

**AGENDA ITEM: C.2.b.2.**

**AGENDA TOPIC:** International Student Recruitment Plan

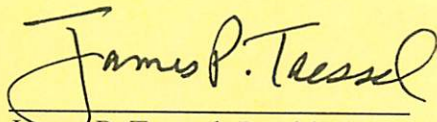
**STAFF CONTACT(S):** Dr. Martin A. Abraham, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Sylvia J. Imler, Chief Diversity Officer and Interim Director of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs

**BACKGROUND:** International student enrollment represents a critical component of Youngstown State University's mission to foster an "understanding of diversity, sustainability, and global perspectives" and to advance the "intellectual and cultural life of the city, region, and world." International students create educational and cultural experiences for YSU's campus and community. For many American students at YSU, international students provide the first close, extensive contact with people from other cultures. In addition, international students make a significant contribution to the local economy. YSU currently does not have an international recruitment budget.

**SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:** Youngstown State University needs to make significant investments to accelerate the pace of international student enrollment growth. Nine of the 13 public universities in Ohio have one or more staff members whose position is dedicated to international student recruitment. The international student recruitment plan is presented for Board discussion.

**RESOLUTION: N/A – DISCUSSION ITEM ONLY**

**REVIEWED AS TO FORM AND CONTENT:**

  
James P. Tressel, President

# PROPOSAL

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT ACTION PLAN FOR YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY



*Developed by:*

Jef Davis, PhD  
Sylvia J. Imler, PhD



## Overview

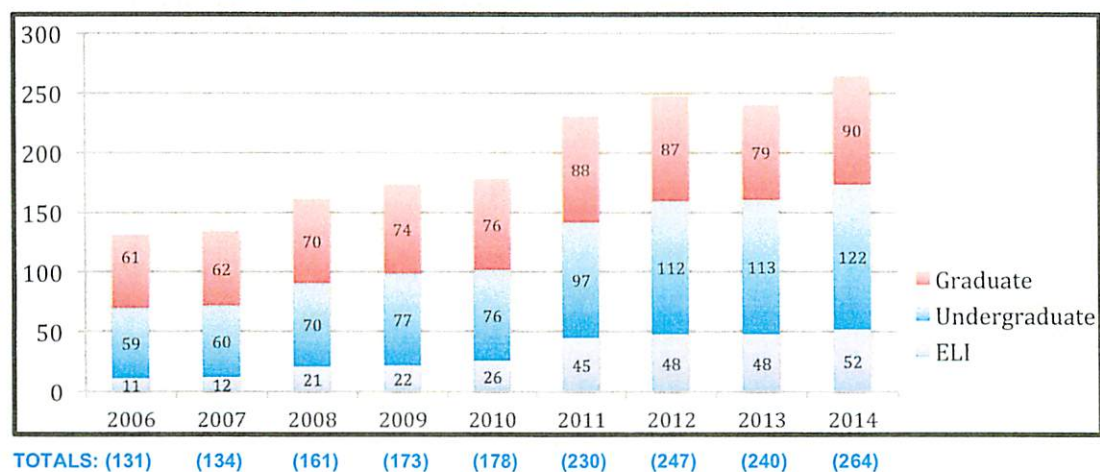
A part of Youngstown State University’s mission is to foster an “understanding of diversity, sustainability, and *global perspectives*” and to advance “the intellectual and cultural life of the city, region, and *world*.” Therefore, international student enrollment represents a critical component of our ability to fulfill that mission. International students are an important resource at YSU because they create educational and cultural experiences for our campus and community. For many U.S. students at YSU, international students provide the first close and extensive contacts with people from other cultures. These contacts are very important for the U.S. students as they learn how to interact effectively with people from a wide range of cultures. YSU’s international students come from more than 50 different countries around the world. In addition, international students also make a significant contribution to our economy. During the 2012-2013 academic year, NAFSA: Association of International Educators estimates that international students and their dependents contributed \$24 billion to the U.S. economy, supporting or generating 313,000 jobs as a result of international student spending on tuition and living expenses while in the United States. In that same year, YSU’s international student population contributed more than 5.8 million dollars to the local economy—tuition accounts for less than half of that total, the rest going toward rent, food, entertainment, automobiles, clothing, entertainment, etc.

