



**OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AFFAIRS (OISA)  
ASSESSMENT & REVIEW: DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS**

8/24/11

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Brenda Strong, Technical Assistant II  
Hanna Langley, International and Academic Advisor  
Michael Hunt, RLC (Collaborative Enrichment Position with ISO and CSB)  
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**1. Giving due consideration to the educational directions of your program or service field, to the college's stated educational goals, and to changes within the college, how would you currently define your department or program mission?**

*OISA Mission:* The Office of International Student Affairs supports the educational experience of international and global nomad students and scholars, and collaborates with partners on campus and off to advance awareness of global perspectives.

*OISA Primary Responsibilities:*

- Assist and advocate for international and global nomad students as they transition to life and learning at Grinnell College and in the U.S.A. – from their initial admission, preparation and arrival, through their commencement and beyond;
- Maintain the College's SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor System) records, support institutional compliance with this and other government regulations that impact international students and scholars, and teach students and scholars about their legal rights and responsibilities to help them remain in lawful status;
- Extend the opportunity for cross-cultural exchange through our Host Family Friendship Program and Cultural Speakers Bureau, as well as through our support of the International Student Organization and other student-led initiatives;
- Initiate, build and maintain networks across campus that support Grinnell's institutional values of social justice and global perspectives.

*OISA Vision:* The Office of International Student Affairs aspires to collaborate with colleagues on campus, in our community, and around the globe to provide intentional, creative and active contributions to the field of international education.

**2. Explain how the department or program provides the best possible educational experience for students who comprise the department's or program's clientele, giving particular attention to student learning outcomes.**

**Stated Learning Objectives for the OISA:**

- *As a result of intentional educational efforts by OISA staff, Grinnell's F and J visa holders will learn how to identify and maintain their immigration documents and learn how to comply with the regulatory responsibilities, benefits and limitations therein.*
- *As a result of participation in IPOP (International Pre-Orientation Program) international and global nomad students will learn that they have a support network on campus, and will be prepared and inspired to engage fully with their US counterparts in and out of the classroom.*

- *As a result of meeting with OISA staff, international and global nomad students and scholars will be confident in our work, trust our judgment, and consider us their ally.*
- *As a result of their engagement with OISA efforts and programs, international and global nomad students will be motivated to embrace the role of ‘cultural ambassador’ and to willingly share the unique gifts and insights that they bring to this small community in rural Iowa.*
- *As a result of our outreach efforts and consistent, quality work, campus and community constituents will learn about the resources available in the OISA and feel served and impacted by our efforts.*

**I consider the following activities to be among our best practices:**

The OISA staff spends significant time and energy teaching, problem solving, advising and referring. This happens through group information sessions, email correspondence, printed materials and handouts, and most importantly through **individual meetings** and contacts. In 2010-11, the OISA staff recorded well over 2,000 meetings with individual students. Some of our most valuable and impactful work takes place behind closed doors in a one-on-one mentoring and advising context. OISA staff are knowledgeable, personable and helpful in meaningful ways – and students benefit greatly from these individual meetings. Individual appointments are initiated by students, staff or faculty referral, or by our reaching out to them. Students visit us with questions about finances, immigration or other legal issues, cultural or social struggles, etc. In addition, every ‘first year’ who participated in IPOP is invited to participate in a ‘First Year Check In’ meeting during the first semester at Grinnell. We use a template to guide this conversation, but each meeting is unique and student focused with a primary goal to establish a positive open relationship between that student and our office. In addition, we work closely with Academic Advising (especially through Hanna Langley’s joint appointment) reaching out actively to international students who have been identified by faculty as experiencing academic difficulty. Because of my position (Karen Edwards) as a Dean on Call, access to the Campus Safety and Security log, and participation in our Students of Concern (SOC) meetings, we also have knowledge of behavioral decisions that students make – some wise, and others not so wise. We often reach out to students when those kinds of concerns make our radar.

The OISA’s **International Pre-Orientation Program (IPOP)** is a valuable way for our office to help establish community among international and global nomad peers; to build student’s trust in our staff; to enhance the skills of student participants; and to expose other staff and faculty to our office’s work. In this brief program (two arrival days and three days packed with sessions) we work to balance and prioritize each of these valuable goals! Over the past three years we made several intentional and positive changes in the program. I will highlight several features of IPOP of which we are especially proud.

