

A. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

Student Services

1. Describe the program's purpose and mission. Limit 250 words.

The primary purpose of the International Student Office is to provide comprehensive support services that address the unique challenges faced by international students. This includes:

Immigration and Legal Compliance: Assisting students with visa applications, maintaining legal status, work authorization, and navigating complex immigration regulations.

Academic Integration: Facilitating orientation programs, academic advising, and connecting students with resources to ensure educational success in a new learning environment.

Cultural Adjustment: Offering programs and workshops that help students adapt to their new cultural surroundings while celebrating their diverse backgrounds through cultural events and community-building activities.

Practical Support: Providing guidance on housing, healthcare, banking, transportation, and other essential life skills needed to thrive in a foreign country.

Community Building: Creating a welcoming environment where international students can connect with peers, develop networks, and feel a sense of belonging on campus.

2. Which of the following Institutional Learning Outcomes does the program support? Select at least one.

ILOs

- #1 - Acquire the self-confidence and self-discipline to pursue their intellectual curiosities with integrity in both their personal and professional lives
- #2 - Obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to access, evaluate, and interpret ideas, images, and information critically in order to communicate effectively, reach conclusions, and solve problems
- #3 - Respect the inter-relatedness of the global human environment, engage with diverse peoples, acknowledge the significance of their daily actions relative to broader issues and events
- #4 - Assume responsibility for their own impact on the earth by living a sustainable and ethical life style
- #5 - Demonstrate a level of engagement in the subject matter that enables and motivates the integration of acquired knowledge and skills beyond the classroom

B. STUDENTS SERVED

3. Describe 1-3 salient demographic composition of students served by the program and include an analysis of how it aligns with the students your program is intended to serve. (500 words)

Salient Demographic Composition and Alignment Analysis

Our program serves a distinctly international student population representing over 100 countries and speaking more than 100 languages. The three most salient demographic characteristics are: (1) overwhelmingly international F-1 visa status, (2) extraordinary linguistic diversity, and (3) geographic concentration in specific markets.

Primary Demographic Characteristics:

Our enrollment demonstrates significant geographic concentration, with our top seven source countries being China, Sweden, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia, and France. These markets collectively represent the majority of our student body, with China constituting the largest single cohort. East Asian countries (China, South Korea, Japan, Indonesia) account for substantial enrollment, reflecting these nations' strong traditions of overseas education and high value placed on U.S. credentials. Sweden's notable presence reflects government funding for students studying abroad, while France's representation indicates appeal among European students seeking specialized expertise our program offers.

The linguistic diversity—over 100 languages spoken—creates a uniquely multilingual learning environment that fundamentally shapes classroom dynamics, necessitates comprehensive support services, and enriches cross-cultural peer learning.

Alignment with Intended Student Population:

Our program's recruitment strategy intentionally targets international students seeking a U.S. education to advance their global career prospects. The current demographic composition demonstrates strong alignment with our recruitment objectives. The overall recruitment, admission, and enrollment numbers confirm that our marketing and outreach efforts successfully reach prospective students in key targeted global markets. The concentration of students from rapidly developing economies, particularly East Asia, reflects strategic recruitment partnerships with education agents, targeted digital marketing campaigns, and participation in international education fairs in both high-demand and emerging regions.

However, this analysis reveals important considerations for recruitment strategy refinement. The heavy concentration from specific markets, while demonstrating recruitment success, indicates our recruitment resources are heavily weighted toward certain geographic areas. Recently proposed elimination of duration of status necessitating mandatory extension of stay applications, and ever declining demographics of college aged students, will particularly impact prospective students from our primary markets, potentially requiring adjusted recruitment messaging and expanded market diversification.

The relative underrepresentation of students from India, Latin America, the Middle East, and other regions indicates untapped market potential that our upcoming recruitment strategy explicitly addresses. Recognizing these gaps, we are strategically expanding our recruitment infrastructure through new agent partnerships in Latin America and India, allocating increased marketing budgets to these regions, developing culturally and linguistically tailored recruitment materials for diverse markets, and scheduling dedicated recruitment travel to these previously underserved areas while also maintaining a healthy foot print our current established markets. These targeted initiatives reflect our commitment to geographic diversification and our recognition that broadening our market base while keeping dedicated resources in established marketplaces strengthens enrollment stability while reducing sole dependence on traditional source countries.

Implications:

Our demographic profile confirms highly effective recruitment in established markets while our strategic expansion into underrepresented regions positions us to achieve greater geographic balance, mitigate market concentration risks, and build a more globally diverse student body that enhances the international educational experience for all students.

4. Describe how the program does outreach to, and provides access for, the intended student population. (250 words)

Our program employs a comprehensive, multi-channel recruitment strategy specifically designed to reach international students across diverse global markets. Through strategic partnerships with education agents in over 30 countries, we maintain sustained local presence in key markets including China, South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Sweden, and France, while actively expanding into underrepresented regions such as Latin America and Africa through newly established agent networks.

Our direct outreach includes participation in major international education fairs across Asia, Europe, and Latin America, enabling face-to-face engagement with prospective students and families. We conduct targeted high school visits in priority markets, building relationships with guidance counselors and establishing our program's reputation. Domestically, we partner with language centers serving international students, creating pathways for English language learners to transition into our program.

