 to 2016 (*OIP Statistics*, 2019) (See Figure 1). In the years following 2016, the number kept growing, but modestly (*OIP Statistics*, 2019). Political climate, the application requirements (recommendation letters, TOEFL, GRE, and forms) as well monetary factors (e.g. cost of attendance, fees, and additional charges applied to foreign students) have contributed to this decline (Krsmanovic et al., 2018). See figure 1.

Figure 1

Number of International Student at a large Southeastern University



Political Climate. In 2016, international educators demonstrated concerns about the presidential election and the impact on international student recruitment (Gottlieb, n.d.) In 2017, six of the principle organizations of international educators organized a large survey with more than 250 institutions to analyze the impact of political climate on the international students (Gottlieb, n.d.). In recent years, the president of U.S. established a series of executive orders which restricted travel from Muslim countries (Todoran & Peterson, 2020). This situation affected not only the international students from those countries but also was a concern for students from other countries (Todoran & Peterson, 2020).

The survey found that 39% of institution reported a decline of internationals for the Fall 2017, especially institutions from the Middle East. In addition, there was a decline in number of graduate applications from China (32% decline) and India (15% decline) (Advancing Global Higher Education, 2017). Concerns from employment opportunities, benefits and visa restrictions and the feeling they are not welcome arose as reasons fewer students applied from these regions in the survey (Advancing Global Higher Education, 2017).

Financial factors. Second, it is essential to clarify why the reasons monetary factors impact international students' enrollment. An additional charge is applied to foreign students which makes the tuition and fees a considerable amount for most of international students. The international students are classified as non-resident for the payment of tuition fee. Most states in the U.S. establish separate policies for Resident and Non-Resident students in the public universities. This fact has a strong financial impact on international students. For instance, as of 2020, each term in-state graduate students at Auburn University pay \$4,914 for nine credit hours of tuition and \$838 for the student services fee, totaling \$5,752. In contrast, domestic non-resident graduate students at Auburn University pay these same charges for nine credits hours

but are additionally charged 9,828 for non-resident fee, increasing their cost to a total \$15,580. Furthermore, international graduate students pay the same fee as non-residents but must also pay the \$130 for the International Student Fee, and \$1,022 for International Insurance for students, increasing their fees to \$16,732 per semester. The student needs to be sure that this is what they want. It is a process that needs orientation, resignation, discipline, financial resources, and confidence.

Retaining and attracting international students. Recent research has identified trends in global student mobility (Bhandari, 2018). There are a number of effective strategies used by countries other than U.S. to retain and attract students, for example:

- Canada uses strategies to attract students whose degrees were obtained in the country adjusting the immigrant process to better retain international students in the workforce, giving them additional points when they applied for residency, removing the requirement for a work-permit for researchers coming to work on short-term contracts at public universities. In 2018, this country increased by 16% (Bhandari, 2017; NAFSA, 2018).
- Germany's higher education sector offers degree programs with minimal fees, career incentives, residency permits, and more English-taught graduate programs. In 2017, German institutions increased 7 percent of the number international student enrollment, half of them choose to stay and 40 percent planned to remain for at least 10 years. (Bhandari, 2017).
- China and Japan, two countries traditionally known for sending students to study abroad, also recently intensified initiatives to attract global talent to Japan subsidized Japanese language courses, company internships, job search assistance and residency permits.

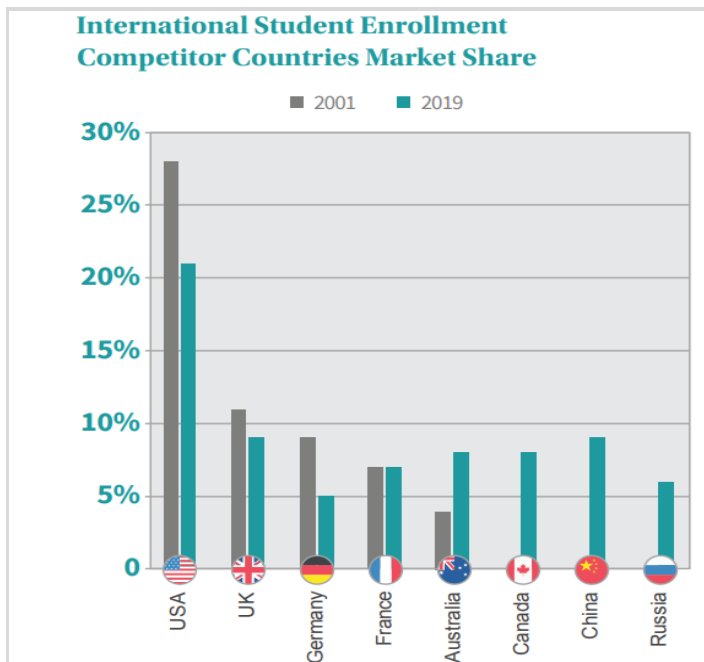
(Bhandari, 2017). Students who graduated with a master’s degree in China were immediately eligible for a one-year work visa (NAFSA, 2018).

- Australia, foreign students are able to work for up to 18 months after graduation and graduates in the high-need occupation areas can work longer for up four years (NAFSA, 2018). In 2018, this country increased international student enrollment by 47% between 2015 - 2018, and 15%, and in 2019, the government announced an additional one more year for post-study work visa (NAFSA, 2018).

In March, 2020 the NAFSA developed a report “Losing Talent 2020” An Economic and Foreign Policy Risk America Can’t ignore. It portrays the risks that the United States runs if it does not urgently change the policies and treatment currently intended for international students in consideration of the policies of other countries (NAFSA, 2020; see figure 2) (*Losing Talent*, n.d.)

Figure 2

U.S. International Enrollment Competitor Countries Market Share



International students prioritize finding a good job when they finish their instruction and start an international career, which is why they seek a global experience. For NAFSA, one of the most important associations that represents international educators in the United States, emphasizes that decline in number of international students has happened for third consecutive year in the U.S., and countries that provide visas and allow students to stay post-graduation have grown much more than those that do not in the past decade (NAFSA, 2020). In addition, NAFSA recommends the government help universities develop a national recruitment strategy and the congress concede visa for those who want to stay after graduation, support bills that makes a more welcome nation, protect the duration of practical training (CPT and OPT), and make more green cards available for students graduate from U.S. universities (NAFSA, 2020). These strategies have the ability to attract and retain talent student in the U.S.

Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services

Integration Process

Despite the motivation and excitement coupled with such a journey, many socio-cultural challenges impact the learning process (Hunter-Johnson, 2016). Most international students face challenges, such as socio-cultural stressors, language barriers, (Kuo, 2011; Hunter-Johnson, 2016; Shih & Brown, 2000; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). In a study conducted with graduate students at a university in Alabama, the participants reported that they were not able to comprehend classes lectures, reading textbooks, and had difficulty participating in group discussion (Kuo, 2011). “They felt like children unable to express their thoughts and feelings” (Kuo, 2011, p. 40). The adaption to the United States educational system is a difficult task; research has evidenced that most new graduate students feel anxious and confused when they start any graduate program (Marin, 1996). It was noted that questions such as “how to

participate, what exactly to do, where to start” arose (Marin, 1996, p. 11). The challenges and adaptations are individual; some aspects of this integration can be easier for some students while more challenging for others (Rodrigues et al., 2019). Evidence has also shown that it is essential that staff and faculty to understand that “each international graduate student need time to adjust and may require different kinds of support than other domestic graduate students” (Rodrigues et al., 2019, p. 50).

Further research has explored whether U.S. university campuses are prepared to support international students during their stay to obtain academic success (Choudacha, 2016). This research unveiled that some larges campuses with a considerable of number foreign students were unsure and unprepared to administer the expectations of campus and community stakeholders to support the accelerated expansion of international students on the campus (Choudacha, 2016). In addition, small to medium sized campus were not able to invest infrastructure, resources, and skills needs to assist the international students (Choudacha, 2016).

Many researchers have highlighted the necessity for international students to adjust to new environments, different academic systems, and new lifestyles (Shih & Brown, 2000; Banjong, 2015). The Academic Programs, Support. Support and Campus Services is an instrument to reduce the impact of academic transition for students at universities in the U.S. (Choudaha, 2016; Martirosyan et al., 2019). These services can assist them in their academic success and trajectory (Martirosyan et al., 2019). Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services for international students are essential to continue “international student matriculation, engagement, and success in U.S. higher education” (Martirosyan et al., 2019, p.173).

Conceptualization of Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services

Kramer defined student academic services as, “an interconnected collaborative system of services that support student development and success.” (Kramer, 2003, p. xi). This author also suggests that this set of services has a long, eventful history directly connected to the academic purposes of the institution, connected, collaborative, comprehensive, and horizontally organized, where the student is the centric view of these services. (Kramer, 2003, p. xi). Another point of view was discussed by Winston Jr, when he states that, “providing a concise definition of academic services is more complicated than it appears on the surface.” (Winston Jr, 2003, p. 9). The essence of these arguments is that there are many definitions that have emerged when conceptualizing academic programs. They can be defined as programs and services that provide students opportunities to practice or develop skills (tutoring, writing or language laboratories) or created to maintain an institution’s academic infrastructure (financial aid programs, class registration, admission) or referred to as student affairs programs (leadership training, service-learning projects; Winston Jr, 2003).

A Model for Conceptualizing Academic Services

According to the model developed by Morrill, Hurst, and Oetting (1980) and Hurst and Jacobson (1985) Academic Services have a purpose, target, and intervention method. (Winston Jr, 2003). The below sections descriptively outline this model and define these three aspects of Academic Services.

Purpose. Winston Jr. notes that the purpose of Academic Services includes the following:

- 1) Enrich or supplement learning and personal development, through encouraging students to learn most relevant topics, classroom experiences, life experience, personal development,

- 2) Correct or ameliorate academic or personal knowledge shortfalls, skill deficiencies, or maladaptive attitudes through assistance for the students who need help in their academic areas,
- 3) Prevent the occurrence of foreseeable personal or academic difficulties through programs such as first-year programs to anticipate or prevent problems, and
- 4) Make collegiate life more convenient or pleasant through attitudes of staff and services to guarantee that these students will not abandon the institution. (Winston Jr, 2003).

Target. The target is related to the delivery of services; those who are receiving services are individuals (students), groups and organization (student organization, voluntary association, based on similarity, shared interests, attributes, or goals (Winston Jr, 2003).

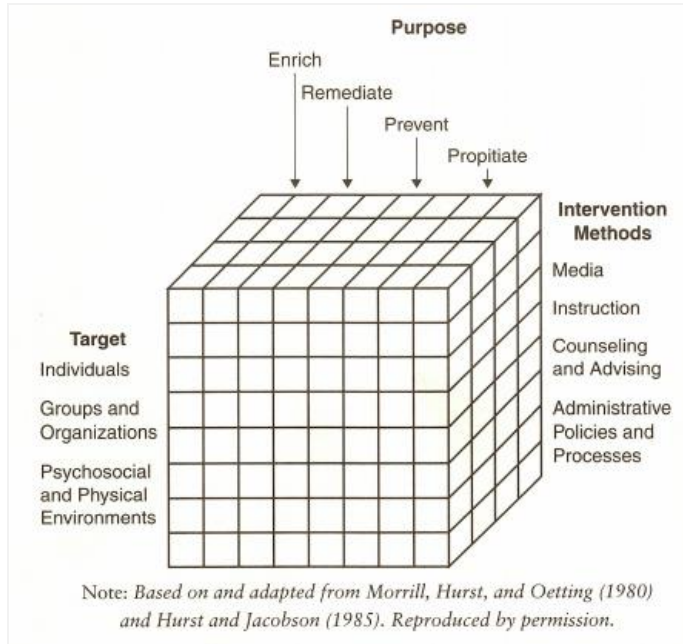
Psychosocial and physical environments influence these targets. Another target of academic services can be the environments of the institution. Arnold and Kuh (1999) pointed out that the various constituencies of higher education hold different mental models of what they consider important. For instance, faculty members perceive the core of institution to be the curriculum, teaching, and scholarship; (Winston Jr, 2003). However, for traditional-age students, the core includes fitting in and making friends, having academic success, student involvement, and student affairs (Winston Jr, 2003).

Intervention Methods. Different methods can be used depending on educational purpose. These include media (technology, internet, email, communication formats); instruction (face-to-face interaction or over the internet); counseling and advising (interventions to help academic, life, career goals, build or repair self-insight and self-esteem), and administrative policies and procedures (development and implementation of policies and procedures), (Winston Jr, 2003). Burnett and Oblinger state “the high-quality student services are essential to higher

education, and they reflect the importance an institution places on its students, on and off campus and the public-perception of the institution” (Burnett & Oblinger, 2003, p. 27). Refer to Figure 3 for a visual of this model.

Figure 3

Conceptual Model of Academic Services



Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services in Alabama

In a recent exploratory study, Academic and Social Support Services for International Students offered by the top 20 U.S. universities were analyzed. The principle universities with the greatest enrollment of international students were found to have similar academic program/support and campus services across universities. The researchers did not find a significant difference in the services offered (Martirosyan et al., 2019). When compared to the principal universities in this study, universities with the greatest enrollment of international students in Alabama also have very similar academic program/support and campus services to the top 20 universities in the U.S. Auburn University, University of Alabama, Troy University

and University of South Alabama offer essentially the same Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services as larger principal universities, such as New York University, University of Southeastern California, Arizona State University - Tempe, Columbia University, University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, Northeastern University-Boston, and others. These similarities are not coincidences; instead, they may reflect the use of models such as Conceptual Model of Academic Services.

International Student Support at Auburn University

As the highest ranked university for number of international students in Alabama, Auburn University has many of the success tools available for all students, which benefit international students as they adjust to U.S. culture and academics (NAFSA, 2018; Auburn University | Academic Programs and Support, 2016). There are several Academic Programs, Support offerings developed at Auburn University, such as the Miller Writing Center, Auburn University Libraries, and Academic Coaching, to improve students' learning and help students achieve their academic goals. In addition, a variety of Campus Services can help students' everyday needs, including the Recreation and Wellness Center, AU Speech and Hearing Clinic, Student Affairs, and more.