- Serving as an IPOP leader is an honor – and we are blessed to have far more applicants than we can accommodate. Both international and domestic students apply for these seven positions, and the final leadership team becomes extremely invested in the program. They engage in the planning, the roll out, and the follow-up. Each leader is assigned a ‘small group’ of 9-10 incoming students. They reach out over the summer (pre-arrival) and work directly with them during IPOP and into the fall. While not an official ‘mentoring’ program, the relationships these leaders build with their small group serve us well.
- Collaboration with Grinnell’s Financial Aid, Bursar, and Accounting Offices have allowed for a very productive effort during IPOP - where students rotate through stations to complete employment paperwork efficiently. We help facilitate students’ Social Security application by preparing required paperwork and providing transportation to the SS Office in Marshalltown.
- We have increased our efforts to support parents and family members who come to Grinnell during IPOP and New Student Orientation (NSO) and appreciate the positive connections this makes for our office. (this year we had 26 family members here during IPOP!)

- We have shortened the program by two days over the past two years. This has allowed us to focus our program, and has also facilitated a shift for our students to consider IPOP as supplemental to NSO (rather than repetitive of NSO). It is our goal for IPOP to provide a ‘trampoline’ from which participants can leap into their Grinnell experience as full and active partners with their domestic counterparts.

It is worth reading in more detail about the IPOP schedule (in the binder). I am quite pleased with how this program has evolved and believe it is an excellent introduction to campus, to town, and to College life in the USA.

**Teaching and learning around regulatory topics** happens in a variety of contexts. Our first point of contact takes place upon a student’s acceptance to Grinnell –we introduce them to this office via email, snail mail, our web site, and sometimes via Skype. Our Pre-Arrival mailing includes in-depth information on regulatory issues and our communication on these topics are educational from day one – providing valuable guidance while asking our students to take on the responsibility for their own understanding and compliance. We introduce regulatory topics more fully during IPOP, through sessions, through our IPOP HANDBOOK, and through a required Compliance Statement. We offer regular information sessions on employment regulations, we initiate timely reminders regarding travel endorsements, visa renewals, SEVIS reporting requirements, etc. We purchase CINTAX (now Glacier Tax Prep) for our students and scholars and provide detailed guidance on tax compliance. We offer handouts covering a variety of regulatory questions (consulting an attorney, work permit issues, getting a drivers license, etc...) and we feature these themes on a regular basis in our weekly FYI email blasts and in MOSAIC, our bi-annual magazine.

Our **Host Family Program** and our **Cultural Speakers Bureau** (though the first is more developed than the latter) accomplish multiple objectives for the OISA, the students, and the local community. Both programs provide positive learning and growth opportunities for our students, to help them transition to and enjoy living and studying here in small town Iowa. Both programs also celebrate and take advantage of the unique gifts and insights that international students offer our local community – bringing the world into our midst! In the past four years we have developed a Host Family Handbook, initiated our Volunteer Coordinator Positions, and worked to increase the regular activities for and communication with host families. Over 103 local families are involved, and about 168 students. Students ‘opt in’ to the Host Family Program, and most remain active throughout their four years here. The Cultural Speakers Bureau is adapting and changing, and we would love to see it grow over the coming years. Last year, we initiated 13 CSB programs (51 students participated), including speaking engagements with the Lion’s Club and the Grinnell Optimists, presenting at the Drake Library’s Saturday Spotlight for children, helping with the local Girl Scout Troop’s “Thinking Day,” and presenting at Grinnell High School for the annual “Global Village” event. This past year we began a ‘summer shoppers’ program where students brought artifacts from home to be used and shared around campus.

**Communication is highly valued, within our office and with our constituents.** Karen meets individually with each staff member on a weekly basis, and the OISA staff meets monthly. We hire a *Student Liaison* who helps us consider our work from the viewpoint of our students. We engage three *Host Family Volunteer Coordinators* to support that program (they issue regular electronic communication to host families). We publish an *IPOP HANDBOOK* and a *HOSTING HANDBOOK* annually. *MOSAIC* is our bi-annual magazine. We feature student writers, primarily, but also work to incorporate staff, faculty, alum, and host families in a way that showcases our mutual investment in a Global Grinnell. *FYI from the OISA* is a weekly email blast from our office to international and global nomad students. We use it to make announcements that are unique or especially salient to them and we also link to the Campus Memo for easy access to a broader venue of events and announcements. We use our *OISA Web Site* [www.grinnell.edu/offices/studentaffairs/oisa](http://www.grinnell.edu/offices/studentaffairs/oisa) to provide a basic overview of services and programs, and we also collaborated on *Global Grinnell* [www.grinnell.edu/aboutinfo/global-grinnell](http://www.grinnell.edu/aboutinfo/global-grinnell)