Digital marketing campaigns deliver culturally and linguistically tailored content to prospective students in their home countries, while our multilingual website and application materials ensure accessibility across our 100+ language communities.

Once students enroll, we prioritize comprehensive access to support services through multiple communication channels. New student orientations introduce the full range of academic, linguistic, and cultural support resources available. Regular mass email communications highlight workshops, tutoring services, and upcoming events. Our active social media presence across platforms popular in different regions ensures continuous engagement and timely information sharing about opportunities, deadlines, and support services.

This integrated approach, combining external recruitment infrastructure with robust internal communication systems—ensures we effectively reach our intended international student population and provide equitable access to the resources essential for their academic success and cultural adjustment.

5. When considering student outcomes, SMC produces the largest equity gaps for Black and Latinx students. How does the program address equity gaps within the scope of work that it performs? (500 words)

While our program serves a predominantly international F-1 visa student population representing over 90 countries and 100+ languages, we recognize that Santa Monica College produces significant equity gaps for Black and Latinx students institution-wide. Although our specific program enrollment demographics reflect our international recruitment focus, we remain committed to addressing equity within our operational scope and contributing to college-wide equity objectives.

Understanding Our Context:

Our program's demographic composition, concentrated among international students from East Asia, Europe, and emerging markets—means we serve relatively few domestic Black and Latinx students. However, this does not diminish our responsibility to examine equity within our own student population and ensure our practices support institutional equity goals.

Equity Analysis Within Our Population:

We continuously monitor outcomes across our diverse international student body, disaggregating data by region of origin, English proficiency level, and socioeconomic indicators. While we observe minimal equity gaps among our international students, we recognize that students from certain regions face distinct challenges including greater cultural adjustment demands, varying levels of prior academic preparation, and differential access to financial resources. We address these variations through targeted support services, ensuring equitable access to tutoring, advising, and academic workshops regardless of students' backgrounds.

Support Services Promoting Equitable Outcomes:

Our comprehensive orientation programs provide foundational knowledge about navigating U.S. higher education, ensuring all students—regardless of prior exposure to American academic culture, understand available resources. Multilingual support services and culturally responsive advising reduce barriers for students from linguistically diverse backgrounds. Our proactive communication strategy through mass emails, social media, and direct outreach ensures equitable information access, preventing advantages for only well-connected or already-informed students.

Contributing to Institutional Equity Goals:

Beyond our immediate student population, we contribute to SMC's equity objectives through several initiatives. We participate in college-wide equity professional development, ensuring our staff understands

systemic barriers facing underrepresented students. We advocate for institutional policies supporting all students, including international students who may share similar socioeconomic challenges with domestic underrepresented populations. Our recruitment expansion into Latin America and Africa reflects commitment to geographic and demographic diversification, broadening representation within our program.

Recognizing Limitations and Opportunities:

We acknowledge that our program's primary focus on international recruitment means our direct impact on domestic Black and Latinx student equity gaps is limited. However, we can strengthen institutional equity efforts by examining how our program resources, expertise in supporting linguistically diverse students, and successful retention strategies might inform college-wide approaches. Our experience supporting students navigating cultural and linguistic transitions offers transferable insights for supporting all students facing systemic barriers.

Future Commitments:

Moving forward, we commit to greater collaboration with college departments serving domestic underrepresented students, sharing best practices in culturally responsive support. We will continue monitoring equity within our diverse international population while remaining accountable to institutional equity priorities through participation in college-wide initiatives and ongoing examination of how our work intersects with SMC's broader equity mission.

6. If applicable, describe any instructional partnerships or collaborations that impact the students served by the program. (500 words)

Instructional Partnerships and Collaborations

The International Education Center (IEC) at Santa Monica College has established and sustained a number of significant instructional partnerships and collaborations that meaningfully impact the international student population served by the program. These collaborative relationships span regulatory compliance, academic support, advising, and faculty engagement, and are integral to the IEC's ability to fulfill its mission of supporting international student success.

A cornerstone of the IEC's collaborative framework is its partnership with the Office of Academic Affairs. This relationship is essential to ensuring that the college's course offerings include adequate on-ground and hybrid instructional options necessary to maintain international students' compliance with federal regulations governing F-1 visa status. Specifically, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) mandates a defined minimum level of in-person instruction for international students. Through ongoing coordination with Academic Affairs, the IEC works to ensure that course scheduling and program design consistently reflect and accommodate these regulatory requirements, thereby safeguarding students' immigration status while preserving access to a broad and rigorous academic curriculum.

The IEC also maintains substantive collaborative relationships with the college's student support services, most notably the tutoring and academic counseling departments. IEC staff regularly refer students to campus tutoring resources in recognition of the distinct academic challenges that international students frequently encounter, including language acquisition demands and unfamiliarity with the conventions of American academic institutions. Referrals to academic counseling are equally prioritized, as counselors play an indispensable role in assisting students with the development of individualized educational plans that reflect an appropriate and strategic course sequence. Such planning is critical not only to facilitating timely graduation and transfer to four-year institutions, but also to ensuring continued adherence to full-time enrollment requirements as stipulated by federal immigration policy.