Academic Programs, Support. According to the Auburn University website, the purpose of Academic Program/Support is related to create an encouraging learning environment where the faculty and staff help the students to plan and achieve their goals (Auburn University | Academic Programs and Support, 2016). In other words, Academic Programs, Support, are programs and tools developed at Auburn University to help students to improve their learning, and consequently, to improve their academic results. Most of the Academic Programs, Support in Auburn University is free, and they are available for all the students. This study will not be

described to all Academic Programs, Support. It highlighted which are accessible for graduate students. They are classified as:

- Academic Coaching
- Auburn University Libraries
- AU Student Counseling/Psychological Services
- Study Abroad/ International Education Opportunities
- The Biggio Center
- The ePortfolio Project
- The Miller Writing Center
- University Career Center

Campus Services. Campus services is a variety of departments and staff that the students can appeal to help in their everyday needs and enhance their time at the university (Auburn University | Campus Services, 2017). These include:

- AU Speech and Hearing Clinic
- Auburn University Medical Clinic
- Cross-Cultural Programs
- Recreation and Wellness Center
- Student Affairs at Auburn University
- Student Involvement
- The Office of Accessibility
- The Office of Inclusion and Diversity

For this study we selected the campus services that are available to and related to the success of international graduate students. Table 2, Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services of 4 principals universities in number of International Students showed the similarities.

Table 2

APS and Campus Services of 4 principles universities

| Academic Programs/Support | Auburn University | University of Alabama | Troy University | University of South Alabama |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Academic Coach/ Academic Success | x | x | x | x |
| Libraries | x | x | x | x |
| Student Counseling/Psychological Services | x | x | x | x |
| Study Abroad/International Education | x | x | x | x |
| The ePortfolio Project | x | | | |
| Writing Center/ Success Learning Center | x | x | x | x |
| Career Center | x | x | x | x |
| English Language Institute | | x | | x |

| Campus Services | Auburn University | University of Alabama | Troy University | University of South Alabama |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Speech and Hearing Clinic - Accent Reduction | x | | | |
| Medical Clinic | x | x | x | x |
| Cross-Cultural Programs | x | | | |
| Recreation and Wellness Center | x | x | x | x |
| The Office Student Affairs | x | x | x | x |
| The Office Student Involvement/Leadership | x | | x | |
| The Office of Accessibility | x | x | x | x |
| The Office of Inclusion and Diversity | x | x | | x |

Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter describes the methodology utilized to answer the research questions presented in Chapter 1, including detailed information regarding design, participants, survey instrument, procedures, and data analysis.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do demographic variables (Academic level, Age, Gender, English as a Second language, and Length of time in Graduate School) impact awareness of Academic Programs, Support, and Campus Services for international graduate students at Southeastern University?
2. What Academic Programs, Support are most utilized by international graduate students at Southeastern University?
3. What Campus Services are most utilized by international graduate students at Southeastern University?
4. What is the perceived importance of Academic Programs, Support to the international graduate student at Southeastern University?
5. How satisfied are international graduate students with Academic Programs, Support at Southeastern University?

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative survey research design in which participants were invited to answer a 20-item survey using Qualtrics software. The purpose of this study was to explore whether the International Students who are enrolled in the Graduate Program at

Southeastern University know, use, and are satisfied with the Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services offered by the institution.

Research Population/Participants

According to the Office of Institutional Research at Southeastern University, 2,491 international students were enrolled at the institution in the Fall Semester 2020: 1,142 graduate students and 1,349 undergraduate students. (Auburn University | Country, 2020). Since undergraduate and graduate students origin have difference academic support needs, this study prioritized analyzing international graduate students. In order to participate in the survey, participants must:

1. Be an international student at Southeastern University,
2. Be 18 years old or older,
3. Be currently enrolled in the Ph.D., Ed.S, or Masters programs during the Fall 2020 semester.

Participation was completely voluntary and anonymous. Respondents did not receive compensation, and if they changed their mind about the participation, they could withdraw at any time by closing their internet browser. Each participant was asked to answer the questions based upon the most recent or last experience using Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services at Southeastern University. A total of 155 graduate students responded. Of these respondents, 2 students stated they did not want to participate in the study and 27 opened the survey but did not complete the study. These participants were eliminated from the study. Overall, 126 students completed the survey and were included in data analyzation.

Research Instrument/Questionnaire

To answer the research questions, the researchers created a web-based, 20-item survey via Qualtrics software (See appendix 1). There are 3 main areas the survey explores: I.) Demographic information, II) Academic Programs, Support, III) Campus Services.

- Part I questions were used to determine demographic information about the participants, such as the program in which they are currently enrolled, age, gender identity, country of origin, native language, etc.
- Part II questions were used to investigate international graduate students' knowledge and use of Academic Programs, Support offered by Southeastern University. Satisfaction and feedback about these programs were reported in this section, as well as the importance of the programs.
- Part III questions were used to analyze international graduate students' knowledge and use of Campus Services offered by Southeastern University. Satisfaction and feedback about these programs were reported in this section, as well as the importance of the services. Furthermore, clarity of communication and impact on international graduate students' feeling of welcomeness were observed.

The researchers had obtained approval to conduct the research from the Auburn University Institutional Review Board on August 31, 2020, Protocol #20-358 EX 2008 (See Appendix 3). It is worth mentioning that the instrument applied in the research was based on a pilot test developed for the discipline ADED 7910 - Practicum in Adult Education, where it received feedback from 24 international students enrolled at Auburn University during the Fall Semester, 2019. This feedback included undergraduate and graduate international students. An extensive list with all the academic programs/supports and Campus Services was also built,

because it was necessary to understand the service and how it was offered. This preliminary stage aimed to verify the feasibility of future research and the students were able to understand the questions.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited via email invitation sent by the Auburn University Graduate School (gradcom@auburn.edu). The email invitation provided the information letter for the study and included the link to the survey. Consent to participation in the study was embedded as the first question of the survey after the information letter. The researchers opted to send the research via the graduate school email in order to guarantee that all international graduate students received the survey. This email is the official and principle form of communication between the Graduate School and international graduate students. The initial invitation to participate in the study was sent October 12, 2020; reminder emails were October 26, 2020 and November 9, 2020.

Data Collection

The data were collected through an electronic survey built through the Qualtrics program. The researchers opted for this system, as it is a user-friendly, reliable tool made available by Auburn University that it is compatible with the SPSS system, the system chosen to analyze and treat the data. As mentioned above, the instrument was approved by the Auburn University Institutional Review Board on August 31, 2020, and the data collection only started after this approval. The researchers did not have access to the emails or any data that could identify the participants in this study. The documents proving the approval of the IRB, as well as the recruitment email are indicated in the attachments.

Variables

From question 1 to question 7, are independent variables, where the researcher highlights demographic data such as information about the participants, the program in which they are currently enrolled, age, gender identity, country of origin, native language, etc. Dependent variables dependents begin from question 8 to question 20. Measurement through discrete categories and ranked categories.

Data analysis method.

The researchers chose to use the SPSS system, a statistical analysis software that is available to Auburn University students, and that it is compatible with the Qualtrics system.

- Research question 1 was answered through descriptive statistics crosstabs, frequencies the independent variables (Academic level, Age, Gender, English as a Second language, and Length of time in Graduate School), and the dependent variable (question 8).
- Research question 2 was answered through descriptive statistics frequencies, and statistics crosstabs correlating the independent variables, and the dependent variable (questions 10 and 11).
- Research question 3 was answered through descriptive statistics frequencies, and statistics crosstabs correlating the independent variables, and the dependent variable (questions 18).
- Research question 4 was answered through descriptive statistics frequencies (question 12).
- Research question 5 was answered through descriptive statistics frequencies (question 13).

Chapter 4: Results

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of this study was to investigate whether international students, enrolled in a graduate program at Southeastern University knew, used, and were satisfied with the Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services offered by the institution. Additionally, it was investigated whether these programs and services were an important instrument to support and integrate into their journey as an international graduate student. Contributions of other universities in the state of Alabama was noted in the literature review; however, these universities were outside the scope of the present study.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do demographic variables (Academic level, Age, Gender, English as a Second language, and Length of time in Graduate School) impact awareness of Academic Programs, Support, and Campus Services for international graduate students at Southeastern University?
2. What Academic Programs, Support are most utilized by international graduate students at Southeastern University?
3. What Campus Services are most utilized by international graduate students at Southeastern University?
4. What is the perceived importance of Academic Programs, Support to the international graduate student at Southeastern University?
5. How satisfied are international graduate students with Academic Programs, Support at Southeastern University?

Demographics

As mentioned above, all international students who were enrolled in graduate programs at Southeastern University during the Fall 2020 semester were invited to participate in the study. Overall, the results included 126 students who completed the survey and were included in data analysis, resulting in a response rate of 11.03% of Southeastern University's total graduate student population.

Of these respondents, 76 students (60.3%) were in a doctoral program, and 50 students (39.7%) were in a master's program. Of note, the study did not have any participants who were Ed.S students. The distribution of these populations within Southeastern Graduate School is unknown, as the Office of Institutional Research and the Graduate School have not reported this data; the data was classified only for career level (graduate vs. undergraduate).

Of those who participated in the survey, graduate students in the second year of their graduate program comprised the largest group of respondents (n=51, 40.5%), followed by students in their first year (n=31, 24.6%), then students in their third year (n=28, 22.2%), then fourth year (n=10, 7.9%), then fifth year (n=6, 4.8%).

The age of the participants ranged from 21 to 48 years, with a mean age of 28.53 and a standard deviation of 4.85. For the purpose of data analysis, these ages were distributed into five groups: 21 to 24, 25 to 27, 28 to 30, 31 to 35, and older than 36.

Although Southeastern University reports that the majority of international graduate students are male, this was not reflected in the study. The sample population is composed of 69 females, 56 males and one other. Despite the questionnaire allowing for the student to specify the option "other" with a free-response box, the student preferred not to answer.

One hundred and eight (n=108, 85.7%) participants self-reported that English was not their first language. This demonstrates clearly the domain of the idiom can be a factor crucial for the utilization of Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services. Yuchun Zhou and colleagues (2011) state that language could be a considerable facilitator or a hindrance in participants' academic adjustment. See Table 3.

Table 3

Demographic Data

| | <i>n%</i> |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Graduate Program Enrolled | |
| Ph.D. | 76(60.3) |
| Masters | 50(39.7) |
| Year of Graduate Program | |
| First year | 31(24.6) |
| Second year | 51(40.5) |
| Third year | 28(22.2) |
| Fourth year | 10(7.9) |
| More than 5 years | 6(4.8) |
| Gender | |
| Female | 69(54.8) |
| Male | 56(44.4) |
| Other (specify) | 1(.8) |
| English as a First Language | |
| Yes | 18(14.3) |
| No | 108(85.7) |
| Age | |
| Minimum | 21 |
| Maximum | 48 |
| Mean | 28.53 |
| St. Deviation | 4.854 |

Southeastern University's international graduate students hail from more than 85 countries around the globe (Auburn University | Country, n.d.); however, in this study, the participants reported being from 31 countries, divided into six regions: Asia (n=69, 54.762%),

Latin America & Caribbean (n=17, 13.49%), Africa, Sub-Saharan (n=12, 9.52%), Europe (n=12, 9.52%), Middle East & North Africa (n=11, 8.7%), and North America (n=3, 2.38%). The classified regions follow the same division utilized by the Institute of International Education (IIE) in its annual census of international students in the United States. See Table 4.

Table 4

International Students by place of origin

| Region | Sub-Region | Country | n(%) |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Africa, Sub-Saharan | | | 12(9.52%) |
| | Southeastern Africa | Southeastern Africa | 1 |
| | West Africa | Ghana | 2 |
| | | Nigeria | 9 |
| Asia | | | 69(54.76%) |
| | East Asia | China, | 31 |
| | | Japan | 1 |
| | | South Korea | 8 |
| | South and Central Asia | Bangladesh | 5 |
| | | India | 15 |
| | | Nepal | 4 |
| | | Pakistan | 2 |
| | | Sri Lanka | 1 |
| | Southeast Asia | Indonesia | 1 |
| | | Philippines | 1 |
| Europe | | | 12(9.52%) |
| | | Croatia | 1 |
| | | Italy | 2 |
| | | Spain | 2 |
| | | Switzerland | 1 |
| | | Turkey | 5 |
| | | UK | 1 |
| Latin America & Caribbean | | | 17(13.49%) |
| | Caribbean | Jamaica | 1 |
| | | Mexico and Central America | Mexico |
| | South America | Brazil | 10 |
| | | Colombia | 2 |
| | | Ecuador | 1 |
| | | Peru | 1 |
| | | Uruguay | 1 |

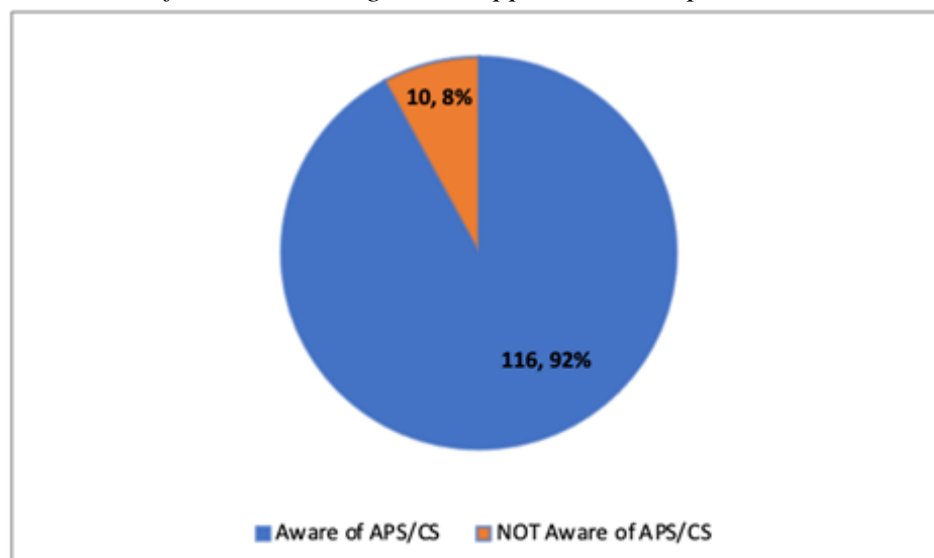
| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Middle East & North Africa | | | 11(8.7%) |
| | Middle East | Iran | 4 |
| | | Jordan | 3 |
| | | Kuwait | 1 |
| | | Saudi Arabia | 3 |
| North America | | | 3(2.4%) |
| | | Canada | 3 |
| Other | | | 1(0.79%) |
| Missing | | | 1(0.79%) |

Awareness of Academic Programs and Support

Understanding of awareness of the support and services by international graduate students was the first step of this study. The majority of respondents (n=116, 92.1%) reported that they know about the Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services offered by Southeastern University, while only 7.9% (n=10) of respondents said that they did not know about these services. See figure 4.