to help encourage a broader perspective on campus internationalization. We offer our students a number of *Regulatory Handouts* on topics ranging from 'F-1's and Internships' to 'Consulting an Attorney.' We also collaborate on a regular basis with Grinnell's Office of Communication, and work to offer photos and story ideas for *campus publications* and/or the *press*.

Because we are invested in the success of the **International Student Organization** (ISO) the OISA provides advisory support and funding for the group. We typically dedicate part of our Collaborate Enrichment Position (through Residence Life, and currently held by Michael Hunt) to work directly with ISO. We collaborate on a "First Friday" reception at the start of the year, to encourage first-year and upper-class international students to meet one another. We are especially involved in the ISO Food Bazaar (a large annual event); a winter "Tea Stop" during our Wellness Fair; and the spring ISO Cultural Evening – among other smaller projects.

We also offer significant support by organizing activities for students over college **break** periods (for a number of our students who are not able to leave campus during that time). We are pleased that the College allows students with a home address outside the US to stay on campus at no extra cost during fall, winter and spring breaks. (Break programming is detailed in the review binder.) Three years ago, we also initiated a **Winter Coat Closet** (stocked by donations from the community). Coats are made available for free to new international students as the cold Iowa winter approaches. Last year we distributed over 60 coats.

### **3. Explain how you evaluate student achievement of learning outcomes and how the results of this assessment are integrated into department or program planning processes.**

There are a number of ways that we assess student learning and achievement, as well as reviewing our work as an office. Since student learning is so central to our mission, I have incorporated my reply for this question into the response to # 8 below.

### **4. In what ways does the work of your department or program reflect and foster understanding of the diversity of our society and on campus?**

Diversity is central to international education. I hope this is reflected through our work on a daily basis! Every student and scholar that we teach and support brings a unique experience and world view into our midst - they bring unique needs, unique ways of sharing, unique points to ponder...

When we talk about international students, we often limit our concept of diversity to citizenship. International students at Grinnell are diverse in ways that span far and wide, well beyond their citizenship. Some have traveled a great deal; others have come to Iowa via the first airplane ride of their life. Religious backgrounds vary greatly, in terms of faith experience and tradition and in terms of devotion and centrality to their everyday life and habits. Dietary needs; socioeconomic status; rural vs. urban; educational systems; level of exposure to war and/or peace; experience with technology; family size, influence, and expectations; political affiliation; exposure to new ideas and lifestyles... There is NO such thing, really, as a 'typical' international student – and it is all too easy to place them into a single category or check box.

The diversity of our 'clients' from around the globe impacts our work directly. We are prepared to assist each of them, in unique ways, with their transition to life and studies at Grinnell. While we offer common support systems and programs (discussing cultural transitions as a group during IPOP; including and incorporating Grinnell's commitment to Social Justice throughout our programming and our publications;

working to help make ISO Food Bazaar a success; etc.) we also place a great deal of value on our ability, in this small school environment, to know our students by name and to work with them on an individual basis. I think we do an outstanding job in this regard, and refer you to the supplemental materials referenced below.

As we support students with diverse needs we reflect often about the support they also receive from others across our campus. We reach out to offices and departments often, with the intent to help them reflect on ways they might better support diversity. We have established positive relationships with our Dining Services staff and our Dean of Religious life, to revisit how we support student's religious and/or dietary needs. We collaborate with Student Health and Counseling Services to explore and consider how culture impacts perspectives on (or access to) health and wellness practices. We work with our Cashier and our Financial Aid Office, to engage their support of students with financial difficulty. We work with the Career Development Office, faculty advisors, and visit department meetings (most recently with Computer Science and Economics) to discuss unique issues for F-1 visa holders looking for summer internships or considering their major declaration and career choices.