Furthermore, IEC staff maintain ongoing communication with instructional faculty across academic disciplines. When a student demonstrates unsatisfactory academic performance, excessive absenteeism, or behavioral concerns, IEC staff work directly with the faculty member to assess the situation. Staff then serve

as a liaison between the instructor and the student, coordinating appropriate intervention and connecting the student with relevant campus resources. This collaborative approach promotes early resolution of student difficulties and reflects the IEC's commitment to fostering a comprehensive, campus-wide network of support.

Collectively, these partnerships demonstrate the IEC's dedication to ensuring that international students at Santa Monica College are academically supported, appropriately advised, fully compliant with applicable federal regulations, and positioned to achieve their educational goals in a timely and successful manner. og

C. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

7. Describe any changes that have been implemented as a result of the recommendations of the last program review. (500 words)

Based on the recommendations from the last program review, we have implemented significant changes to our marketing, recruitment, and program development strategies that have strengthened our international education offerings.

First, we have diversified our marketing and recruitment efforts to reach previously underserved markets. Recognizing the need to expand beyond our traditional recruitment regions, we strategically targeted countries with growing demand for U.S. higher education, including India, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico. While these markets have not yet yielded substantial growth, it is important to note that the development of new markets is resource and time intensive and takes prolonged effort to cultivate into tangible and measurable results. By establishing connections in these emerging markets, we have positioned Santa Monica College as an accessible destination for students from regions that were historically underrepresented in our international student population. This groundwork will serve as the foundation for future enrollment growth as our presence and reputation in these countries continues to develop.

Second, we have significantly focused our efforts on the development of contract education programs, which has proven to be a transformative initiative for the college. A prime example of this success is Novel Prep, a contract program that has grown to generate approximately two million dollars per year for SMC. This substantial revenue stream demonstrates the viability and impact of contract education as a sustainable model for international programming. The success of Novel Prep has validated our strategic pivot toward developing partnerships with sponsoring organizations and has created a template for future contract program development. These contract programs not only provide financial benefits to the college but also offer structured pathways for international students whose education is supported by government agencies, corporations, or educational organizations in their home countries.

These changes represent a fundamental shift in how we approach international education at SMC. Rather than relying solely on traditional individual enrollment patterns, we have created a more diversified and resilient model that combines direct student recruitment from new markets with strategic contract partnerships. This dual approach has enhanced our financial stability while simultaneously expanding access to SMC's educational opportunities for students who might not otherwise have the means to study in the United States.

The implementation of these recommendations has required dedicated staff time, investment in market research, relationship building with international partners, and the development of administrative systems to support contract student management. The results have demonstrated that these investments were worthwhile and have positioned our international education program for continued growth and sustainability in the years ahead.

8a. Identify and describe one or two outcomes students are expected to experience after receiving services from, or participating in, the program. (200 words)

After receiving services from the International Education Center, students are expected to achieve two primary outcomes essential for their academic success and personal wellbeing.

First, students will gain comprehensive knowledge of their F-1 visa status and educational pathway. They will understand federal regulations governing their F-1 status, including enrollment requirements, travel restrictions, and program completion timelines. Students will have clarity regarding their educational pathway at SMC, enabling informed decisions about academic progression and transfer goals. They will also understand employment options, including on-campus employment, Curricular Practical Training (CPT), and Optional Practical Training (OPT), ensuring they can gain valuable work experience while maintaining legal compliance.

Second, students will successfully navigate essential life and campus resources necessary for their transition and ongoing success. They will learn how to obtain housing, access mandatory health insurance coverage, and locate appropriate medical care. Furthermore, students will gain comprehensive understanding of all campus support services, including tutoring, counseling, academic advising, and student life programs. This knowledge empowers international students to proactively seek assistance and fully utilize available resources throughout their educational journey at Santa Monica College, ultimately contributing to higher retention and completion rates.

8b. Describe how the identified student outcomes are assessed. (e.g., a survey of program participants is administered at week 12 of each semester) (200 words)

The International Education Center has not yet developed formal qualitative surveys to assess student satisfaction and service effectiveness. However, the department consistently receives praise from students in the form of emails and letters of appreciation for its easy accessibility, expert services in immigration matters, housing assistance, and effective connection to campus support services. Students regularly express gratitude for the comprehensive support they receive throughout their academic journey, often taking the time to personally acknowledge the impact of IEC services on their success and wellbeing.

Moving forward, the IEC is committed to working collaboratively with Institutional Research to develop comprehensive survey instruments that will systematically assess the entire student services model. These surveys will provide valuable quantitative and qualitative data to measure student satisfaction, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that services continue to meet the evolving needs of our international student population. This partnership will enable the IEC to gather meaningful feedback and make data-informed decisions to enhance service delivery and student outcomes. By implementing structured assessment tools, the department will complement the anecdotal feedback already received and establish a more robust framework for continuous improvement.

8c. What is the "effectiveness" target goal for each of the expected student outcomes identified? (e.g., 90% or more of students attending the FAFSA workshops successfully complete the financial aid application within four weeks) (200 words)

The International Education Center has established the following effectiveness target goals for its two primary student outcomes:

Outcome 1: F-1 Visa Status and Educational Pathway Knowledge Target Goal: 90% or more of students receiving initial advising services will demonstrate accurate understanding of their F-1 status requirements and educational pathway within their first semester of enrollment, as evidenced by maintaining legal compliance with enrollment requirements and progressing toward their stated academic goals.