Figure 4

Awareness of Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services



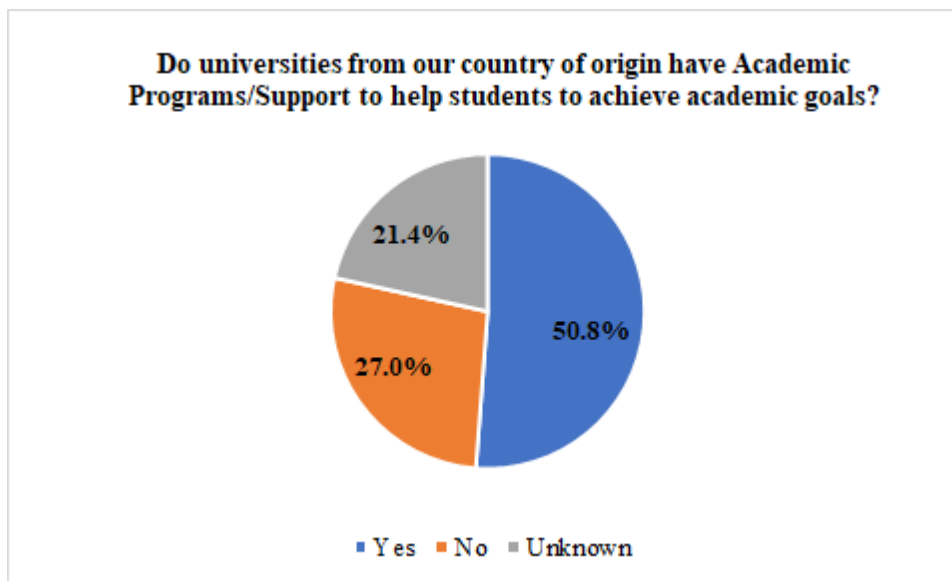
The following sections explore the differences of a number of independent variables (including previous knowledge and demographic variables).

Awareness and Access in Native Country

One factor that could potentially impact participants' awareness is the previous knowledge that the international graduate students had about Academic Programs, Support. A question was presented to know if these students in their country-of-origin have Academic Programs, Support to help them achieve academic goals similarly to the U.S Academic System. (See appendix 1, question 15). The objective of this question is to understand the familiarity the students have with these programs before they are enrolled at the Southeastern University. Generally, the most striking result that emerged from the data is that the majority of participants reported that they have Academic Programs, Support in their country of origin, which helps them achieve their academic goals ($n=64$, 50.8%). Of the 126 students, 34 students (27%) reported that they did not have access to similar programs in their home country, and 27 students (21.4%) indicated that it was unknown to them. See Figure 5.

Figure 5

Foreign universities and APS to achieve academic goals



Descriptive statistics crosstabs were used to analyze the frequency difference between the availability of these services and the place of origin of the international graduate students. The majority of students who participated in this study are from Asian countries such as China, South Korea and India. More specifically, approximately 37 students (54.4%) reported that in their countries have academic support to help them perform their scholastic goals. In addition, 14 students (20.6%) disclosed that they did not have academic support, and 17 students (25%) indicated that they did not know. Seventy-five percent ($n=9$) of the students from Africa, Sub-Saharan, reported that their countries don't have Academic Programs, Support to help them achieve academic goals, and 25% of said no ($n=3$). These results are substantial, considering the number of the students who participated in the study. On the other hand, one hundred percent of the students from North America ($n=3$) responded that they have this support from these countries. These students are coming from Canada, a top destination of international students which approaches the U.S. American system.

International students from Latin America & Caribbean and Europe, had similar results. 47.1% ($n=8$) of International Students from the Latin America & Caribbean states said that there are Academic Programs, Support in their countries to accomplish their academic goals, 35.3% ($n=6$) revealed there are not, and 17.6% ($n=3$) are unknown. European students communicated that 41.7%, ($n=5$) do have academic programs, 25% ($n=3$) do not, and 33.3% ($n=4$) are unknown. Few information is contained in this study about the academic system of Middle East and North Africa. Students from Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia indicated that there are academic programs in their countries to assist them to achieve their academic goals; 54.5% ($n=6$) said they do have programs, 18.2% answered no ($n=2$), and 27.3% ($n=3$) are unknown. The relationship between the previous knowledge and place of origin needs to be

interpreted with caution, as there is important data to explain the utilization of these services. See table 5.

Table 5

Foreign universities and APS to achieve academic goals by regions

| | <i>n</i> (%) Yes | <i>n</i> (%) No | <i>n</i> (%) Unknown |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| African, Sub-Saharan | 3(25%) | 9(75%) | - |
| Asia | 37(54.4%) | 14(20.6%) | 17(25.0%) |
| Europe | 5(41.7%) | 3(25.0%) | 4(33.3%) |
| Latin America & Caribbean | 8(47.1%) | 6(35.3%) | 3(17.6%) |
| Middle East & North Africa | 6(54.5%) | 2(18.2%) | 3(27.3%) |
| North America | 3(100%) | - | - |
| Other | 1(100%) | - | - |

Impact of Demographic Variables on Awareness Levels

In order to measure the impact of demographics on awareness levels of Academic Programs, Support, and Campus Services for International Graduates, the first set of descriptive statistics crosstabs analyses were conducted by frequencies of the independent variables (Academic level, Age, Gender, English as a Second language, and Length of time in Graduate School) with the dependent variable represented by question 8 of the survey (See Appendix 1).

Academic Level. Descriptive statistics crosstabs were used to analyze the frequency difference between the academic level of the international graduate students and awareness of Academic Program, Support and Campus Services at Southeastern University. The tests showed that 96% (*n*=48) that the Master’s students are familiar with the Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services, compared to 89.5% (*n*=68) of the Ph.D. students.

Table 6

Awareness of APS/CS by Academic Level

| Academic Level | Total Number of Respondents <i>n</i> (%) | Number Respondents Familiar w/APS/CS <i>n</i> (%) | Number Respondents NOT familiar w/ APS/CS <i>n</i> (%) |
|----------------|---|--|---|
| Masters | 50(39.7%) | 48(96%) | 2(4.0%) |
| Ph.D. | 76(60.3%) | 68(89.5%) | 8(10.5%) |

Age. Participants were then asked to identify their age via a free-response box. This ensured that the actual ages of the participants were captured. A descriptive statistics crosstabs test revealed that the groups 21 to 24 and 25 to 27, more than 96% of the students were aware of Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services offered on Southeastern University, ($n=30$, 96.8%; $n=25$, 96.2% respectively). The response rate was 91.2% for the group 28 to 30 ($n=31$), and 88% for the students the 31 to 35 ($n=22$). Interestingly the students older than 36 years had a lower percentage in comparison to the other groups ($n=8$, 80%). See Table 7.

Table 7

Awareness of APS/CS by Age

| Age Group | Total Number of Respondents <i>n</i> (%) | Number Respondents Familiar w/APS/CS <i>n</i> (%) | Number Respondents NOT familiar w/ APS/CS <i>n</i> (%) |
|---------------|---|--|---|
| 21-24 | 31(24.6%) | 30 (96.8%) | 1(3.2%) |
| 25-27 | 26(20.6%) | 25 (96.2%) | 1(3.8%) |
| 28-30 | 34(27.0%) | 31(91.2%) | 3(8.8%) |
| 31-35 | 25(19.8%) | 22(88.0%) | 3(12.0%) |
| Older than 36 | 10(7.9%) | 8(80.0%) | 2(20.0%) |

Gender. Similarly, a descriptive statistics crosstabs test was run to compare gender and awareness of Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services. These tests showed that the majority ($n=62$, 89.9%) of the female students who responded to the survey are familiar with

Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services. Similarly, the majority ($n=53$, 94.6%) of the male students also indicated the same. The only student who chose the option “other” as a gender identity reported that they have knowledge of Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services. See Table 8.

Table 8

Awareness of APS/CS by Gender

| Gender | Total Number of Respondents <i>n</i>(%) | Number Respondents Familiar w/APS/CS <i>n</i>(%) | Number Respondents NOT familiar w/ APS/CS <i>n</i>(%) |
|---------------|--|---|--|
| Female | 69(54.8%) | 62(89.9%) | 7(10.1%) |
| Male | 56(44.4%) | 53(94.6%) | 3(5.4%) |
| Other | 1(0.8%) | 1 (100%) | - |

English as a Second Language. Participants were then asked to report whether English was their first language. In response to this question, the majority ($n=108$, 85.7%) of international graduate students who participated in this study reported that English is not their first language ($n=18$, 14.3%). Of these participants 91.7% ($n=99$) were familiar with Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services, compared to native English Speakers ($n=17$, 94.4%). See Table 9.

Table 9

Awareness of APS/CS by English as a Second Language

| English-Speaking Nativity | Total Number of Respondents <i>n</i>(%) | Number Respondents Familiar w/APS/CS <i>n</i>(%) | Number Respondents NOT familiar w/ APS/CS <i>n</i>(%) |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Native English Speakers | 18(14.3%) | 17(94.4%) | 1(5.6%) |
| Non-Native Speakers | 108(85.71%) | 99(91.4%) | 9(8.3%) |

Graduate School Year of Study. When reviewing data from the length of time in Graduate School, the majority of students of all years in their graduate programs reported awareness of these services. Students in their fourth year had the largest majority, as 100% ($n=10$) of respondents reported awareness of these services. Students in their second and third years had the next largest majorities ($n=47$, 92.2%; $n=26$, 92.9%, respectively), followed by students in their first year ($n=28$, 90.3%), then students in their fifth year ($n= 5$, 83.3%). See Table 10.

Awareness of APS/CS by Graduate School Year of Study

| Length of time in Graduate School | Total Number of Respondents <i>n</i>(%) | Number Respondents Familiar w/APS/CS <i>n</i> (%) | Number Respondents NOT familiar w/ APS/CS <i>n</i>(%) |
|--|--|--|--|
| First year | 31(24.6%) | 28(90.3%) | 3(9.7%) |
| Second year | 51(40.5%) | 47(92.2%) | 4(7.8%) |
| Third year | 28(22.2%) | 26(92.9%) | 2(7.1%) |
| Fourth year | 10(7.9%) | 10(100%) | - |
| More than 5 years | 6(4.8%) | 5(83.3%) | 1(16.7%) |

Sources of Awareness

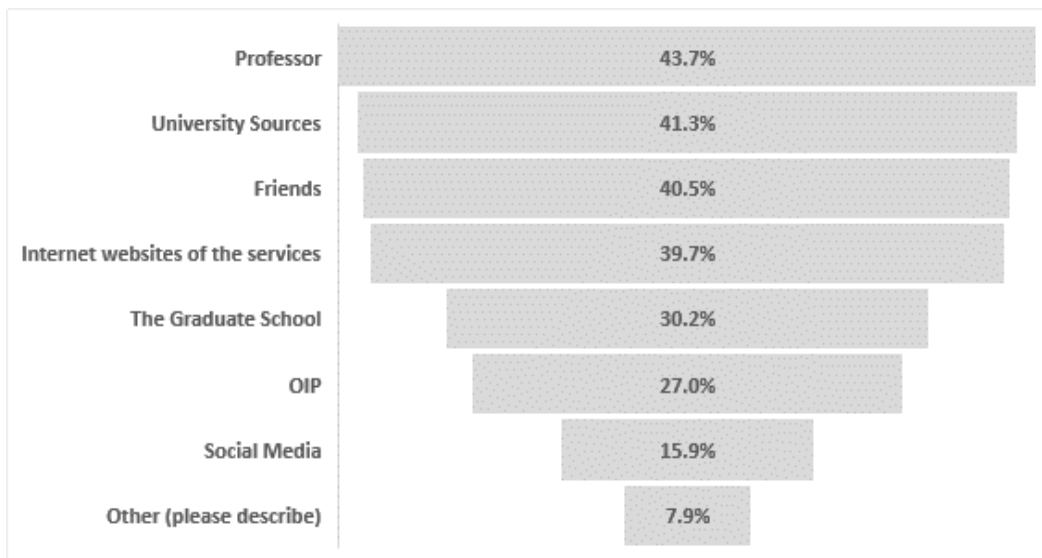
They students who reported that they were aware of APS/CS in question 8 were then ask to how they learned about these services (See Appendix 1, Question 9). As students may have learned about these services from multiple sources, respondents were asked to “select all that apply” between common communicators of these services, including: Friends, Professor, Internet (website of these services), the Office of International Programs (website or International Advisor), the Graduate School (webiste or Academic Advisor), Social Media, University Sources and other. The category “university sources” includes a large number of to announce events around the campus, including: The Newsletter Auburn News, This Week at AU,

Auburn Alumni Association, Auburn University Campus Safety & Security, Auburn University Athletics, AU involve, Office of the President, Senior VP for Students Affairs, International Alumni Newsletter, Office of International Student & Scholar Services (email), Auburn University Graduate School (email), and Auburn InterConnect(a newsletter specially tailored to international graduate students).

The most significant sources of awareness for these students were their professors ($n=55$, 43.7%). closely followed by University Resources ($n=52$, 41.3%), friends ($n=51$, 40.5%), and the internet (websites of these services; $n=50$, 39.7%). Respondents also indicated that the Graduate School ($n=38$, 30.2%), the Office of International Programs ($n=34$, 27%), and social media ($n=20$, 15.9%), were sources of awareness. Furthermore, a smaller percentage ($n=10$, 7.9%) indicated that they learned about APS/CS through “other” resources. When asked to define “other” these students reported the First Year Experience Mentorship Program and student organization. See figure 6.

Figure 6

How did you learn about these services?



Utilization of Academic Programs, Support

In order to identify which Academic Programs, Support are most utilized by international graduate students at Southeastern University, participants were asked to report which academic program, support they 1.) are currently using, and 2.) have used in the past (See Appendix 1, Questions 10 and 11 respectively).