**YSU’s international student enrollment has more than doubled in the past seven years**, from around 1% of all full-time students to 2.5%. This has been achieved primarily through the following:

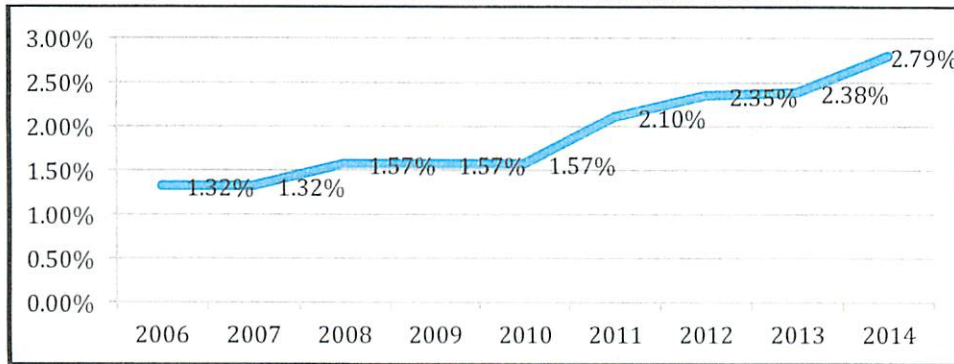
- 1) Centralization of international credential evaluation and admission processing;
- 2) Production of international student-specific recruitment publications;
- 3) Limited advertisement on international admissions-oriented websites and publications;
- 4) Initial development of a network of 3<sup>rd</sup>-party, commission-based (10% of the first year’s Net Tuition Revenue) recruiters;
- 5) International recruitment travel to the Middle East in 2009/2010.

In addition, The Center for International Studies and Programs has provided limited partial travel funds (on an *ad hoc*, opportunity basis) to faculty members traveling to China, India, and South Korea, when there has been a clear recruitment opportunity that could be identified, and initiated recruitment in SE Asia. Another initiative that tangentially contributes to international student recruitment is the hosting of summer camps for students from Mainland China and Taiwan.

**YSU International Student Enrollment 2006–2014**



**International Students as % of All Full-time Students**



### ***Rationale for International Recruitment***

The recent decline in U.S. student enrollment provides the opportunity—perhaps the necessity—to further increase international student enrollment.

Fliegler supports the rationale for increasing international enrollment in the following:

- *With strategic and data-driven efforts in place, institutions are building increasingly successful efforts to bring internationals to campus.*
- *As the U.S. population of teenagers is declining, institutions know they need international students to balance their budgets and to give U.S. students more international exposure,” says Blumenthal, adding that diversifying the classroom and getting international perspectives are also big reasons for attracting these students. “Even community colleges—which in the old days were totally a local resource—are starting to bring in international students.”*
- *Although the numbers are still small in comparison to domestic student enrollment, they make a big impact. According to the report, international students’ spending in all 50 states contributed approximately \$24 billion to the U.S. economy (University Business, 2014).*

### ***Why Recruit International Students?***

1. Cultural Diversity
2. Talent Pool—Academic and Intellectual
3. Offset Population Decline
4. Economic Driver—
  - a. \$2.9 million in tuition and fees
  - b. \$5.9 million in non-tuition economic impact

## Challenges and Opportunities

There are several significant challenges to international student recruitment. Because prospective international students—or their families—often know little about Youngstown, they often turn to the Internet for additional information. Google searches on “Youngstown” generally retrieve overwhelmingly negative results, containing numerous images of urban decay—in sharp contrast to similar searches for Cleveland.

Despite the many challenges, YSU has distinct advantages as follows:

- Affordability
  - Return on Investment
- Location
  - Best city for starting a new business
- Quality Academic Programs
  - Forbes *Best Colleges*
  - *Asian Correspondents*’ “Most Dynamic Universities in the USA”
- Teaching-oriented faculty

## Guiding Questions

Before embarking on a new plan of international student recruitment, the following questions must first be answered:

1. Where should we focus our recruitment efforts?
2. Which academic levels should we focus on?
3. What academic majors should we focus on?
4. What will it cost?

### *1) Where to focus recruitment efforts?*

YSU’s international students are a reasonably diverse group, hailing from more than 50 countries. As the following table demonstrates, the percentages of our international students from India and Nepal are both higher than their national averages, and our enrollment of students from Canada, Turkey, and Western Europe is on par with the United States national average. Successful recruitment in the Middle East has yielded a population that includes a much higher percentage (more than 40%) of students from that region (particularly Saudi Arabia) than the nationwide average. However, our enrollment of students from East Asia, particularly from Mainland China, lags far below the United States as a whole. South Korea, despite its relatively small size, sends a large number of students to this country, making it the third largest sending nation. (Note: There is roughly one Korean student in the United States for every 600 people in South Korea). Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Brazil are additional countries from which YSU has not yet attracted students in numbers commensurate with their enrollment at other U.S. institutions.

## TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

NATIONAL <sup>1</sup>			YSU <sup>2</sup>			
Rank	Country	% of Total	Rank	Country	# of Students	% of Total
1	China	31%	1	Saudi Arabia	54	18.9%
2	India	11.6%	2	India	37	13.0%
3	South Korea	7.7%	3	Ghana	25	8.8%
4	Saudi Arabia	6.1%	4	Jordan	17	6.0%
5	Canada	3.2%	5	Nepal	11	3.9%
6	Taiwan	2.4%	6	Canada	9	3.2%
7	Japan	2.2%	6	China	9	3.2%
8	Vietnam	1.9%	6	South Korea	9	3.2%
9	Mexico	1.7%	7	Kenya	7	2.5%
10	Brazil	1.5%	8	Iraq	6	2.1%
11	Turkey	1.2%	9	Brazil	5	1.8%
12	Iran	1.2%	9	Kuwait	5	1.8%
13	U.K.	1.2%	9	Turkey	5	1.8%
14	Germany	1.1%	9	U.K.	5	1.8%
15	France, Nepal, Indonesia	0.9% ca.	10	Bahamas	4	1.4%

<sup>1</sup> *Open Doors 2014*, Based on Fall 2013 data

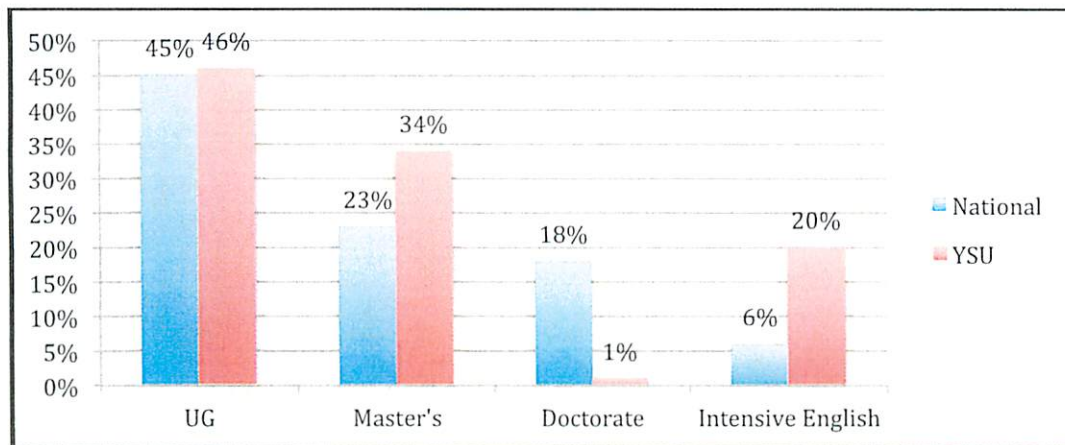
<sup>2</sup> Fall 2014



2. Which academic levels should we focus on?

YSU's international enrollment distribution by academic level is similar to the national distribution (with the logical exception of doctoral students). Therefore, we do not have a need to bolster a particular segment of the population, but rather need to continue to recruit at all levels.

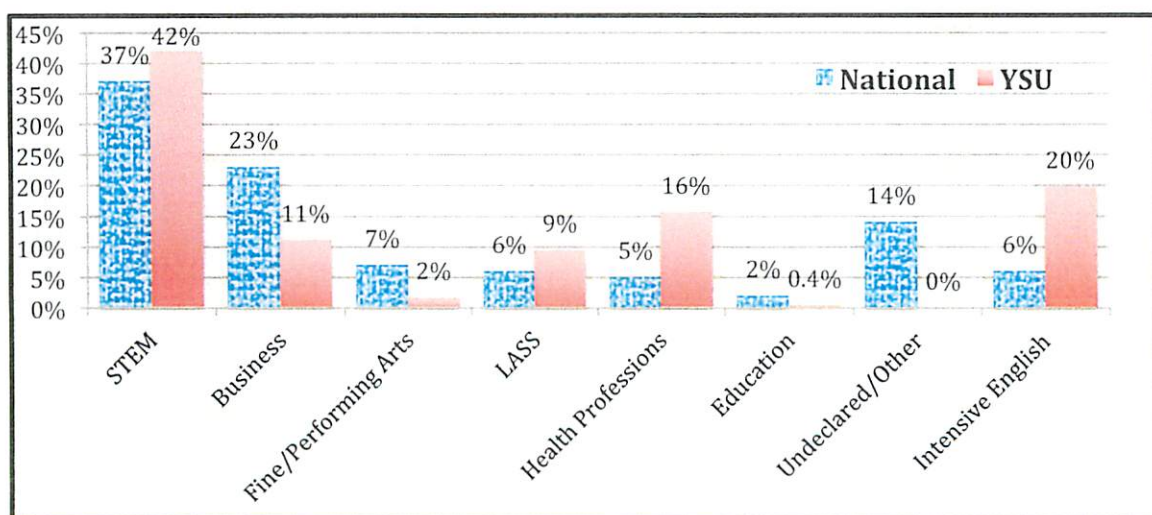
**International Student Enrollment by Academic Level**



3. What academic majors should we focus on?

Compared to the national figures, Youngstown State University's enrollment by college shows fewer international students enrolled in Business and Fine and Performing Arts. This shows that there is a market for these programs, and because we have very strong programs in these fields at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, we should be able to recruit more heavily in these fields.