Outcome 2: Navigation of Life and Campus Resources Target Goal: 85% or more of new international students will successfully access at least three essential resources (housing, health insurance, and campus

support services) within their first semester, as measured through follow-up communications and service utilization tracking.

These targets will be assessed through the qualitative survey instruments to be developed in collaboration with Institutional Research. The surveys will measure student comprehension of immigration regulations, satisfaction with services received, and successful connection to necessary resources. Additionally, the IEC will track compliance indicators such as enrollment maintenance, timely program completion, and utilization of campus support services. These measurable goals will enable the department to systematically evaluate service effectiveness and make data-informed improvements to better serve the international student population.

8d. Analyze the program's performance on the data collected to assess the program's student outcomes. Is the program meeting the target goals? What context is needed to understand the results? (500 words)

Program Performance Analysis

While the International Education Center currently lacks qualitative survey tools to formally assess student satisfaction, the department has developed comprehensive quantitative systems that provide substantial evidence of program effectiveness and student outcome achievement.

Enrollment Funnel Performance

The IEC has constructed a detailed enrollment funnel tracking students from initial recruitment through admission, counseling, and enrollment. This system allows us to monitor conversion rates at each critical stage and identify potential bottlenecks in the student journey. The data demonstrates strong performance in moving prospective students through the pipeline.

Federal Compliance and Student Success Indicators

The department has built robust reporting systems aligned with federal SEVIS requirements that monitor student enrollment patterns in real-time. These automated alerts notify staff when students fall below the required 12-unit full-time enrollment threshold, drop courses, or fail to maintain the appropriate ratio of on-ground to online coursework. This proactive monitoring system serves as a strong indicator that students understand their F-1 visa requirements and are maintaining legal compliance—a key component of our first student outcome. The low incidence of compliance violations suggests that students are successfully gaining and applying knowledge of federal regulations governing their status.

Financial Operations Management

The IEC manages significant financial operations, including over four million dollars in annual health insurance transactions and 1.2 million dollars in commission payments to global recruitment partners. The department maintains comprehensive reporting systems for insurance payment reconciliation and enrollment-based commission calculations. The accuracy and efficiency of these operations demonstrate that students are successfully accessing mandatory health insurance coverage—a critical component of our second student outcome related to navigating essential life resources.

Meeting Target Goals

Based on available quantitative data, the IEC appears to be effectively meeting operational targets. High compliance rates with federal regulations suggest students are gaining necessary knowledge about their F-1 status. Successful management of large-scale financial operations indicates students are accessing essential services like health insurance. However, without formal survey instruments, we cannot definitively confirm whether we are achieving the specific effectiveness targets of 90% comprehension of F-1 requirements and 85% utilization of essential resources. The development of qualitative assessment tools in collaboration with Institutional Research remains a priority to provide more comprehensive evidence of student outcome achievement.

9. Based upon the outcomes assessment, satisfaction evaluation and/or other data, provide two notable examples of how the program serves students effectively and briefly explain why they are successful. (500 words)

Program Performance Analysis

The International Education Center (IEC) demonstrates strong program performance across two critical operational areas: federal compliance monitoring and enrollment funnel management. Together, these systems provide compelling quantitative evidence of program effectiveness and student outcome achievement.

Federal Compliance and Student Success Indicators

The IEC has developed and implemented a robust compliance monitoring infrastructure aligned with federal SEVIS reporting requirements. This system tracks student enrollment patterns in real time and enables our staff to send alerts when students fall below the federally mandated 12-unit full-time enrollment threshold, drop courses, or fail to maintain the required ratio of on-ground to online coursework. The proactive nature of this system is a significant programmatic strength, as it enables staff to intervene promptly before a student's academic decisions result in a visa compliance violation.

The low incidence of compliance violations among the IEC's international student population is a meaningful and measurable indicator of program success. It suggests that students are not only receiving accurate and timely information about their F-1 visa obligations, but that they are also applying that knowledge effectively in their academic planning and enrollment decisions. This outcome is directly attributable to the IEC's investment in automated monitoring tools, staff training, and proactive student communication. The ability to manage federal compliance at scale — across a large and diverse international student population — reflects the department's operational maturity and its commitment to student success and institutional integrity.

Enrollment Funnel Performance

The IEC's development of a comprehensive enrollment funnel tracking system represents a significant programmatic achievement. This system monitors prospective students at each stage of the enrollment process, from initial recruitment through admission, counseling, and final course enrollment. By tracking conversion rates at every critical stage, the IEC is able to identify and address bottlenecks in the student journey in a timely and data-informed manner.

Strong performance across the enrollment funnel is an important indicator of program effectiveness for several reasons. First, it demonstrates that the IEC's recruitment and outreach efforts are successfully attracting prospective students and converting interest into enrollment. Second, it indicates that the administrative and advising processes supporting students through admission and counseling are functioning efficiently and effectively. Third, robust funnel performance ensures that the college maintains a healthy and sustainable international student population, which is essential to the financial and academic vitality of the program. The IEC's ability to construct and utilize this tracking system reflects a sophisticated, data-driven approach to enrollment management that positions the department for continued growth and programmatic improvement.

Collectively, the success of these two systems underscores the IEC's capacity to manage complex operational demands while keeping student success and regulatory compliance at the forefront of its institutional priorities.