Southeastern University provides a large quantity of Academic Programs, Support for undergraduate and graduate students. In order to narrow these programs. The support and programs which are specifically tailored to undergraduates were not included in this study. For this question, eight Academic Programs and Support were selected: Academic Coaching, University Libraries, Student Counseling/Psychological Services, Study Abroad/ International Education Opportunities, The Biggio Center, The ePortfolio Project, The Miller Writing Center, University Career Center. “None” was also included as an option to identify if students have never used these services. The eight Academic Programs, Support that were included in the study are crucial for the academic development of students, and they are services commonly offered in the principle universities in the United States (See literature review). There are other programs or support offered at Southeastern University, for example, Office of Professional and Continuing Education, LinkedIn Learning, Ed2go online, and Advancity Conversational English Program “Mojochat”. Although they are important support programs, they are not included in the study because they are not directly related to academic success and/or are not commonly offered in the principle universities in the United States.

Regarding past utilization of APS, University Libraries was the most utilized ($n=98$, 77.8%); it was the service for which the majority of respondents stated they had previously used. Following were the Miller Writing Center ($n=56$, 44.4%), the ePortfolio Project ($n=29$, 23.0%),

the Biggio Center ($n=27$, 21.4%), the University Career Center ($n=22$, 17.5%), the Student Counseling/Psychological Services ($n=17$, 13.5%), and Academic Coaching ($n=11$, 8.7%), and Study Abroad/International Education Opportunities ($n=8$, 6.3%). See table 11.

Table 11

Past Utilization of APS at Southeastern University

| | <i>n</i>(%)of Students who have used APS Students |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| University Libraries | 98 (77.8%) |
| The Miller Writing Center | 56(44.4%) |
| The ePortfolio Project | 29(23.0%) |
| The Biggio Center | 27(21.4%) |
| University Career Center | 22(17.5%) |
| Student Counseling/Psychol. Services | 17(13.5%) |
| Academic Coaching | 11(8.7%) |
| None | 11(8.7%) |
| Study Abroad/Intl Ed. Opportunities | 8(6.3%) |

To better understand how the utilization of these services is impacted demographic variables, a descriptive statistics crosstabs test were used between each of the eight highlighted Academic Programs, Support and the demographic variables presented in the section above. See Table 12.

The tests highlighted that the international PhD students utilized some Academic Program, Support, differently than Master’s Students. PhD students made greater use of University Libraries ($n=56$, 57% vs. $n=42$, 42%), The Miller Writing Center ($n=33$, 59% vs. $n=23$, 41%), The ePortfolio Project ($n=18$, 62% vs. $n=11$, 38%), and Student Counseling /Psychological Services ($n=12$, 71% vs. $n=5$, 29%). On the other hand, the University Career Center ($n=8$, 36% vs. $n=14$, 64%) and Academic Coaching ($n=4$, 36% vs. $n=7$, 64%) were used more by Master’s students.

When analyzing the effect of age, the students between the groups of 21-24 ($n=31$), 25-27 ($n=26$), and 28-30 ($n=34$) had a high utilization compared with students of 31-35 ($n=25$) and more than 36 ($n=10$). The female students ($n=69$) and the students who speak English as a Second language ($n=105$) have more utilization in all Academic Programs, Support than males ($n=56$) and native English speakers ($n=18$). In addition, the findings indicate that second year international students have an impressive utilization of Academic Program, Support when compared to the students of other years. See table 12.

Table 12

Past Utilization of APS at Southeastern University - Independent variables

| Academic Level | n(%)Ph. D Students | n(%)Masters Students | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| University Libraries | 56(57%) | 42(43%) | - | - | - |
| The Miller Writing Center | 33(59%) | 23(41%) | - | - | - |
| The ePortfolio Project | 18(62%) | 11(38%) | - | - | - |
| The Biggio Center | 16(59%) | 11(41%) | - | - | - |
| University Career Center | 8(36%) | 14(64%) | - | - | - |
| Student Counseling/Psychol. Services | 12(71%) | 5(29%) | - | - | - |
| Academic Coaching | 4(36%) | 7(64%) | - | - | - |
| None | 7(64%) | 4(36%) | - | - | - |
| Study Abroad/Intl Ed. Opportunities | 3(38%) | 5(63%) | - | - | - |
| Age | 21-24 n(%) | 25-27 n(%) | 28-30 n(%) | 31-35 n(%) | > 36 n(%) |
| University Libraries | 25(25.5%) | 22(22.4%) | 25(25.5%) | 17(17.3%) | 9(9.2%) |
| The Miller Writing Center | 12(21.4%) | 13(23.2%) | 15(26.8%) | 9(16.1%) | 7(12.5%) |
| The ePortfolio Project | 7(24.1%) | 8(27.6%) | 6(20.7%) | 3(10.3%) | 5(17.2%) |
| The Biggio Center | 8(29.6%) | 5(18.5%) | 7(25.9%) | 4(14.8%) | 3(11.1%) |
| University Career Center | 6(27.3%) | 4(18.2%) | 6(27.3%) | 4(18.2%) | 2(9.1%) |
| Student Counseling/Psychol. Services | 4(23.5%) | 1(5.9%) | 5(29.4%) | 5(29.4%) | 2(11.8%) |
| Academic Coaching | 3(27.3%) | 5(45.5%) | 3(27.3%) | - | - |
| None | 2(18.2%) | 4(36.4%) | 5(45.5%) | - | - |
| Study Abroad/Intl Ed. Opportunities | 3(37.5%) | 3(37.5%) | 1(12.5%) | 1(12.5%) | - |
| Gender | n(%)Female | n(%)Male | n(%)Other | | |
| University Libraries | 55(56.1%) | 42(42.9%) | 1(1%) | - | - |
| The Miller Writing Center | 32(57.1%) | 24(42.9%) | - | - | - |
| The ePortfolio Project | 19(65.5%) | 10(34.5%) | - | - | - |
| The Biggio Center | 15(55.6%) | 12(44.4%) | - | - | - |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| University Career Center | 13(59.1%) | 9(40.9%) | - | - | - |
| Student Counseling/Psychol. Services | 13(76.5%) | 4(23.5%) | - | - | - |
| Academic Coaching | 5(45.5%) | 6(54.5%) | - | - | - |
| None | 4(36.4%) | 7(63.6%) | - | - | - |
| Study Abroad/Intl Ed. Opportunities | 7 (87.5%) | 1(12.5%) | - | - | - |
| English as Second Language | Non-Native Speakers | Native English Speakers | | | |
| University Libraries | 83(84.7%) | 15(15.3%) | - | - | - |
| The Miller Writing Center | 49(85.7%) | 7(12.5%) | - | - | - |
| The ePortfolio Project | 25(86.2%) | 4(13.8%) | - | - | - |
| The Biggio Center | 23(85.2%) | 4(14.8%) | - | - | - |
| University Career Center | 20(90.9%) | 2(9.1) | - | - | - |
| Student Counseling/Psychol. Services | 14(82.4%) | 3(17.6%) | - | - | - |
| Academic Coaching | 6(54.5%) | 5(45.5%) | - | - | - |
| None | 10(90.9%) | 1(9.1%) | - | - | - |
| Study Abroad/Intl Ed. Opportunities | 8(100%) | - | - | - | - |
| Graduate School year of study | First year n(%) | Second year n(%) | Third year n(%) | Fourth year n(%) | > 5 years n(%) |
| University Libraries | 22 (22.4%) | 43(43.9%) | 20(20.4%) | 8(8.2%) | 5(5.1%) |
| The Miller Writing Center | 15(26.8%) | 20(35.7%) | 9(16.1%) | 7(12.5%) | 5(8.9%) |
| The ePortfolio Project | 2(6.9%) | 14(48.3%) | 6(20.7%) | 3(10.3%) | 4(13.8%) |
| The Biggio Center | 7(25.9%) | 12(44.4%) | 5(18.5%) | - | 3(11.1%) |
| University Career Center | 3(13.6%) | 14(63.6%) | 2(9.1%) | 1(4.5%) | 2(9.1%) |
| Student Counseling/Psychol. Services | 1(5.9%) | 4(23.5%) | 5(29.4%) | 3(17.6%) | 4(23.5%) |
| Academic Coaching | 6 (54.5%) | 2(18.2%) | 2(18.2%) | 1(9.1%) | - |
| None | 4 (36.4%) | 4(36.4%) | 3(27.3%) | - | - |
| Study Abroad/Intl Ed. Opportunities | 3(37.5%) | 3(37.5%) | 2(25%) | - | - |

Utilization of Academic Programs, Support - Place of Origin

To complement the understanding of the utilization of Academic Programs, Support for International Graduate Students an important set of analyses statistics crosstabs were used to analyze the relationship between the utilization of Academic Programs, Support and place of origin of the international students. These tests showed that there are particularities between students. The students of Asian countries such as China and India interestingly are the most used the academic programs and support that the Southeastern University provides for the students. They represented 59.8% in the utilization of University Libraries ($n=58$) in the total of students who utilized the service, as well as, in the Miller Writing Center, they are 67.9%, ($n=38$) and 69% in the ePortfolio ($n=20$). In three Academic Programs, Support which received a small number of utilizations, this group of the students continued in the high position. They represented, 52.9% in utilization of the Counseling/Psychological ($n=9$), 54.5% in utilization of the Academic Coaching ($n=6$), and 62.5% in the Study abroad/International Educational Opportunities ($n=5$). They are also represented the majority at the University Career Center with 63.6% of utilization ($n=14$), and 50% in the Biggio Center ($n=13$). The students' origin from the Asian countries are in the total 69 students, and only 4 of them choose the options none. It means that they did none of these services.

For the students from Europe, they are 12 students in total, and the principal services utilized for them are University Libraries ($n=8$, 8.2%), the Miller Writing Center ($n=6$, 10.7%), and the Student Counseling/ Psychological Services ($n=5$, 29.4%). It is important to highlight that the European students represented the second position of utilization in the Student Counseling/Psychological Services behind the Asian students. The students from African, Sub-Saharan who participated in this study was 12 students and 11 of them utilized the University

libraries ($n=11$, 11.3%), The University Career Center ($n=4$, 18.2%), The Biggio Center ($n=4$, 15.4%). The students of Latin American & Caribbean had more utilization of the University Libraries ($n=14$, 14.4%). The international graduate students from the Middle East & North Africa, North America had a small utilization of the services, so there were not significantly findings. See table 13.

Table 13

Past Utilization of APS - Place of origin

| Academic Programs Support Regions | African, Sub-Saharan <i>n</i>(%) | Asia <i>n</i>(%) | Europe <i>n</i>(%) | Latin American & Caribbean <i>n</i>(%) | Middle East & North Africa <i>n</i>(%) | North America <i>n</i>(%) | Other <i>n</i>(%) |
|--|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| University Libraries | 11(11.3%) | 58 (59.8%) | 8(8.2%) | 14(14.4%) | 4(4.1%) | 2(2.1%) | - |
| The Miller Writing Center | 4(7.1%) | 38(67.9%) | 6(10.7%) | 3(5.4%) | 3(5.4%) | 1(1.8%) | 1(1.8%) |
| The ePortfolio Project | 3(10.3%) | 20(69.0%) | 3(10.3%) | 2(6.9%) | 1(3.4%) | 1(3.4%) | - |
| The Biggio Center | 4(15.4%) | 13(50%) | 3(11.5%) | 2(7.7%) | 4(15.4%) | - | - |
| University Career Center | 4(18.2%) | 14(63.6%) | 1(4.5%) | 1(4.5%) | - | 1(4.5%) | 1(4.5%) |
| Student Counseling/Psychol. Services | - | 9(52.9%) | 5(29.4%) | 3(17.6%) | - | - | - |
| Academic Coaching | 1(9.1%) | 6(54.5%) | 1(9.1%) | 1(9.1%) | 2(18.2%) | - | - |
| None | 1(9.1%) | 4(36.4%) | 2(18.2%) | 1(9.1%) | 2 | 1(9.1%) | - |
| Study Abroad/Intl Ed. Opportunities | - | 5(62.5%) | 2(25%) | 1(12.5%) | - | - | - |

Present Utilization of Academic Programs, Support

Considerable that the data were collected during the COVID-19 (coronavirus pandemic), and at the Southeastern University, an alternate operations model was initiated to guarantee safety to students, faculty, and staff. This directly impacted all Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services and their use by students because some services were only available remotely, while others were briefly unavailable. This fact, reflecting in the results when questioned the international graduate students what Academic Programs, Support that they are currently using. The most remarkable result to emerge from the data is even with the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, The University Libraries and the Miller Writing Center continued to be as the most important Academic Programs, Support and Services for International Graduate Students. The University Libraries continuing in the first place, ($n=70$, 55.6%), and The Miller Writing Center kept on the principals position ($n=21$, 16.7%).

Almost half of the students choose the option None, ($n=42$, 33%), reporting that they have not used any services. Interestingly, the Student Counseling/Psychological Services increase their position ($n=13$, 10.3%). It is important to highlight that during COVID-19 (coronavirus pandemic), there was large dissemination of Student Counseling/Psychological Services in The Newsletter Auburn News, This Week at AU, Auburn University Graduate School (email). The University Career Center ($n=10$, 7.9%); Academic Coaching ($n=7$, 5.6%); The Biggio Center ($n=6$, 4.8%); The ePortfolio Project ($n=4$, 3.2%) The Study Abroad/ International Educational Opportunities ($n=3$, 2.4%). Overall, the results showed that, the Academic Programs, Support had a significant reduction in the number of students who are currently using during the COVID-19 (coronavirus pandemic). See table 14.

Table 14

Present Utilization of APS at Southeastern University

| | Total Students <i>n</i>(%) |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| University Libraries | 70(55.6%) |
| None | 42(33.3%) |
| The Miller Writing Center | 21(16.7%) |
| Student Counseling/Psychol. Services | 13(10.3%) |
| University Career Center | 10(7.9%) |
| Academic Coaching | 7(5.6%) |
| The Biggio Center | 6(4.8%) |
| The ePortfolio Project | 4(3.2%) |
| Study Abroad/Intl Ed. Opportunities | 3(2.4%) |

For question 11, the study will not correlate with the independents' variables (Academic level, Age, Gender, English as second language, and Graduate school year of study) because its use has been altered for the reasons mentioned above.