In addition, our efforts to 'Initiate, build and maintain networks across campus that support Grinnell's institutional values of social justice and global perspectives' have resulted in a variety of specific initiatives to encourage diversity education. Our initiative to establish a *Gallery of Flags* on campus went far beyond adding color and nuance to the Spencer Grill – and offered students an opportunity to think critically about the significance of national flags and the challenges inherent in such a display. Our interest in creating a campus that welcomes diversity has resulted in student, staff and faculty training opportunities: *SA training*; *Working Well with International Visitors* (for administrative staff and Dining Services Staff); *What it's like to be me* (offered to staff and faculty campus wide); and faculty department meetings/visits around unique issues for F-1 students. We have also initiated conversations in the local community – meeting local police and local attorneys, for example, to discuss unique issues for F-1 students who encounter the law.

Another one of our primary responsibilities in the OISA is to “extend the opportunity for cross-cultural exchange through our Host Family Friendship Program and Cultural Speakers Bureau, as well as through our support of the International Student Organization and other student-led initiatives.” These efforts certainly reflect and foster an understanding of diversity, on campus and in the local community, as we embrace the potential for ‘soft diplomacy’ in action. We believe that building friendships across cultures has the power to impact world peace!

**5. What is the extent of departmental staff involvement in college courses, non-departmental programs, interprogram or interdisciplinary collaborations, or college governance? Assess how such commitments have enhanced or limited the department or program.**

I will respond to this question with a focus on staff involvement beyond the scope of the OISA, and to question 6 with a focus on staff collaboration that is directly related to the OISA mission.

Brenda Strong is our Technical Assistant in the OISA serving as a source for organization, detail and budget management, keeping calendars and event planning on track, serving as our primary SEVIS manager, and providing front line student contact, advice and referral. Brenda also supports the DSA Suite from time to time – with regard to student appointments, phone calls, and traffic referral. Brenda is a tremendous asset to our office, her willingness to engage with College issues beyond her duties in the OISA notwithstanding. She represents our office on search committees, policy and planning committees, and also serves on our DSA Assessment Group. This past year, Brenda was asked to co-chair the President's Staff Handbook Review Committee. This has been a tremendous task, demanding time and

energy over the past year, plus. While there is no doubt that it took significant time and energy, her involvement in this project was a valuable service to our Division and to the College.

My (Karen) position as Assistant Dean takes substantial time and energy, as well as additional skills that go beyond the scope of the OISA directorship. There are pros and cons to this, of course. The role gives me a broader awareness of campus issues as they relate to student life and student governance. I have access to information about individual students that enhance my ability to support their needs. The role gives me access to collaborative and beneficial relationships, with Student Affairs and Student Government in particular. In my role of Assistant Dean, I also sit on the Emergency Planning Committee, the President's Senior Leadership Team, and I also served on the Ad Hoc Committee to create a Biased Motivated Incident Response Protocol. I have served on a variety of search committees, the Community Enhancement Mini Grants Committee, and the Center for International Studies Advisory Board. Of course, since time is limited, my responsibilities of Assistant Dean can sometimes distract me from the more focused, and perhaps more narrow mission of the OISA.

Hanna Langley's position is, by design, shared between the OISA and the Office of Academic Advising. Hanna's skills compliment this 'overlap' – she is very good at supporting student's through academic struggles and she is knowledgeable regarding the diversity of educational systems around the world. She does an excellent job working with the IPOP leaders to introduce new students to academic life at Grinnell. She is also currently helping us conduct the Focus Group on Academic Integrity. The only limitation in this arrangement might be that it is difficult to define what portion of Hanna's time is actually dedicated to either office – since there is so much overlap in the advising portion of her work. Hanna also, thankfully, supports some of the social and cultural projects that our office engages in – helping select Fischlowitz winners and IPOP leaders, supporting our IPOP Addendum for Language Assistants, engaging in the planning for ISO Food Bazaar, etc.

For several years, the OISA has been able to secure a 10 hour / week appointment from a Residence Life Coordinator (RLC) - through a Collaborative Enrichment Placement (CEP). We are pleased to benefit from this appointment, but struggle to build consistency through this position, since the individual serving in this role changes and brings different skills and interests each year. The position is typically dedicated to serve as advisor to the International Student Organization (Food Bazaar in particular); Cultural Speakers Bureau; and various projects as assigned. We are especially lucky this year that Michael Hunt has returned for a second year with the OISA (and his third year at the College).