10. Based upon the overall assessment and evaluation of the program, describe 2-5 areas that require attention or improvement. (500 words)

Areas Requiring Attention and Improvement

Based upon the overall assessment and evaluation of the International Education Center, two critical areas have been identified that require attention and improvement to enhance program effectiveness and strategic decision-making.

1. Development of Comprehensive Recruitment Tracking System

The IEC needs to create an accurate tracking system that follows prospective student leads from initial contact at student fairs through the entire enrollment funnel to final enrollment. Currently, while the department participates in numerous international student fairs across major global markets and invests significant resources in recruitment activities, we lack the systematic data collection necessary to determine the return on investment for specific fairs and markets. While we can track leads, the system is manual and requires us to match leads inserted into our drip campaign through the admission, counseling, and enrollment steps. Currently we lack the resources to follow through on this manual and labor-intensive task.

An effective tracking system would capture key metrics at each stage: initial inquiry generation at fairs, application submission rates, admission rates, enrollment rates, and student retention. This data would enable the department to make evidence-based decisions about which fairs and markets yield the highest quality students and best conversion rates.

Implementation would require collaboration with SMC's Marketing Team, IT services, and Institutional Research to create integrated databases tracking students from first contact through enrollment.

2. Enhancement of Digital Analytics and Website Engagement Tracking

The second critical area concerns the need to develop robust capabilities for tracking click-through rates and user behavior on the IEC website and social media platforms. In an increasingly digital recruitment landscape, understanding how prospective students interact with online resources is essential for optimizing marketing efforts and improving user experience. However, pursuit of these tracking and marketing initiatives would be contingent upon the availability of dedicated funding.

Currently, the department lacks comprehensive analytics to determine which web pages prospective students visit most frequently, how long they engage with content, where they encounter obstacles in the application process, and which social media platforms drive the most qualified inquiries. This gap prevents the IEC from making informed decisions about website design, content placement, and digital marketing strategies.

Should funds become available, developing this analytical capability would involve implementing advanced tracking tools such as Google Analytics, heat mapping software, and social media analytics platforms. The data collected would reveal patterns in how students from different countries navigate the college's digital presence, allowing the department to optimize content for specific audiences, identify and remove barriers in the digital application process, and allocate social media marketing budgets more effectively.

This enhanced tracking would provide insights into the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns, enabling the IEC to understand which messages resonate with prospective students and which channels provide the best return on investment. Understanding user behavior across platforms would also inform decisions about mobile optimization, language accessibility, and content that most effectively engages international audiences.

Both improvements are essential for modernizing the IEC's approach to recruitment and student services.

D. THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

11. Based on the findings from your assessment/evaluation, describe the goals/priorities and accompanying action plan(s) you will pursue to improve your program. (500 words)

Goals, Priorities, and Action Plans for Program Improvement

Building on the IEC's demonstrated strengths in compliance monitoring and enrollment funnel management, two priority areas have been identified for strategic improvement: the development of a comprehensive recruitment tracking system and the enhancement of digital analytics capabilities. Together, these initiatives will modernize the IEC's approach to recruitment and provide the data-driven foundation necessary for sustainable program growth.

Priority 1: Comprehensive Recruitment Tracking System

The IEC currently participates in international student fairs across multiple global markets, yet lacks the infrastructure to systematically measure the return on investment of these efforts. While leads can be captured, the current matching process is manual, labor-intensive, and difficult to sustain at scale. As a result, the department cannot confidently determine which markets and recruitment activities yield the highest quality applicants and best conversion rates.

The goal is to implement an integrated, automated tracking system that follows prospective students from first contact through final enrollment. This system will capture key metrics at every stage of the funnel — inquiry generation, application submission, admission, counseling completion, and enrollment — and will link recruitment source data to student outcomes, including retention.

The action plan involves three parallel workstreams. First, the IEC will initiate a collaborative planning process with SMC's Marketing Team, IT Services, and Institutional Research to assess existing data infrastructure and identify integration opportunities. Second, the department will define the minimum data fields required at each funnel stage and establish standardized data entry protocols to ensure consistency and reliability. Third, staff will be trained on updated data collection procedures, and a review process will be established to evaluate recruitment performance by market on a semester basis. This evidence base will directly inform future fair participation decisions and resource allocation.

Priority 2: Digital Analytics and Website Engagement Tracking

The IEC's digital presence is a primary point of contact for prospective international students, yet the department currently lacks the tools to understand how users interact with its website and social media platforms. Without this data, it is difficult to optimize content, identify barriers in the online application process, or determine which digital channels drive the most qualified inquiries.

The goal is to develop robust digital analytics capabilities that provide actionable insight into prospective student behavior across the IEC's online platforms. Implementation is contingent upon the availability of dedicated funding; however, preliminary planning will proceed immediately so the department is positioned to act quickly when resources become available.

The action plan includes identifying and evaluating appropriate analytics tools — including Google Analytics, heat mapping software, and social media analytics platforms — and developing a phased implementation timeline. Initial focus will be placed on high-traffic pages and key points in the online application process. Findings will inform decisions related to website design, content placement, mobile optimization, language accessibility, and social media budget allocation.

Together, these two priorities represent the IEC's commitment to continuous improvement and strategic, data-informed decision-making in service of students and the institution.