Utilization of Campus Services

As expected the University Medical Clinic and Recreation and Wellness Center are the most principal Campus Services utilized or currently utilized by the international graduate students. The response rate was ($n=88$, 69.8%) for Medical Clinic and ($n=71$, 56.3%) for the Recreation and Wellness Center. The campus services Cross-Cultural ($n=19$, 15.1%, Student Involvement ($n=19$, 15.1%), and Student Affairs ($n=15$, 11.9%) had a similar response rate, almost fifteen percent of the students related that they have used or currently use. Very a few participants related that they utilized, or current utilized, The Office of Accessibility ($n=8$, 6.3%), The Office of Inclusion and Diversity ($n=7$, 5.6%) and Speech and Hearing Clinic ($n=5$, 4.0%). See Table 15.

Table 15

Past and Present Utilization of CS at Southeastern University

| | Total Students <i>n</i>(%) |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| University Medical Clinic | 88(69.8%) |
| Recreation and Wellness Center | 71(56.3%) |
| Cross-Cultural Programs | 19(15.1%) |
| Student Involvement | 19(15.1%) |
| Student Affairs at Southeastern University | 15(11.9%) |
| The Office of Accessibility | 8(6.3%) |
| The Office of Inclusion and Diversity | 7(5.6%) |
| Speech and Hearing Clinic | 5(4.0%) |

Past Utilization of CS at Southeastern University - Independent variables

This study analyzed the past utilization of Campus Services and independent variables: (Academic level, Age, Gender, English as second language, and Graduate school year of study). One more time, a set of analyses statistics crosstabs were used, and the tests confirmed the same movement that occurred with the Academic Programs, Support. The international Ph.D. students related more utilization than Master Students in almost all Campus Services exception of the Cross-Cultural Program ($n=6$, 31.6%) Master students vs. ($n=13$, 68%), Ph.D students. The Office of Inclusion and Diversity ($n=4$, 57.1%) Master students vs. ($n=3$, 42.9%) Ph.D students, and Speech and Hearing Clinic ($n=2$, 40%) Master students vs. Ph.D students. When analyzing the age, the students between the groups of 21-24, 25-27, 28-30, of 31-35 have a high utilization in general than students more than 36. The female students and the students who speakers of English as a Second language have more utilization in all Campus Services than male, other and Native Speakers. In addition, the findings of the results indicate that the international students of the second year have an impressive utilization when compared to the student of other years. See table 16.

Table 16

Past and Present Utilization of CS at Southeastern University by Independent variables

| Academic Level | n(%)Ph.D Students | n(%)Masters Students | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| University Medical Clinic | 51(58.0%) | 37(42.0%) | - | - | - |
| Recreation and Wellness Center | 45(63.4%) | 26(36.6%) | - | - | - |
| Cross-Cultural Programs | 6(31.6%) | 13(68.4%) | - | - | - |
| Student Involvement | 12(63.2%) | 7(36.8%) | - | - | - |
| Student Affairs at Southeastern University | 9(60.0%) | 6(40.0%) | - | - | - |
| The Office of Accessibility | 6(75.0%) | 2(25.0%) | - | - | - |
| The Office of Inclusion and Diversity | 3(42.9%) | 4(57.1%) | - | - | - |
| Speech and Hearing Clinic | 2(40.0) | 3(60.0) | - | - | - |
| Age | 21-24 n(%) | 25-27 n(%) | 28-30 n(%) | 31-35 n(%) | > than 36 n(%) |
| University Medical Clinic | 22(25.0%) | 21(23.9%) | 19(21.6%) | 20(22.7%) | 6(6.8%) |
| Recreation and Wellness Center | 16(22.5%) | 19(26.8%) | 20(28.2%) | 13(18.3%) | 3(4.2%) |
| Cross-Cultural Programs | 7(36.8%) | 6(31.6%) | 3(15.8%) | 2(10.5%) | 1(5.3%) |
| Student Involvement | 4(21.1%) | 4(21.1%) | 6(31.6%) | 3(15.8%) | 2(10.5%) |
| Student Affairs at Southeastern University | 2(13.3%) | 4(26.7%) | 4(26.7%) | 2(13.3%) | 3(20.0%) |
| The Office of Accessibility | 1(12.5%) | - | 4(50.0%) | 2(25%) | 1(12.5%) |
| The Office of Inclusion and Diversity | 2(28.6%) | 2(28.6%) | - | 2(28.6%) | 1(14.3%) |
| Speech and Hearing Clinic | 2(40%) | 3(60%) | - | - | - |
| Gender | n(%)Female | n(%)Male | n(%)Other | | |
| University Medical Clinic | 49(55.7%) | 38(43.2%) | 1(1.1%) | - | - |
| Recreation and Wellness Center | 43(60.6%) | 28(39.4%) | - | - | - |
| Cross-Cultural Programs | 7(36.8%) | 11(57.9%) | 1(5.3%) | - | - |
| Student Involvement | 11(57.9%) | 7(36.8%) | 1(5.3%) | - | - |
| Student Affairs at Southeastern University | 4(26.7%) | 11(73.3%) | - | - | - |
| The Office of Accessibility | 3(37.5%) | 5(62.5%) | - | - | - |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| The Office of Inclusion and Diversity | 6(85.7%) | 1(14.3%) | - | - | - |
| Speech and Hearing Clinic | 3(60.0%) | 2(40.0%) | - | - | - |
| English as Second Language | Non-Native English Speakers n(%) | Native Speakers n(%) | | | |
| University Medical Clinic | 74(84.1%) | 14(15.9%) | - | - | - |
| Recreation and Wellness Center | 61(85.9%) | 10(14.1%) | - | - | - |
| Cross-Cultural Programs | 17(89.5%) | 2(10.5%) | - | - | - |
| Student Involvement | 18(94.7%) | 1(5.3%) | - | - | - |
| Student Affairs at Southeastern University | 11(73.3%) | 4(26.7%) | - | - | - |
| The Office of Accessibility | 7(87.5%) | 1(12.5%) | - | - | - |
| The Office of Inclusion and Diversity | 6(85.7%) | 1(14.3%) | - | - | - |
| Speech and Hearing Clinic | 4(80.0%) | 1(20.0%) | - | - | - |
| Graduate School year of study | First year n(%) | Second year n(%) | Third year n(%) | Fourth year n(%) | > 5 years n(%) |
| University Medical Clinic | 18(20.5%) | 39(44.3%) | 18(20.5%) | 7(8.0%) | 6(6.8%) |
| Recreation and Wellness Center | 6(8.5%) | 33(46.5%) | 18(25.4%) | 8(11.3%) | 6(8.5%) |
| Cross-Cultural Programs | 5(26.3%) | 7(36.8%) | 6(31.6%) | 1(5.3%) | - |
| Student Involvement | 1(5.3%) | 8(42.1%) | 7(36.8%) | 1(5.3%) | 2(10.5%) |
| Student Affairs at Southeastern University | 3(20.0%) | 8(53.3%) | 4(26.4%) | - | - |
| The Office of Accessibility | - | 3(37.5%) | 4(50.0%) | 1(12.5%) | - |
| The Office of Inclusion and Diversity | - | 4(57.1%) | 2(28.6%) | 1(14.3%) | - |
| Speech and Hearing Clinic | 2(40%) | 1(20%) | 2(40%) | - | - |

The perceived importance of APS to the International Graduate Student

In response to this question, the participants were asked in question 12, “How helpful is the Academic Programs, Support offered by Southeastern University?.” A set of descriptive statistics frequencies were conducted, and the tests revealed that significantly, for the international graduate students, the Academic Programs, Support is extremely helpful ($n=18$, 14.3%) or very helpful ($n=60$, 47.6%). Following the response rate was (moderately helpful) ($n=32$, 25.4%) for moderately helpful and ($n=10$, 7.9%) for slightly helpful. It should be noted that six students did not provide a response to this question, ($n=6$, 4.8%). The mean found was 2.28 and the Std. Deviation was .833, Minimum 1 and Maximum 4.

In addition, a set of descriptive statistics crosstabs analyses were conducted through the frequencies between the two dependent variables question 10 and question 11. In question 10 “Please select all the Academic Programs, Support that you have used in the past” and in question 12 mentioned above (See appendix 1). The objective of this analysis is to determine which APS student found to be more helpful for them.

As expected, The University Libraries and the Miller Writing Center were indicated of the international graduate students as the most helpful Academic Program, Support. The response rate for the University Libraries was “extremely helpful” ($n=13$, 13.5%), “very helpful” ($n=51$, 53.1%) and “moderately helpful” ($n=27$, 28.1%). Similarly, for the the Miller Writing Center the response rate was “extremely helpful” ($n=14$, 25.5%), “very helpful” ($n=24$, 43.6%) and “moderately helpful” ($n=15$, 27.3%). The ePortfolio Project, The Biggio Center, and The University Career Center had similar results. Academic Coaching was considered “very helpful” ($n=6$, 54.6%) and “moderately helpful” ($n=4$, 36.4%) and “slightly helpful” ($n=1$, 9.1%). See table 17.

Table 17

How did helpful is APS at Southeastern University

| Helpful | Students who have used APS n(%) | Extremely helpful n(%) | Very helpful n(%) | Moderately helpful n(%) | Slightly helpful n(%) |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| University Libraries | 96(76.2%) | 13(13.5%) | 51(53.1%) | 27(28.1%) | 5(5.2%) |
| The Miller Writing Center | 55(43.7%) | 14(25.5%) | 24(43.6%) | 15(27.3%) | 2(3.6%) |
| The Biggio Center | 26(20%) | 3(11.5%) | 13(50.0%) | 9(34.6%) | 1(3.8%) |
| University Career Center | 22(17.5%) | 5(22.7%) | 11(50.0%) | 6(27.3%) | - |
| Student Counseling/Psychol. Services | 16(12.7%) | 2(12.5%) | 7(43.8%) | 5(31.3%) | 2(12.5%) |
| Academic Coaching | 11(8.7%) | - | 6(54.5%) | 4(36.4%) | 1(9.1%) |
| Study Abroad/Intl Ed. Opportunities | 8(6.3%) | 3(37.5%) | 3(37.5%) | 2(25.0%) | - |

When investigated the place of origin of the students and the perception of how helpful the Academic Programs, Support at Southeastern University in is general the international students have considered “very helpful” and “moderately helpful”, inclusively in the countries that they state there are not these services such as Africa, Sub-Saharan. See table 18.

Table 18

How did helpful is APS at Southeastern by place of origin.

| Helpful | Extremely helpful n(%) | Very helpful n(%) | Moderately helpful n(%) | Slightly helpful n(%) |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Africa, Sub-Saharan | 2(16.7%) | 8(66.7%) | 1(8.3%) | 1(8.3%) |
| Asia | 10(15.2%) | 29(43.9%) | 24(36.4%) | 3(4.5%) |
| Europe | 2(18.2%) | 6(54.5%) | 1(9.1%) | 2(18.2%) |
| Latin America & Caribbean | 2(12.5%) | 11(68.8%) | 2(12.5%) | 1(6.3%) |
| Middle East & North Africa | - | 4(40.0%) | 3(30.0%) | 3(30.0%) |
| North America | 1(33.3%) | 1(33.3%) | 1(33.3%) | - |
| Others | 1(100%) | - | - | - |
| Missing n(%) | 7(5.6%) | - | - | - |

The satisfaction of APS offered by Southeastern University

In order to find the level of satisfaction of Academic Programs, Support the international graduate student at Southeastern University, the students were questioned “How satisfied they are with the Academic Programs, Support offered by at Southeastern University” Results from this section were quantified by assigning a number to each point on the scale (1-5, 1=Very Satisfied; indicating highest level satisfaction, 5=Very Dissatisfied, indicating lowest level satisfaction; see Appendix 1, question 13). The University Libraries had their score mean of 1.59 and Std. deviation .762 is a positive satisfaction of the services.

Following The Biggio Center had a score mean 1.87, and Std. deviation .718. The ePortfolio Project and Study Abroad/International Education Opportunities had the same score mean 2.10 with Std. deviation .788, and .852 respectively. For the first time in the study, the Miller Writing Center lost the second position. In terms of satisfaction, it was evaluated mean 2.17 and Std. Deviation 1.092, in the open question, this study brings some comments about the MWC that maybe can explain these results. The University Career Center and Student Counseling/Psychological Services had a response rate mean 2.16 for both and the Std. Deviation 1.214 for The University Career Center and .987 for Student Counseling/Psychological Services. The lowest level of satisfaction, the Academic Coaching response rate was means 2.31, and the Std. Deviation .841. Table 19 and 20 illustrates average ratings by question. In conclusion, for this study, the satisfaction will not be cross table with the independent variables (Academic level, Age, Gender, English as second language, and Graduate school year of study) and the place of origin of students. See Table 19, Figure 7 and Table 20.