I feel good about the visibility of OISA staff. We are all invested in this place, as often happens on a small campus. All four of us (Karen, Brenda, Hanna, and Michael, as well as our children) have participated in the Culture Evening, helped cook for with Food Bazaar, invited students into our homes, and are regularly visible at on campus events. All of us consider the campus as a welcoming place and we participate in activities, attend events, and engage with students on campus and off campus - in ways that reach far beyond our job responsibilities.

**6. In what ways is the mission of your department or program supported by other departments/programs? What factors have contributed to good collaboration across departments/programs? In what ways does your department/program mission support the DSA mission/values/vision and the mission of the College?**

The OISA's support of international and global nomad students and scholars is integrally linked to Grinnell's institutional mission to be a "lively academic community of students and teachers ... from diverse social and cultural circumstances." The OISA's investment in community programming and

outreach also complement the institutional interest in preparing students to “use their knowledge and their abilities to serve the common good.”

The OISA reflects the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) mission, values & vision. We “intentionally foster and promote student learning” as we work with international students and scholars to enhance their ability to become active members of this community - intellectually and socially. We provide a great deal of individual guidance, encouragement and cultural translation as students adjust to Grinnell – and this personal relationship building offers students a sense of belonging that is highly valued and inextricably linked to student learning and development. The Host Family Program and the Cultural Speakers Bureau serve to build community, trust, communication, active learning, and leadership development skills. In addition, we teach students and scholars about their rights and responsibilities as non-immigrant visitors - and we engage intentional strategy in this regard that keeps that primary responsibility for learning and follow through where it belongs - with the individual student or scholar.

We collaborate regularly with every area within the DSA: **Academic Advising, Security, Judicial Affairs** (students in academic or social difficulty); **NSO and Residence Life** (NSO/IPOP, student struggles, break housing); **Student Activities** (Flag Gallery, special events, etc); **SHACS** (medical or emotional support).

We have an especially positive working relationship with the **Admission Office**, around international student recruiting and admissions in particular. We work closely with Jon Edwards, Associate Dean, and with Melinda Drees, Admission Document Coordinator, as we revisit on a regular basis how our areas impact one another. We collaborate throughout the recruiting and admissions cycle, re: pre-arrival communication, Verification of Financial Resources and Initial I-20 issuance, SEVIS fee payment, and initial arrival. We collaborate around networking with Education USA colleagues, which positively impacts the OISA’s efforts to support the retention and success of admitted students. We also collaborate to involve current students in the recruiting process. One fun example is our use of the IPOP group photo. We use the photo on our web site, but we also create a postcard that each of the students receive. We use these postcards during an annual spring break event (Pasta and Postcards) where students gather to sign the postcards which are then included in the admission packets for incoming students.

Collaboration with the *Center for International Studies (CIS)* has been invigorating and impactful. Serving on the CIS Advisory Board has given me a voice in a new venue and has exposed faculty to the work we do here. Working with David Harrison (and others) on Campus Internationalization efforts; research around assessing global awareness of Grinnell’s students; the Flag Gallery; our web-site initiative (Global Grinnell); and conducting a staff training session run through H.R. – all have been worthwhile projects. One of our goals in this collaboration is to increase awareness of and commitment to teaching and learning outside of the classroom – beyond the academic curriculum.

The OISA is responsible for *Grinnell’s Exchange Visitor Program*. We work with CIS, and a variety of departments and offices, as a result. We offer departments the opportunity to invite professors, students, and short term scholars from abroad. The OISA coordinates the regulatory details required for issuance of Form DS-2019, as well as scholar check in, compliance, and advising.

In addition, the OISA’s mission in support of international students and scholars links us directly with:

- **Financial Aid** and the **Cashier**, around employment options, job assignments and financial difficulties and/or aid appeals.
- **Accounting** and the **Treasurer**, around student and scholar employment and taxation paperwork and compliance, as well as our retained legal counsel for immigration issues.

- **Diversity and Achievement:** CRSSJ, Intercultural Affairs, Community Service (religious expression and celebrations; counseling; cultural identity; diversity and social justice; service and exploration; Fischlowitz Travel Fellowship...)
- **Career Development Office:** student internships, research, and employment prospects for international students.
- **Academic Affairs.** We collaborate with faculty colleagues across campus (in support of international student themes and issues); Language Assistant support; visiting scholars, and special events with international themes.
- **Registrar.** We collaborate with the registrar as required through SEVIS compliance, to monitor data elements and full time enrollment.