E. EMPLOYEES/PROGRAM STAFF AND DEPARTMENTAL CULTURE

12. List and describe program staffing, including FTE, faculty, classified professionals, managers, and student/intern support. (250 words)

Program Staffing

The International Education Center (IEC) is supported by a dedicated team of professionals across multiple staffing classifications, each contributing to the department's core functions of recruitment, compliance, student services, and program management.

Management (3 FTE) Three full-time managers oversee the department's primary operational areas, including recruitment, contract education, budget management, student worker supervision, management of Intensive English Program (IEP), marketing, student onboarding, admissions, retention and engagement, and counseling resource coordination. This team provides the strategic and administrative leadership necessary to sustain a complex, multi-functional department.

International Student Services Specialists (7 FTE) Seven full-time classified professionals serve as the operational backbone of the IEC, carrying out a broad range of responsibilities including admissions processing, housing referrals, student worker assignments, social media management, immigration advising, IEP support, health insurance billing and reconciliation, and student engagement planning.

Student Services Assistants (3 FTE) Three full-time assistants provide essential admissions support, helping manage the volume of applications and inquiries the department receives while ensuring a smooth and timely process for prospective students.

Office Clerk (1 FTE) One full-time clerk serves as the department's front office presence and first point of contact for international students. This position manages walk-in requests, handles high-volume incoming calls, and receives and distributes emails to the appropriate admissions and specialist staff for follow-up.

Total Staffing: 14 FTE The IEC's staffing reflects a well-structured, student-centered team aligned to meet the diverse needs of its international student population and support continued departmental growth.

13. Analyze staffing levels in the context of the program's mission and purpose. Are there any gaps or needs to be addressed? (250 words)

Staffing Analysis: Alignment with Mission and Identified Gaps

The IEC's current staffing configuration of 14 FTE reflects a lean but functional team carefully structured to support the department's complex and multifaceted mission, with each classification playing a distinct and essential role across recruitment, compliance, student services, and program management.

The three-manager structure is critical to sustaining the department's expanded recruitment efforts. Over the past year, the IEC has more than doubled its recruitment trips, reflecting a deliberate strategy to enter new international markets while maintaining presence in established ones. This requires managers to travel extensively while simultaneously ensuring that day-to-day operations, staff supervision, and student services continue uninterrupted at home. The three-manager model is not a redundancy; it is a necessity. Reducing management capacity would force the department to choose between recruitment growth and operational stability, an unsustainable position for a program that depends on both.

The IEC is currently operating at a skeletal staffing level. Staffing has been reduced by 7 positions due to retirement and normal attrition. Mindful of enrollment trends and the district's fiscal challenges, the department has judiciously redistributed workloads across existing staff classifications in compliance with union contracts, preserving operational integrity while minimizing budgetary impact. This approach reflects the IEC's commitment to fiscal responsibility and operational effectiveness during a period of enrollment decline.

However, this model has reached its limits. Any additional staff loss would compromise the department's ability to meet its core obligations. The most pressing need is the protection of existing positions.

14. Describe how the program provides ongoing professional development opportunities for staff. (500 words)

Professional Development for IEC Staff

The International Education Center recognizes that ongoing professional development is essential to maintaining a high-functioning, compliant, and student-centered department. Given the specialized and regulatory nature of the IEC's work, professional development is not a discretionary benefit, it is an operational requirement. Staff across all classifications are expected to maintain current knowledge in their respective areas of responsibility, and the department actively supports opportunities to do so.

Designated School Official (DSO) Training and Compliance

Staff serving as Designated School Officials carry federal responsibility for maintaining SEVIS records and ensuring student compliance with F-1 visa regulations. Ongoing training in this area is critical. DSOs are expected to regularly engage with resources provided by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), including SEVP-hosted webinars, policy guidance updates, and the SEVP Portal. Participation in the annual NAFSA: Association of International Educators conference, as well as regional NAFSA workshops and state-level symposia, provides DSOs with updated regulatory guidance, peer networking, and best practice sharing. The IEC supports staff participation in these events as a core component of professional development planning. However, budget constraints have limited these opportunities over the past years.

Additionally, DSOs benefit from internal case review sessions and compliance update meetings that ensure the full team is aligned on current federal requirements and institutional procedures.

Admissions Staff Development

Admissions staff and student services assistants receive ongoing professional development provided directly by IEC managers. This in-house training focuses on best practices in admissions processing, document handling, and delivering consistent, high-quality customer service to prospective and incoming international students. Managers conduct training sessions and procedural reviews to ensure that admissions staff are aligned with current departmental standards and are equipped to represent the IEC professionally and effectively at every point of student contact.

Specialist Staff Development

The IEC's international student services specialists manage a uniquely broad portfolio of responsibilities spanning immigration advising, health insurance administration, student engagement, social media, and IEP support. To ensure broad exposure to professional development while managing resources responsibly, NAFSA participation occurs on a rotating basis, allowing specialists across the team to benefit from NAFSA training opportunities, regional workshops, and immigration regulatory updates over time. However, budget constraints have limited these opportunities over the past years. Staff responsible for health insurance billing benefit from training offered through student health insurance plan administrators.

Institutional Support and Culture of Learning

The IEC is committed to fostering a culture of continuous learning. The department encourages staff to pursue relevant professional certifications, attend webinars, and participate in campus-wide professional development offerings coordinated through SMC's Human Resources department. Cross-training within the department also serves as an important internal development strategy, ensuring operational continuity while broadening individual staff competencies.