Table 19

Descriptive Statistics for Satisfied APS at Southeastern University

| | <i>n</i> (%) | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std.Deviation |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|---------|---------|------|---------------|
| University Libraries | 108(85.71%) | 1 | 5 | 1.59 | .762 |
| The Miller Writing Center | 60(47.62%) | 1 | 5 | 2.17 | 1.092 |
| The ePortfolio Project | 39(30.95%) | 1 | 4 | 2.10 | .788 |
| The Biggio Center | 31(24.60%) | 1 | 3 | 1.87 | .718 |
| University Career Center | 31(24.60%) | 1 | 5 | 2.16 | 1.214 |
| Student Counseling/Psychol. | 32(25.40%) | 1 | 5 | 2.16 | .987 |
| Academic Coaching | 42(33.33%) | 1 | 4 | 2.31 | .841 |
| Study Abroad/Intl Ed. Opportunities | 20(15.87%) | 1 | 4 | 2.10 | .852 |

Figure 7

Descriptive Statistics for Satisfied APS at Southeastern

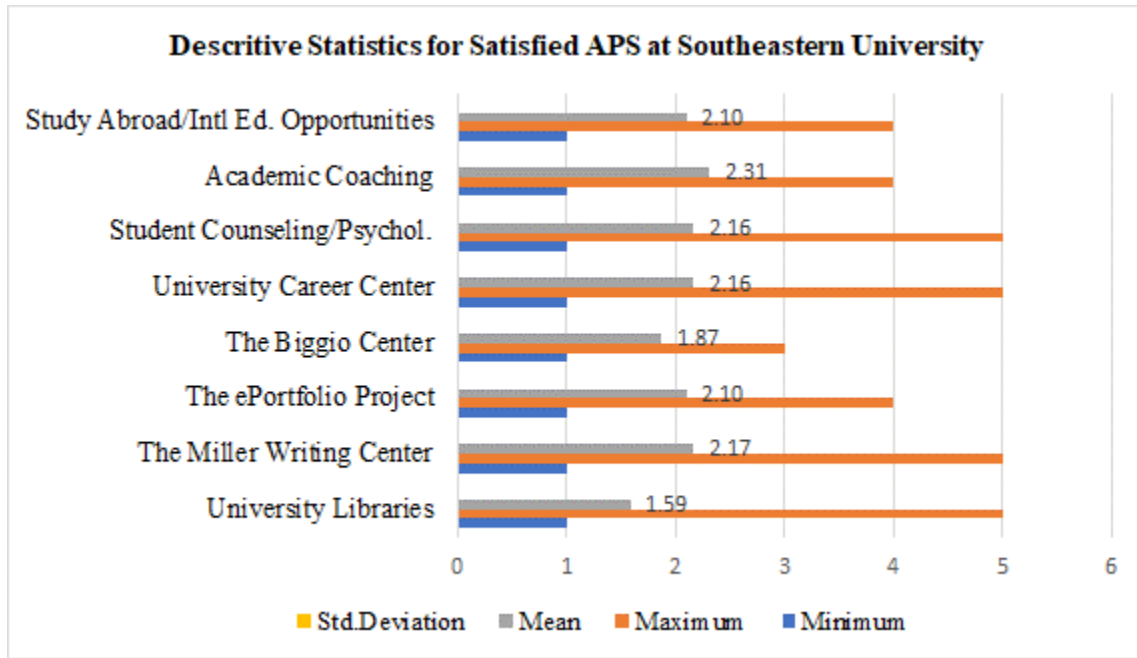


Table 20*How satisfied are you with the APS offered by Southeastern University?*

| | Very Satisfied n(%) | Satisfied n(%) | Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied n(%) | Dissatisfied n(%) | Very Dissatisfied n(%) | N/A Missing n(%) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| University Libraries | 56(44.4%) | 45(35.7%) | 3(2.4%) | 3(2.4%) | 1(0.8%) | 18(14.3) |
| The Miller Writing Center | 19(15.1%) | 22(17.5%) | 11(8.7%) | 6(4.8%) | 2(1.6%) | 66(52.4%) |
| Academic Coaching | 7(5.6%) | 18(14.3%) | 14(11.1%) | 3(2.4%) | - | 84(66.7%) |
| The ePortfolio Project | 9(7.1%) | 18(14.3%) | 11(8.7%) | 1(0.8%) | - | 87(69.0%) |
| The Biggio Center | 10(7.9%) | 15(11.9%) | 6(4.8%) | - | - | 95(75.4%) |
| University Career Center | 12(9.5%) | 8(6.3%) | 7(5.6%) | 2(1.6%) | 2(1.6%) | 95(75.4%) |
| Student Counseling/Psychol. | 9(7.1%) | 12(9.5%) | 9(7.1%) | 1(0.8%) | 1(0.8%) | 94(74.6%) |
| Study Abroad/Intl Ed. Opportunities | 5(4.0%) | 9(7.1%) | 5(4.0%) | 1(0.8%) | - | 106(84.1%) |

Additional findings open question

The international graduate students were questioned in an open question about their experiences using Academic Program/ Support Services. (See Appendix 1, question 17). In a total 48 International Graduate Students answered this question, which the results were grouped together by topics: University Libraries, The Miller Writing Center, Positive Feedback of APS, Negative Feedback of APS, and Other topics. The University Libraries had eight satisfactory feedback and one with possibility improvement. These comments from the students reinforce the results that the University Libraries had in other categories such as satisfied, used in the past, currently using, or helping. To the Miller Writing Center in total seven international graduate students commented about this academic services. I mixed of excellent and general feedbacks with opportunity for improvement. Some respondents gave a general positive feedback of APS, in these expositions they did not gave a specified academic program, but more information how they are using this services or feedback about the staffs, in a total of thirteen comments. As a natural process, opportunities for improvement were expected. The negative feedback of APS was more tips, and comments. In the end, in the section Other some participants commented items which was not have a relation to Academic Programs, Support, this study will analyze these comments in the section Conclusion.

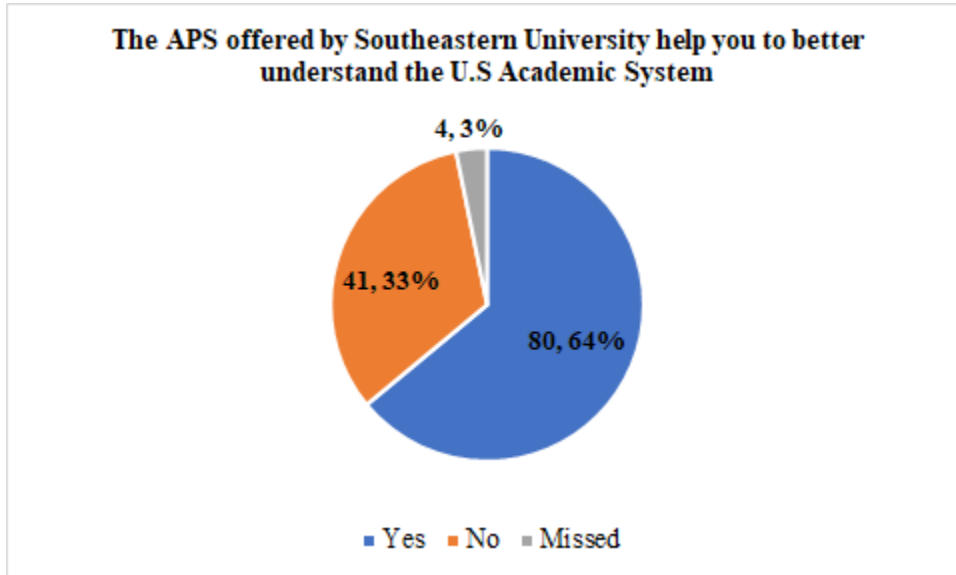
Additional findings question multiple choice

Other questions were added in this study with the objective understand of the U.S Academic System, communication, inclusion and welcome at the Southeastern University. For the analysis the U.S Academic System, the participates were invited to answer this question: “Do the Academic Programs, Support offered by Southeastern University for Graduate Students help you to better understand the U.S. Academic System? The majority of respondents felt that “Yes,

in percent it was 63.5% ($n=80$), approximately 32.5% ($n=41$), of the international graduate students said that No, and 4% ($n=5$), missed the question. See Figure 8.

Figure 8

The APS offered by Southeastern and U.S Academic System



To investigate the communication the participants were invited to answer these questions: “Do you feel that the purpose of Academic Programs, Support is clearly communicated to International Graduate Students?” and “Do you feel that the purpose of Campus Services is clearly communicated to International Graduate Students?” Both for the Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services the results not unanimous. For the Academic Programs, Support over half reported “Yes” ($n=52$, 41.3%); No ($n=42$, 33.3%) and 24.6% ($n=31$), responded that they did not have opinion. For the Campus Services the results indicated that 50% ($n=60$) agreed that the communicated is clearly; 30.2% ($n=38$) reported that no and 19%, ($n=24$) did not have an opinion. See table 21.

Table 21

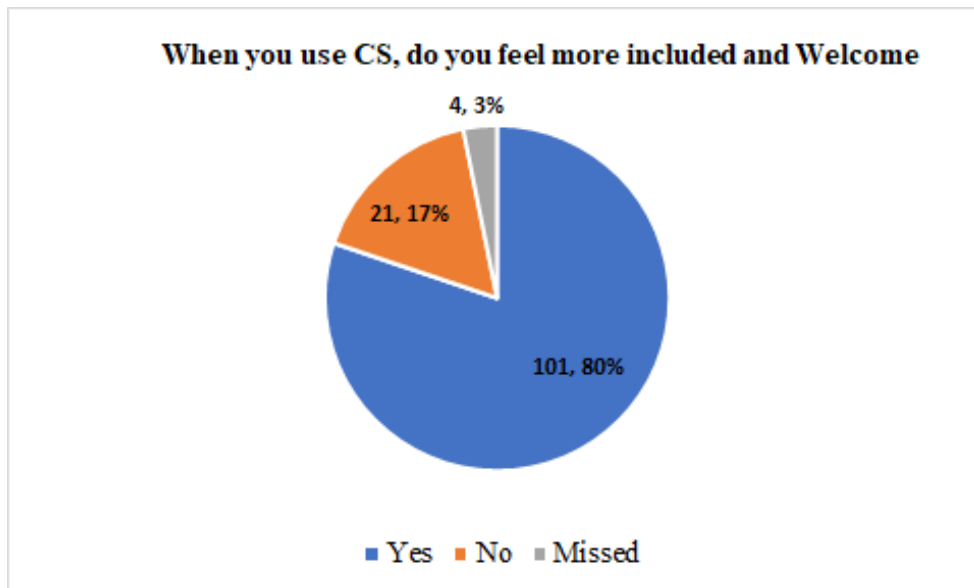
Clearly Communication of APS and CS

| Clearly Communicated APS n(%) | | Clearly Communicated CS n(%) | |
|--|-----------|---|-----------|
| Yes | 52(41.3%) | Yes | 63(50%) |
| No | 42(33.3%) | No | 38(30.2%) |
| No opinion | 31(24.6%) | No opinion | 24(19.0%) |
| Missing | 1(0.8%) | Missing | 1(0.8%) |

To explore the inclusion and welcome the international students was answered “When you use Campus Services, do you feel more included and welcome at the Southeastern University”. Interestingly, the majority of respondents, 80.2% of international graduate students, explained that they felt more included and welcome when they are using Campus Services, and a small minority 16.7% ($n=21$), indicated that No, and 3.2% ($n=4$) missed the question. See figure 9.

Figure 9

Campus Services, Inclusion and Welcome at Southeastern University



Chapter 5: Summary, Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research

Summary

This study was designed to determine whether international students enrolled in a graduate program at Southeastern University knew about and used the Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services, as well as their level of satisfaction with the programs.

Additionally, it was investigated if these programs and services were an important instrument to support, help and if they integrated into their journey throughout university. Chapter 1 provided a brief introduction, statement of the problem, purpose, significance, limitations of this study, definition of terms, organization of the study.

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of this study was to investigate whether international students, enrolled in a graduate program at Southeastern University knew, used, and were satisfied with the Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services offered by the institution. Additionally, it was investigated whether these programs and services were an important instrument to support and integrate into their journey as an international graduate student. Contributions of other universities in the state of Alabama was noted in the literature review; however, these universities were outside the scope of the present study.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do demographic variables (Academic level, Gender, English as a Second language, and Length of time in Graduate School) impact awareness of Academic

- Programs, Support, and Campus Services for international graduate students at Southeastern University?
2. What Academic Programs, Support are most utilized by international graduate students at Southeastern University?
 3. What Campus Services are most utilized by international graduate students at Southeastern University?
 4. What is the perceived importance of Academic Programs, Support to the international graduate students at Southeastern University?
 5. How satisfied are international graduate students with Academic Programs, Support at Southeastern University?

In Chapter 2, this study presented a literature review that analyzed the following: the international students global, international graduate students who want to obtain higher education in the United States, and the students in the State of Alabama. Also, the explanation was presented about the Academic Programs, Support, and Campus Services. This was done through a model developed by Morrill, Hurst, and Oetting (1980) and Hurst and Jacobson (1985), a model which is used for conceptualizing academic services. In conclusion, this chapter closes on how these services are available for the students at the given university.

Chapter 3, disclosed the methodology of this research project. The researchers created a web-based, 20-item survey via Qualtrics software which was approved and reviewed by an Institutional Review Board. The data collection occurred during the Fall 2020 semester, in which the international graduate students received the email by Auburn Graduate School (gradcom@auburn.edu). A total of 155 graduate students responded. Of these respondents, two students stated they did not want to participate in the study, and 27 opened the survey but did not

complete the study. These participants were eliminated from the study. Overall, 126 students completed the survey and were included in the data analysis.

Chapter 4, provided the findings of this study. All the twenty questions were analyzed, and the SPSS system was used, a statistical analysis software that is available to Southeastern University students. This system is compatible with the Qualtrics system. It was able to give the set of descriptive statistics crosstabs and frequency analyses.

Discussion

Awareness levels of APS and CS

After analyzing the awareness levels of international graduate students, the results indicated that the majority of them know about Academic Programs, Support and Campus services, which is provided by Southeastern University. The current study was not able to affirm the influence of demographic variables in awareness of the services because statistical descriptive crosstabs were conducted through the frequencies. However, it appears that regardless of gender, academic level, age, or length of time in graduate school, these services are generally known by the majority of international graduate students. While there is room for growth in awareness levels amongst all categories, the vast majority of international graduate students were aware of these services.

One factor that could potentially impact participants' awareness is the previous knowledge they have. Those who indicated having similar services in their country of origin also demonstrated awareness and utilization differently than those that did not have the services. This fact is of extremely relevance and can be a key to understanding the low rate of utilization of these services utilization. If the students had not this previous experience, they take considerable amount of time to understand how the services work in the U.S academic system. These

programs were developed by experts and can help them succeed academically, if they know exactly how to use them and how they work. International graduate students reported that they became aware of these services through a multitude of resources, most prominently professors, university resources, friends, and websites rather than from the Graduate School and the Office of International Programs.

This study has no evidence of what students know regarding these offices because they were not asked about their relationship with these departments. But implicitly, this result suggests that these departments are more related to the administrative process of the students than spreading awareness regarding Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services. It is important to note these departments are directly connected to the students, which through the findings, show that an effective and open line of communication is beneficial to connect with more students. In the open question regarding students' use of Academic Programs, Support, some international graduate students reported difficulties finding information. Below are some testimonies from these students:

- *Really helpful, but It is hard to get it informed unless the faculties include the services into the course-related activity."*
- *"I have to seek for help and if a friend hadn't told me I wouldn't ever know where to go. Counselors help when they listen to you, most nod and wait until time is up and keep watching the time."*
- *"...I like participating in different webinars offered by different organizations which is the primary information source of mine ..."*

Despite the fact that social media is consistently used these days, only a handful of international graduate students have learned about these programs through social media (15.9%). It was not investigated by this study if the Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services

are present on the main social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter; since this information is unclear, the results may be affected. However, the lesser percentage of awareness spread via social media indicates that these source of communication needs to be more explored. An increased engagement on social media can result in a higher utilization of these services since the students do not regularly check the updates on the website of Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services, whereas majority of the student population uses main social media apps daily.