**YSU VERSUS NATIONAL INTERNATIONAL ENROLLMENT BY GENERAL FIELD OF STUDY**



#### 4) *What will it cost?*

YSU currently operates with no international recruitment budget. The significant gains in international enrollment in recent years are the result of strategic investment of extremely limited resources. We can grow, at 5–10% per year, with comparatively modest investments in travel and advertising. With current staffing, we should be able to participate in 2 significant recruitment events per year. This would require an investment of approximately \$50,000 (\$25,000 x2).

However, if we are to significantly accelerate the pace of our international student enrollment growth, we will need to make some significant investments to that end. Most of the public universities in Ohio have one or more staff members whose position is dedicated to international student recruitment. A sampling of Ohio institutions of higher education with international recruitment staff is as follows:

##### **International Recruiters**

Akron (new position)  
Bowling Green (new position)  
Cincinnati (Multiple)  
Kent State  
Miami (4)  
Ohio State (Multiple)  
Ohio U. (Multiple)  
Toledo (1 director + 2 recruiters)  
Wright State

##### **No International Recruiters**

Central State  
Cleveland State University  
Shawnee State  
Youngstown State University



Therefore, we propose additional investment in international recruitment activities.

International Recruitment Materials (e.g., mail, handouts, brochures, etc.)	\$ 20,000
Recruitment Travel/University Fairs (e.g., 3 fall/3 spring semester)	\$150,000 (\$25,000 x 6)
Third-Party Recruiters	\$ 30,000
Advertising (e.g., HotCourses USA, Study in USA, TESOL.org, US Journal.com, etc.)	\$ 35,000
Recruiter (Salary and Benefits)	\$ 45,000
International Ambassador Program/Study Abroad Scholarships (see attached) (Approximately 25 YSU students at \$2,000)	\$ 50,000
Mobile Application + E-brochure in English and Chinese (Available App Store -- free. Lives on web; compliant with old browsers, drive traffic, analytics (tracking system); \$5,000 annual maintenance fee; each translation approximately \$1900-\$2000)	\$ 8,500
Additional Translations (Thai, Portuguese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese)	\$ 10,000
US Department of Commerce: Gold Key Service (Market research in target area; identify partners for IIE; vet some agents, institutions, provide a list; they will set up meetings for YSU to meet with parties; \$2000 per country)	\$ 2,000
Reduce tuition level for partner institutions/exchange students* <i>*Requires OBOR approval for any fee variance</i>	\$ 0
Total	\$ 350,500

## Proposal for the YSU International Ambassador Program

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### **Purpose:**

To enrich Youngstown State University's community and culture by implementing a program that creates an outreach to students in high school and college in foreign host countries and offers information about the opportunities available for international students at Youngstown State. This outreach could lead to potential growth of Youngstown State's international footprint, improve relationships with international universities, and possibly increase overall international enrollment at YSU.

### **Summary of Program:**

The International Ambassador Program will allow internationally outgoing Youngstown State students the chance to represent the University abroad as ambassadors in exchange for a determined amount of financial compensation or stipend. These students will give presentations at a specified number of universities/high schools in their host country regarding Youngstown State and the opportunities available here. The University will provide the presentation and any other promotional materials. The presentations would be held primarily in English courses offered at the host country's high schools and universities. This insures that the audience has some level of proficiency in understanding English. If the student were fluent in the language of his host country, then he would hold the presentations in high attendance classes in the host nation's language. To prove the presentations took place, a form will have to be signed by the university's/high school's representative.

### **Potential Benefits to Program:**

#### **YSU Students:**

1. Will receive financial aid (can be directed to help defray cost of tuition or other travel expenses)
2. Provide students with the chance to study abroad
3. Network on an international level
4. Represent Youngstown State on an international level

#### **Host Country Universities and High Schools:**

1. Will have a direct connection to representatives of Youngstown State University
2. Open potential opportunities for partnership with Youngstown State University

#### **Youngstown State University:**

1. Enriches International Program (goal to make YSU a desired destination college for international students)
2. Larger international footprint
3. Increased enrollment of international students
4. Youngstown State University's community and culture becomes more diverse