Collectively, these professional development efforts ensure that IEC staff remain knowledgeable, effective, and equipped to serve one of SMC's most diverse and complex student populations.

15. What equity-centered practices and training have been implemented in the program? If applicable, provide examples and discuss strengths and areas for growth. How can the institution better support the program and staff in developing an equity minded work culture? (500 words)

Equity-Centered Practices and Training

The International Education Center is inherently an equity-centered program. By design, the IEC exists to serve one of the most diverse student populations on campus, international students who navigate not only the academic demands of higher education but also the cultural, linguistic, and logistical challenges of studying in a foreign country. Equity and inclusion are therefore not peripheral values for the IEC; they are embedded in the department's core mission and reflected in the daily work of every staff member.

Current Practices and Training

IEC staff are actively encouraged to participate in equity and diversity training opportunities when offered by the district. These trainings provide staff with frameworks for understanding systemic barriers, recognizing bias, and delivering services in a culturally responsive and inclusive manner. Participation in district-sponsored equity training ensures that IEC staff remain aligned with the institution's broader commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that these values are reflected in how the department engages with its student population.

In practice, equity-centered values are visible across the IEC's daily operations. Staff routinely work with students from a wide range of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and are expected to approach each interaction with cultural humility and sensitivity. The department's commitment to accessibility is reflected in its efforts to provide clear, multilingual-friendly communication, streamlined onboarding processes, and proactive outreach to students who may be struggling to navigate institutional systems.

Strengths

The IEC's greatest equity strength lies in the nature of its work. Every service the department provides, from immigration advising and admissions support to student engagement and health insurance assistance, is designed to remove barriers and ensure that international students have equitable access to the resources and opportunities available to all SMC students. The department's diverse and experienced staff bring cultural awareness and genuine commitment to student success to their roles every day.

Areas for Growth

While current participation in district equity training is encouraged, there is an opportunity to deepen and formalize the IEC's approach to equity-centered professional development. Establishing a more structured framework for equity training, including department-specific discussions about how equity principles apply to immigration advising, admissions, and student services, would strengthen the team's collective capacity to identify and address barriers faced by international students.

How the Institution Can Better Support the IEC

The institution can better support the IEC and its staff by expanding the availability and frequency of equity and diversity training offerings, and by ensuring that programs are relevant to the unique context of international student services. Additionally, providing dedicated time and resources for staff to engage in equity training without competing demands of daily operations would signal a genuine institutional commitment to building an equity-minded work culture. Investment in culturally responsive professional development tailored to the needs of international education professionals would further strengthen the IEC's ability to serve its diverse student population with excellence and intention.

16. If applicable, describe if the program has a succession plan to ensure that it is minimally impacted by staffing transfers, departures, and/or retirements? (250 words)

The International Education Center has proactively positioned itself to minimize disruption from potential staffing transitions through strong internal leadership capacity. The IEC has an Associate Dean whose extensive experience, creativity, and knowledge base lend themselves to an immediate leadership transition should the need arise. This individual possesses comprehensive understanding of both the operational and strategic aspects of international education, federal regulations governing F-1 students, and the college's

institutional priorities, making them well-prepared to assume expanded leadership responsibilities with minimal disruption to program operations.

In addition to this senior-level readiness, the IEC has two specialists who would be ready to transition into leadership positions if needed. These staff members have demonstrated strong competencies in student services, regulatory compliance, program development, and team collaboration. Their current roles have provided them with broad exposure to departmental functions and decision-making processes, positioning them as viable candidates for advancement. This depth of talent within the organization ensures that institutional knowledge is distributed across multiple team members rather than concentrated in a single position.

While we have not formalized a written succession plan, the inclusive management approach described earlier has naturally created opportunities for professional growth and leadership development among staff. Team members regularly participate in decision-making, lead projects, and represent the department in cross-functional initiatives, all of which build the skills necessary for future leadership roles. To further strengthen our succession planning, the college could support formal leadership training programs and cross-training initiatives that would prepare staff for expanded responsibilities and ensure continuity of services.

17. Describe the program's workplace culture, climate, and morale, and discuss how it impacts the program's ability and capacity to effectively serve students. Describe how the college can support and improve the environment and/or morale in your department. (500 words)

The International Education Center's workplace culture, climate, and morale have steadily improved over the past few years, creating an environment that directly enhances our ability to effectively serve our international student population. This positive trajectory has been the result of intentional leadership practices and a commitment to fostering a collaborative and empowering work environment.

Staff members are encouraged to work with minimal supervision and are empowered to propose changes in workflows and protocols that improve efficiencies and student satisfaction. This approach has cultivated a sense of ownership and professional autonomy among team members, leading to innovative solutions that have streamlined processes and enhanced service delivery. When staff feel trusted and valued as experts in their roles, they are more invested in finding creative ways to better serve students and contribute to departmental goals.

IEC managers have made a concerted effort to be inclusive of staff in the decision-making processes that impact the department's functions. This collaborative approach ensures that those who work directly with students and understand operational challenges have a voice in shaping policies and procedures. Regular team meetings, open communication channels, and genuine consideration of staff input have fostered a culture of mutual respect and shared purpose. Additionally, managers have offered flexibility with staff schedules, recognizing that work-life balance is essential for employee wellbeing and sustained productivity. This flexibility has been particularly valuable in accommodating the diverse needs of our team while maintaining consistent service to students.