Utilization of Academic Programs, Support

This study can affirm that the University Libraries and the Miller Writing Center are the principal Academic Programs, Support utilized by the international graduate students. It is impressive how many international graduate students used these services. Of the 126 international students who participated in the study, 77.8%, ($n=98$) stated that they have been using the University Libraries and 44.4% ($n=56$) stated that they have been using the Miller Writing Center. This high utilization is explained by the amount of services these two departments provide to the students. For the University Libraries this study will not be able to determine if the students used more of the study facilities, study rooms, or if it reflects the utilization of services such as Research Support, The Library Partners, Interlibrary Loan, and more. The students' related excellent feedback.

- *"I love the library system. Its simple and very effective. Excellent environment to study, specially love the environment in final exam week..."*
- *"The library service is great, they are nice and helpful. I wish all the new students can know this service...."*

- *"It has been a wonderful experience using academic program/support especially the Au library" ... "The fact there is a subject specialist attached to each college makes the library really helpful. The librarians are ready to help at all times."*
- *"Our librarian is wonderful."*
- *"AU library has been helpful for my research especially the databases and journals they provide..."*
- *"I have limited experience using these services but what I've seen so far is good. I've seen multiple webinar invites sent for academic writing styles, software programs etc from the library."*
- *"I have been using the Miller writing center - to check any grammatical mistakes and organization of my writing. It was very helpful. I was especially satisfied with the online services they provide - when I'm not available to travel to the library, the tutors were able to help me with my writing online."*
- *"Miller Writing Center: I really like this support services because it helps me to modify my writing work from different aspects like grammar, phrasing and format. And it also provide some workshop to facilitate my writing skill, however, almost all workshops are introduction courses. I do not know much about the other services except for writing center and RBD library."*
- *"WriteFest is good for my writing skills and completion of the thesis."*
- *The Miller writing center is my future option when I will write my dissertation. I got very positive reviews from my friends about the service.*

The ePortfolio Project was analyzed separately, but it is a service that is integrated into the Miller Writing Center. This academic support assists students to create their portfolio webpage. This service was the third most utilized by the international graduate students. Some comments about this service are follows:

- *"...I also learned how to create an ePortfolio with the ePortfolio project."*
- *"I have taken part in ePortfolio project. I have seen the space to put "personal website" in application processes of European University but did not know what*

is it before this course. The project was detailed and I love the passion of the instructor.”

- *“I'm extremely grateful for all these resources that the university provides for its students! I've learnt new skills (i.e. ePortfolio)...”*

The Biggio Center provides essential services for graduate students such as Educational Development, Instructional Technology Testing Services, and Learning Experience Design. The objective of the Biggio Center is to transform the learning process. There are many workshops (GTA orientation, Leadership, EASL Academy), programs (Preparing Future Faculty), and other resources that can be helpful for international graduate students, specifically for Ph.D. students. However, the utilization did not reflect the importance of these services. Of 76 Ph.D. students, only 16 utilized these services. They represent 21% of the Ph.D. students who answered the study. These Academic Programs and Support Services were not mentioned at anytime by the international graduate students in the open question.

The University Career Center has a large number of services offered to students such as Career Read, Campus Career Closet, Career Fair Preparation, and Navigate your career pathway course. Also, one webpage is specialized for graduate students and another for international. Although these academic programs and support services are necessary for students to enter a job market, only 22 students of 126 stated that they have used these services; furthermore in the total of 48 comments, this support appears only two times.

- *I have used the career center to make myself more employable - resume building, networking skills, and interviewing.”*
- *"My experience with the ...Career Center... are fabulous!"*

Some Academic Programs, Support have small utilization by the international graduate students, and this study is not able to analyze what the reasons are: Student

Counseling/Psychological Services, Academic Coaching and Study Abroad/Intl Ed.

Opportunities. The Student Counseling/Psychological Services had 17 international graduate students who utilized this service in a group of 126 who participated in the study. This academic program and support service has specific programs for international students (International Student Support) and graduate students (Graduate Student Understanding Self and Others (USO)). It is important to highlight that students from some regions had the majority by using this service, such as students from Asia and Europe. On the other hand, no international graduate students from Africa, Middle East & North Africa, or North America used this service.

- *The AU student psychology service has helped me a lot in my stressful time. It was weekly group session. I experienced with the American youth's mentality, culture. Very helpful."*
- *"I'm extremely grateful for all these resources that the university provides for its students..I felt supported in difficult times (i.e. Counseling Services)."*

In conclusion, some international graduate students illustrated in their open answer: lack of time, lack of knowledge about exactly what each service offers, or difficulty in finding the information as one of the reasons they had not used these services. Following some testimonies:

- *"They have been helpful but are not widely known on the campus."*
- *"I rarely use the academic support program due to the volume of activities I have to go through every week."*
- *"I have no relevant experience".*
- *"Haven't utilized all the services provided, thus I am unable to comment at present."*
- *"Not much. I haven't used such support service much."*
- *"Cannot relate to my academic success".*

Utilization of Campus Services

In general, the results indicate that the utilization by each department of the Campus Services was not as great as the Academic Programs, Support Services. As the study expected, the international graduate students utilized the services University Medical Clinic and Recreation and Wellness Services more. This study did not ask students an open-ended question about their experiences using the Campus Services, unlike the question that was provided about the Academic Programs, Support Services. Therefore, the investigation did not draw conclusion beyond what was presented in the results. However, the results may imply that international graduate students are not fully aware of the services offered by Campus Services. For example, the Office of Inclusion and Diversity provides education and training via partnership with the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity (NCFDD). The NCFDD provides external mentoring and career development resources for graduate students through training workshops, leadership development programs, individual coaching, and consulting to increase writing. This service is available and free for all students. In this study only seven students related used this Campus Services, although this department offered a great resources for development of students.

According to several scholars one of the main barriers for international students is communication and language fluency. One of the campus services offered at the Southeastern University is Speech and Hearing Clinic, which provides speech and language treatment for adults, accent reduction, English as a Second Language, and enhancement of Standard American English. Two Ph.D and three master students used these services and this study questions whether the low utilization is because it is a paid service or because they are unaware of the

service. This was the only paid field service included in the survey. Although it is paid, students may apply for a reduced fee.

The Southeastern University consists of 550 students organization, some of which are related of the International Students such as International Students Association, African Students Association, Association of Indonesian Students, Indian Students Association, etc. Some associations promote greater engagement with international students while others are more modest in their activities. These associations serve the students at all levels, i.e., both undergraduate and graduate students. However, there is not any specific organization aimed at addressing the needs of international graduate students. Furthermore, the Graduate Student Council, a student association related of graduate student, discontinued the committee that dealt with issues related to international graduate students. These facts could be impacting the utilization of the student involvement by students as indicated by the survey results wherein only 15% of the surveyed students used these services. One important consideration is that the graduate students are concerned about participating in events that add to their knowledge whereas most of the events promoted by the aforementioned association are social events.

Perceived importance, satisfaction and general findings.

The international graduate student recognizes the importance of Academic Programs, Support. Overall, the students evaluated these programs as “extremely helpful” and “very helpful”. Some Academic Programs and Support Services such as Student Counseling/Psychological Services, Academic Coaching, The Biggio Center, and Study Abroad/Intl Ed. Opportunities were classified as “very helpful” and “moderately helpful”. The students may not use these services, but they know how important they are. These results make

us question why the students didn't use those programs if they clearly recognized their importance.

Additionally, all the Academic Programs, Support had a high mean of satisfaction. The results indicated that they were "very satisfied to satisfied", even in the academic programs and support services that had little utilization. University Libraries, The Miller Writing Center, and The ePortfolio Project had an excellent rate of importance, and it makes sense since they were the services with the highest utilization rates. Despite the fact that Campus Services is important, the present study did not examine the importance and satisfaction of these services by international graduate students.

Implications for the Academic Programs, Support

The Graduate School and The Office of International Programs: First, as mentioned above, the Graduate School and the Office International Programs were not the most options that many international graduate students choose to obtain their information from about the resources offered by the Southeastern University. This study suggests some opportunities for both departments to develop strategies to open communication with these students. An international graduate student surveyed suggests the development of a pdf guide with explanations of the resources offered by the university specifically for international graduate students. Although this information is available on their website, it is a little difficult to navigate for the new students since they are not familiar with these services.

- *"I learnt about most programs on my own. Feels like I have to dig through the websites to find what I need. It would have been nice to receive a pdf guide or something similar before semester begins to guide through different academic programs available - uses, information etc."*

- *“The ones I know about are very helpful, but I am not sure I know all of them or know their purposes.”*

During the New Graduate Student Breakfast & Welcome Event, one of the activities that can help disseminate information regarding the Academic Programs, Support, and Campus Services, is the participation of current international graduate students to give their testimonies about their experiences using these services. Also, during the first months of each semester some activities like webinars, lunches of knowledge can be conducted to educate the students about these resources. Short videos demonstrating the use of these services can also be made available on the Graduate school website in the section “During Your First Semester.”

The course GRAD 8100: Professional Development, covers several important topics, such as professionalism, Resume/CVs, eportfolio, personal presentation, networking and job search. However, there is not a specific topic related to the Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services. In addition, this class is available only for Ph.D students, but its expansion to Master's students may be a possibility to broaden the dissemination of these services. In addition, if the Graduate School holds a “Graduate Week” designated to graduate students with lectures, workshops, and training sessions, not only for international students, but for all graduate students, then more people will be able to benefit from these activities.

The professors, international advisors, and academic advisors have direct contact with the international graduate students. The Graduate School and The Office of International Programs need to prepare these faculty and staff members so that they have knowledge of the services and can explain them to these students. In conclusion, it is necessary to invest in the First-Year Experience (FYE) Peer Mentorship Program.

Southeastern University Libraries: University Libraries received excellent feedback in all categories as mentioned earlier. The only point suggested by the students for improvement is purchasing of materials. However, the library has already done that, if the student needs materials, they have to communicate it to the library partner for them to buy. This study only suggests that the library needs to inform students better about the resources they offer.

- *"I wish Auburn University Libraries should have most up to date available books in their resources."*

The Miller Writing Center: The MWC was recognized by the international graduate students as an important Academic, Program and Support Service, but the students suggested more writing courses with advance level and courses for the graduate level. When comparing the services offered by the Miller Writing Center with other universities that host international students, the MWC do not have a section for international students with resources specifically for this audience.

- *"However, the writing center did not service graduate students well because most of the writing mentor are undergraduate students and they can only check right or wrong. They cannot check if the writing fit the need of manuscripts which can be submitted to journals."*
- *"...I hope it could organize some advance writing course..."*

Student Abroad/ International Education Opportunity: On the webpage at Student Abroad/ International Education, they emphasize, that the "...international students at Southeastern University are able to study abroad through programs while still receiving financial aid". (Auburn University, n.d.). Most international students are not aware of this information. It is important to give lectures and spread this information more widely to increase the use by international graduate students.

Academic Coaching: On the webpage at Academic Coaching, they do not explain that this service is available for graduate students. In addition, they do not have a specific program for international students. The American academic system is different from some countries, so international graduate students have unique needs.

Implications for the Campus Services

The Cross-Cultural Programs: This program assists new international students who are arriving at Southeastern University and provide opportunities to current international students to have a positive cross-cultural experience. Master's students are the ones who use this program the most. This study suggests investing in activities directed towards doctoral students which can increase their knowledge of the American cultural experience.

Student Involvement: Some universities with large numbers of international students have students association, aimed at developing soft skills of international graduate students. The Student Involvement department can focus on providing support to international students in several difficult tasks such as building confidence, developing interpersonal relationships, decision-making, self-management, etc. Investing in these themes can be a great attraction to increase the participation of international students.

The Department of Inclusion and Diversity: This department has as one of their goals as “create, promote, and encourage a supportive and friendly campus environment that is welcoming and attractive to people of all races, ethnicity, nationalities” (About Us – Office of Inclusion & Diversity, n.d.). However, this study found only initiatives designed for international students, through the Cross-Cultural Center, where they support some students association such as African Student Association, Bangladesh Student Association, Indian Students Association,

etc in events, programs, and services. This department “supports” but does not have a specific program of its own directed towards international students especially graduate students.

The Student Affairs at Southeastern University: has excellent support programs for students in general, but no specific programs for international students. The needs of graduate students are different, and the lack of specific services affects the use of these services by international students.

Speech and Hearing Clinic: Communication opens and closes opportunities, and the graduate students are preparing for the job market and for academia. One of the suggestions of this study would be a program in partnership with Miller Writing Center, Auburn University Libraries, The Graduate School and The Cross-Cultural Programs to educate students in improving pronunciation, work on confidence in communication, fluency and detailing the phonetics of the language. This specific program for international graduate students can be offered in each semester.

In conclusion, this study does not aim to report all the implications and opportunities for improvement of all the departments, but only some suggestions for those Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services with the lowest utilization rates and which are important for the development of international graduate students. This study believes that their usage will increase as specific services are created for these students. This study suggests the Southeastern University conducted a deeper investigation of these Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services for the international graduate students, consequently to increase their population.

Recommendations for Future Studies

This study recognizes some limitations in the methodology. The instrument used for data collection was a survey. The survey consisted of 20 questions. However, out of those 20 questions, only three questions were measured with the Likert scale. For future research, the study recommends analyzing properly the scales used in the study.

In question 8, the study asked the same question: if the students knew about Academic Programs, Support, and Campus Services. When analyzing the answers, it was impossible to distinguish if the student was talking about Academic Programs, Support, or Campus Services. Therefore, for future research each question should be specifically measured and analyzed in the sections cited above, such as Academic Programs should be measured with questions only targeting that topic.

The study prioritized questions about Academic Programs and Support Services, so it was not possible to deeply understand the needs and feedback from the international graduate students for the Campus Services. For future studies, a balance between the questions asked to international graduate students about the Campus Services as both types of questions are equally important in understanding their needs.

Additionally, in the literature review, this study focused on the international student instead of the Academic Programs, Support, and Campus Services. It recommended that for future research, knowing APS/CS would greatly benefit the validity of the study.

As mentioned in the discussion section, the international graduate students recognize the importance of the services. However, for future studies, it would be insightful to investigate why the international students do not use the opportunity of services at their disposal, although

they fully acknowledge its presence. It will also be possible to explore deeply the use by country-of-origin, to understand if the origin of the students has an influence on the use of the services.

We are confident that this research will serve as a base for future studies on Academic Programs, Support and Campus Services, and International Graduate Students. The state of Alabama has a lot of potential to grow in the number of international students, although there are few studies about this topic. The researchers strongly recommend the continuation of this study and suggest

that it be developed with the major universities in the State of Alabama in numbers of the international students. Most international students want to complete their courses successfully, with a high level of learning, and with real possibilities for career growth and employment.

When welcomed and prepared for the future, this experience becomes valuable. As mentioned in the Literature review, one of the principal sources of student recruitment is other international students. That is why it is necessary to invest in the current students and investigate their needs.

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Appendix 1: Survey Instrument

1. State the program that you are currently enrolled in at Auburn University:
 - Ph.D.
 - Ed.S.
 - Masters
2. Please state your age: _____
3. Please select your gender identity:
 - Female
 - Male
 - Other (specify) _____
4. Select your country of origin.

▼
5. Is English your first language?
 - Yes
 - No
6. What year of your Graduate Program are you currently in?
 - First year
 - Second year
 - Third year
 - Fourth year
 - More than 5 year
7. How would you evaluate your academic success?
 - Excellent
 - Above Average
 - Average
 - Below Average
 - Poor
8. Do you know about the Academic Programs/Support and Campus Services offered by Auburn University (For example, the Miller Writing Center, the Recreation and Wellness Center, Auburn University Libraries, and others)? If no, then please skip the next question.
 - Yes
 - No
9. How did you learn about these services? (Select all that apply)
 - Friends
 - Professor
 - Internet - website of these services
 - The Office of International Programs -website or International Advisor The Graduate School -website or Academic Advisor
 - Social Media
 - University Sources

Other (please describe) _____

10. Please select all the Academic Programs/Support services that you have used in the past.

- Academic Coaching
- Auburn University Libraries
- AU Student Counseling/Psychological Services
- Study Abroad/ International Education Opportunities
- The Biggio Center
- The ePortfolio Project
- The Miller Writing Center
- University Career Center
- None

11. Please select all the Academic Programs/Support services that you are currently using.

- Academic Coaching
- Auburn University Libraries
- AU Student Counseling/Psychological Services
- Study Abroad/ International Education Opportunities
- The Biggio Center
- The ePortfolio Project
- The Miller Writing Center
- University Career Center
- None

12. How helpful is the Academic Programs/Support offered by Auburn University.

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Moderately helpful
- Slightly helpful

13. How satisfied are you with the Academic Programs/Support offered by Auburn University?

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | N/A |
|--|----------------|-----------|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----|
| Academic Coaching | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| Auburn University Libraries | o | o | o | o | o | o |
| AU Student Counseling/Psychological Services | o | o | o | o | o | o |

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | N/A |
|---|----------------|-----------|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----|
| Study Abroad/ International Education Opportunities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The Biggio Center | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The ePortfolio Project | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Miller Writing Center | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| University Career Center | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

14. Do the Academic Programs/Support services offered by Auburn University for Graduate Students help you to better understand the U.S. Academic System?

- Yes
- No

15. Do universities from your country of origin have Academic Programs/Support to help students to achieve academic goals?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

16. Do you feel that the purpose of Academic Programs/Support is clearly communicated to International Graduate Students?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

17. What have been your experiences using Academic Program/Support services?

18. Please select all the Campus Services that you have used in the past or currently use.

- AU Speech and Hearing Clinic
- Auburn University Medical Clinic
- Cross-Cultural Programs Recreation and Wellness Center
- Student Affairs at Auburn University Student Involvement

- The Office of Accessibility
- The Office of Inclusion and Diversity

19. Do you feel that the purpose of Campus Services is clearly communicated to International Graduate Students?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

20. When you use Campus Services, do you feel more included and welcomed at the Auburn University?

- Yes
- No

Appendix 2: Recruitment Email

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear International Graduate Student,

I am a master's student in the Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology at Auburn University. I would like to invite you to participate in my research study to examine Academic Programs/Support and Campus Services offered by Auburn University and their use by International Students who are enrolled in the Graduate Programs. You may participate if you are an *International Student who is currently enrolled in the Graduate Programs at Auburn University* and are age 18 or older.

Participants will be asked to complete an online survey. Your total time commitment will be approximately 9 minutes to read the consent letter and information email and complete the online survey.

Your individual responses will be considered anonymous. If you participate in this study, you are helping researchers to understand how the Academic Programs/Support and Campus Service at Auburn University can better assist the International Graduate Students attending Auburn University.

If you would like to know more information about this study, an information letter is available by clicking the survey link below. If you decide to participate after reading the letter, select "YES, I WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY".

https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4NKHg0drYINmqqJ

If you have any questions, please contact the primary investigator, Gislene Reis, via email at gfr0004@auburn.edu or the project faculty advisor, Dr. James Witte, at email witteje@auburn.edu.

Thank you for your consideration,

Gislene Reis
Graduate Student Master of Science in Adult Education
Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership & Technology

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
08/31/2020 to _____
Protocol # 20-358 EX 2008

Appendix 3: IRB Approval Notice

From: IRB Administration <irbadmin@auburn.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, October 6, 2020 1:47 PM
To: Gislene Ferreira Dos Reis <gfr0004@auburn.edu>
Cc: James Witte <witteje@auburn.edu>; James Satterfield <jws0089@auburn.edu>
Subject: Reis Modification Request - Approved Protocol, AU IRB #20-358 EX 2008 "Academic Programs/Support and Campus Services Offered by Auburn University and Their Use by International Students Who are Enrolled in the Graduate"

Use IRBsubmit@auburn.edu for protocol-related submissions and IRBadmin@auburn.edu for questions and information. The IRB only accepts forms posted at <https://cws.auburn.edu/vpr/compliance/humansubjects/?Forms> and submitted electronically.

Dear Ms. Reis,

Your request for the modification of your protocol has been approved. The review category continues as "EX" under federal regulation 45 CFR 46.101(b). Attached is a copy of your approved documents.

Official notice:

This e-mail serves as official notice of approval to requested modifications. By accepting this approval, you also acknowledge your responsibilities associated with this approval. Retain a copy of the attached details of your responsibilities.

Information Letter:

A copy of your approved protocol is attached. However you still need *to add the following IRB approval information to your information letter(s):* **"The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from October 6, 2020 to ----- Protocol # 20-358 EX 2008, Reis"**.

You must use the updated document(s) to consent participants.

Expiration:

Continuing review of this Exempt protocol is not required; however, all modification/revisions to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB.

When you have completed all research activities, have no plans to collect additional data and have destroyed all identifiable information as approved by the IRB, please notify this office via e-mail. A final report is no longer required for Exempt protocols.

Best wishes for success with your research!

IRB Administration
Office of Research Compliance
115 Ramsay Hall
Auburn University
Auburn, AL

Appendix 4: IRB Approved Information Letter



(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

INFORMATION LETTER for a Research Study entitled

"Academic Programs/Support and Campus Services offered by Auburn University and their use by International Students who are enrolled in the Graduate Programs"

You are invited to participate in a research study to examine Academic Programs/Support and Campus Services offered by Auburn University and their use by International Students who are enrolled in the Graduate Programs. The study is being conducted by Gislene Ferreira dos Reis, a graduate student of pursuing a Master of Science in Adult Education, under the direction of Dr. James Witte, Professor of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology at Auburn University. You are invited to participate because you are International Student who is currently enrolled in the Graduate Programs at Auburn University and are age 18 or older.

What will be involved if you participate? Your participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete an anonymous, online survey about Academic Programs/Support and Campus Services offered by Auburn University. Your total time commitment will be approximately 9 minutes, which includes reading this document and taking the survey.

Are there any risks or discomforts? No. You will not be asked to disclose any identifiable information. There will no use of deception.

Are there any benefits to yourself or others? If you participate in this study, you can expect to help researchers to understand how the Academic Programs/Support and Campus Service at Auburn University can better assist Auburn University's International Graduate Students.

Will you receive compensation for participating? You will not receive compensation.

Are there any costs? There are no costs for participation.



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If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time by closing your internet browser. If you choose to withdraw, your data up to the point of withdrawal will be saved, but is not identifiable. Once you've submitted anonymous data, it cannot be withdrawn since it will be unidentifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University or any its sectors.

Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous. Information collected through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a professional journal, and/or presented at a professional meeting, etc.

If you have questions about this study, please contact the primary investigator, Gislene Reis e-mail at gfr0004@auburn.edu or the faculty advisor, Dr. James Witte, e-mail at witteje@auburn.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or e-mail at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION ABOVE, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, SELECT, "YES, I WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY". BELOW, YOU MAY PRINT A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO KEEP.



Investigator's signature
Printed Name: Gislene Ferreira dos Reis

07/27/2020
Date

https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4NKHqDdrYNmogJ

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from _____ to _____, Protocol # _____



7/27/2020

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Appendix 5: Open-Ended Question Responses

| n° | Description of The Miller Writing Center |
|----|--|
| 01 | "Whenever I need a proofread, I visited the miller writing center to get the service." |
| 02 | "My experience with the Miller Writing Center and Career Center, as well as the Library, are fabulous!" |
| 03 | "Miller Writing Center: I really like this support services because it helps me to modify my writing work from different aspects like grammar, phrasing and format. And it also provide some workshop to facilitate my writing skill, however, almost all workshops are introduction courses. I hope it could organize some advance writing course. I do not know much about the other services except for writing center and RBD library." |
| 04 | Miller writing center. |
| 05 | "I have been using the Miller writing center - to check any grammatical mistakes and organization of my writing. It was very helpful. I was especially satisfied with the online services they provide - when I'm not available to travel to the library, the tutors were able to help me with my writing online." |
| 06 | "WriteFest is good for my writing skills and completion of the thesis." |
| 07 | "I like participating in different webinars offered by different organizations which is the primary information source of mine. The library service is great, they are nice and helpful. I wish all the new students can know this service. However, the writing center did not service graduate students well because most of the writing mentor are undergraduate students and they can only check right or wrong. They cannot check if the writing fit the need of manuscripts which can be submitted to journals." |
| n° | Description of The Auburn Universities Libraries |
| 01 | "I love the library system . Its simple and very effective. Excellent environment to study, specially love the environment in final exam week. I have taken part in ePortfolio project. I have seen the space to put "personal website" in application processes of European University but did not know what is it before this course. The project was detailed and I love the passion of the instructor. The Miller writing center is my future option when I will write my dissertation. I got very positive reviews from my friends about the service. The AU student psychology service has helped me a lot in my stressful time. It was weekly group session. I experienced with the American youth's mentality, culture. Very helpful." |
| 02 | "It has been a wonderful experience using academic program/support especially the Au library and the miller writing center. my writing has greatly improved! The fact there is a subject specialist attached to each college makes the library really helpful. The librarians are ready to help at all times." |
| 03 | "AU library writing course." |
| 04 | "I learnt about the university library by sitting at my home, can access the books online, academic coach helped me make my daily schedule." |

- 05 "I often (maybe once or twice a week) went to the library before the pandemic to read or do my homework. but after i was accepted by a lab i rarely went to library."
- 06 "I have limited experience using these services but what I've seen so far is good. I've seen multiple webinar invites sent for academic writing styles, software programs etc from the library."
- 07 "I wish Auburn University Libraries should have most up to date available books in their resources."
- 08 "Our librarian is wonderful."
- 09 "AU library has been helpful for my research especially the databases and journals they provide. I have used the career center to make myself more employable - resume building, networking skills, and interviewing. I also learned how to create an ePortfolio with the ePortfolio project."

n° **Description of Positive Feedback of APS**

- 01 "It's been pretty amazing and helpful towards helping me to settle down."
- 02 "My experience has been very rewarding."
- 03 "Found them helpful in the times of great confusion regarding various things."
- 04 "Finding my course's book quickly."
- 05 "Good"
- 06 "Good"
- 07 "Satisfied"
- 08 "Very positive and helpful. It feels good to get people who are welcoming and willing to support you in the best possible way they can."
- 09 "Supportive"
- 10 "I'm extremely grateful for all these resources that the university provides for its students! I've learnt new skills (i.e. ePortfolio) and felt supported in difficult times (i.e. Counseling Services)."
- 11 "I have been using it for doing my writing assignments."
- 12 "Friendly and informative people running the services."
- 13 "They have been very nice and helpful".

n° **Description of Negative Feedback of APS**

- 01 "I have not using all the Academic/support services, I am taking online classes from my home country, because I was unable to travel, due to COVID emergency."
- 02 "I learnt about most programs on my own. Feels like I have to dig through the websites to find what I need. It would have been nice to receive a pdf guide or something similar before semester begins to guide through different academic programs available - uses, information etc."

03 "None"
 04 "Non"
 05 "Cannot relate to my academic success".
 06 "Really helpful but It is hard to get it informed unless the faculties include the services into the course-related activity."
 07 "I have to seek for help and if a friend hadn't told me I wouldn't ever know where to go. Counselors help when they listen to you, most nod and wait until time is up and keep watching the time."
 08 "The ones I know about are very helpful, but I am not sure I know all of them or know their purposes."
 09 "Not much. I haven't used such support service much."

| n° | Description of Others Feedback |
|----|--|
| 01 | "teaching is not very effective." |
| 02 | "They have been helpful but are not widely known on the campus." |
| 03 | "Haven't utilized all the services provided, thus I am unable to comment at present." |
| 04 | "I rarely use the academic support program due to the volume of activities I have to go through every week." |
| 05 | "I think most of the information is given dropwise by the people on the school/department when they need it instead of explaining clearly. Also the in paper and in reality requirements are different". |
| 06 | "I've been doing well on my own, but it good to know that these resources are available. I do plan to make use of the Miller Writing Center." |
| 07 | "I felt alone once I came here because without a car it is really difficult to go to the places and any help was received." |
| 08 | "Some staff are more supportive and some are not. I haven't had much experience with those services but what they are offering is the standard package. Although generally the staff do try, I don't think the unique experiences and problems being an international student is taken into account much when they are offering their services." |
| 09 | "I have no relevant experience". |
| 10 | "Being an international student, we give TOEFL and score well in all sections. But when study here most fo the professor who taught me are either Chinese or from other Asian countries which make it hard to understand the lecture at once due to their lack of speaking clearly. Maybe they are fluent in English but not as fluent in speaking it. I have put an extra effort outside of the class to understand the lecture when an Asian professor teaches." |