However, with the potential of upcoming layoffs looming, there is understandable concern about how this may impact our workplace morale and our capacity to serve students effectively. Budget constraints and staffing reductions would inevitably affect the positive culture we have worked to build and could compromise our ability to maintain current service levels. The uncertainty surrounding potential layoffs creates anxiety among staff and may undermine the trust and stability that have been central to our recent improvements.

To support and improve the environment and morale in our department during this challenging time, the college can take several important steps. First, transparent and timely communication about budget decisions and their potential impact on the IEC would help staff prepare and reduce uncertainty. Second, if layoffs become necessary, the college should work with our department to identify critical functions and

prioritize positions that are essential for maintaining compliance with federal regulations and providing adequate student support. Third, the college could explore alternative cost-saving measures, such as hiring freezes or voluntary reduced schedules, before resorting to layoffs.

Additionally, the college can support our department by providing professional development opportunities, mental health resources, and recognition programs that acknowledge the dedication and hard work of our staff. Investing in employee wellbeing, even during budget constraints, signals that the college values its workforce and understands the direct connection between staff morale and student success. Finally, ensuring that remaining staff are not overwhelmed with unsustainable workloads following any potential reductions will be critical to maintaining both morale and our ability to serve international students effectively.

F. BUDGET PLANNING

18. Describe how the current program budget aligns with the program's goals and outcomes over the next three years. If it doesn't align, what would be needed to supplement the current budget allocation? (250 words)

Budget Alignment with Program Goals and Outcomes

The IEC's current budget allocation is well aligned with the department's goals and projected outcomes over the next three years. District budget allocations more than adequately support the program's core operational functions, staffing, and strategic priorities, providing a stable financial foundation from which the department can continue to grow and improve.

Most notably, the IEC's recruitment budget has been meaningfully augmented to reflect the department's expanded focus on new market development and the continued cultivation of established recruitment territories. This investment directly supports the department's strategic goal of diversifying and growing its international student pipeline, and signals a strong institutional commitment to the IEC's long-term recruitment efforts.

In addition, agent commission structures have been increased to remain competitive in the global student recruitment marketplace. The district has demonstrated its support of this initiative by backfilling the additional costs associated with these enhanced commission structures as needed. This level of institutional responsiveness ensures that the IEC can maintain productive relationships with international recruitment agents while continuing to attract high-quality prospective students across multiple markets.

Looking ahead, the current budget framework positions the IEC well to sustain its recruitment momentum, support staffing operations, and pursue the programmatic improvements identified in this review.

19. Are there any special projects or initiatives that will require additional budgeting or a reallocation of existing resources for the program? Consider the following: human resources, reducing racial equity gaps, student success and completion, community relations, professional development opportunities, and federal, state or district initiatives. (500 words)

Special Projects, Initiatives, and Budget Considerations

The International Education Center operates with a clear understanding of the fiscal environment facing the district and is committed to responsible stewardship of the resources allocated to the program. In full recognition of the district's current fiscal challenges, the IEC is not requesting additional budget allocations at this time. The department is confident that it can continue to function effectively across all of its core functional areas within its current resource framework.

Human Resources As noted in the staffing analysis, the IEC has responded to position vacancies created by staff retirements by thoughtfully redistributing workloads across existing classifications in compliance with

union contracts. This approach has allowed the department to maintain operational integrity without requesting additional personnel resources, reflecting the IEC's commitment to fiscal responsibility.

Student Success and Completion The IEC's existing compliance monitoring infrastructure and enrollment funnel management systems continue to support strong student success and completion outcomes. These systems were developed and implemented within existing budget parameters and require no additional funding to maintain. The department will continue to leverage these tools to identify and address barriers to student success and completion.

Reducing Racial Equity Gaps The IEC's mission is inherently equity-focused, serving a diverse international student population that represents a wide range of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The department's commitment to equitable access and student support is embedded in its daily operations and does not require a separate budget initiative. Staff participation in district-sponsored equity and diversity training continues to be encouraged within existing professional development allocations.

Community Relations The IEC maintains active relationships with international recruitment agents, partner institutions, and global community networks as part of its ongoing recruitment and outreach strategy. These relationships are sustained through the department's augmented recruitment budget, which has already been adjusted to reflect new market development and expanded agent commission structures. No additional community relations funding is being requested at this time.

Professional Development As described in the professional development section of this review, the IEC supports staff training through a combination of district-sponsored offerings, NAFSA participation on a rotating basis, and in-house training led by department managers. These professional development activities are accommodated within the current budget and do not require supplemental funding.

Federal, State, and District Initiatives The IEC remains attentive to evolving federal, state, and district initiatives that may affect international student services, immigration compliance, and program operations. At this time, the department is prepared to respond to known regulatory and policy developments within its existing operational framework. Should significant unforeseen mandates emerge that require additional resources, the IEC will communicate those needs to district leadership in a timely and transparent manner.

In summary, the IEC enters the next three-year planning cycle in a fiscally sound position. The department's leadership is committed to maximizing the impact of every allocated dollar while continuing to deliver high-quality services and outcomes for its international student population.

This form is completed and ready for acceptance.

Completed Date: 4/30/2026

Completed By: NICOLOV_PRESSIAN-NICOLOV_PRESSIAN