**7. If the department or program is adding new activities, programs, or services, please explain how they will be staffed within the existing complement of staff. If the department or program is retaining activities or programs with consistently low involvement, explain any reasons for their retention.**

It might be appropriate here to share some of the changes we have made in OISA operations, to lighten our burden within the past several years. The first two examples have simplified our work load, but they are actually changes that we made because we wanted to send students a different message about “their ownership” regulatory responsibilities.

When I arrived at Grinnell, the OISS played a much more active role in student **tax compliance**. Wage and income statements were distributed through our office, and our staff (in addition to a team of VITA volunteers) reviewed individual tax returns, by appointment, for every international student. We have worked actively with our Accounting office to transition the distribution of forms back to into their purview. The OISA no longer plays ‘middle man’. We also discontinued our VITA site protocol, and chose to lean more heavily on the support we purchase through CINTAX (now Glacier Tax Prep). The primary responsibility for understanding and compliance has been shifted to the student (which is where we think it belongs). The workload for OISA staff (and volunteers) has reduced significantly in this regard, while our compliance rate for student tax filing has remained solid.

Likewise, for years the OISA has submitted the individual SEVIS fee on behalf of each incoming F-1 student. We would submit and pay the fee and then pass on the I-901 receipt along with the initial I-20. We covered the cost for high need students, and charged the fee back to the rest of the students through their College account. This effort (which probably began out of frustration over the initiation of a new SEVIS fee requirement) was creating substantial work for several offices. While it was easier for the students on the front end, we felt that it also sent the wrong message about THEIR need to engage in the legal process from day one. Over the past two years, we have made a successful transition in this regard. We now submit the SEVIS fee only for our full need students. In all other cases, we provide the students with instructions and pass this task their way.

Grinnell has engaged Language Assistants, as native speakers living in the language houses, for many years. The program is coordinated by the individual language departments, and over the years, each program has grown and changed in unique directions. Each of the assistants held unique job descriptions, unique responsibilities, and quite different salaries. Our office took the lead to bring these departments to a common table, along with Academic Affairs, to review our communication and practice around Language Assistants. As a result, we created a common template of job expectations, salary, and benefits. This process served to streamline, simplify, and better define the OISA’s role supporting Language Assistants at Grinnell. We continue to learn along the way about supporting our LA’s in appropriate ways, but believe we have made good progress in this area.



We have also added a number of new efforts / programs to our itinerary. Many of the best practices listed in this review have been new in recent years – the Flag Gallery; Summer Shoppers; Winter Coat Closet; additional break programming; FYI / MOSAIC; Academic Focus Groups; Assessment practices; and Host Family initiatives like the volunteer coordinators and the family weekend and winter pot-luck events.

OISA staff are stretched, to be sure. We do need to continue our efforts to regroup and restructure, and to consider any new initiatives carefully with special attention to staff workload and time vs. value.

### **8. Explain how you evaluate the department or program's achievement of management goals and objectives. What means are used for short-term and long-term planning? How is assessment of the operation of the department or program integrated into planning?**

Each year, the OISA is expected to submit an **End of Year Report** to outline accomplishments from the year and to consider goals for the upcoming year. The process of putting our accomplishments into a written format is a helpful reminder of the good work we do – and it also serves as a motivating factor as we look to the coming year. The EOY exercise proves helpful as we consider priorities for our time and our budget.

Staff evaluations are initiated every year, through HR. Within the Division of Student Affairs, we are asked to conduct **360° Evaluations** – through which we request direct feedback from the colleagues we work with most. This has been extremely helpful, as we work to hone our skills and shift workload and set priorities accordingly.

We maintain an office log to monitor **OISA traffic flow** and program participation. We record over 2,000 individual appointments (Brenda and Karen) in an academic year, and log 50+ group appointments and a list of active programming activities. This log does not account for Hanna Langley's appointments (which are logged separately) or for the amount of advising and support that we offer through email. Over time, this log helps us consider the direct impact of international student enrollment on office time and staffing needs.

The OISA collects an annual evaluation from **International Pre-Orientation Program** participants, as well as holding debriefing meetings with the student leaders (IPOC). This review directly impacts the program's evolution in meaningful and visible ways. As a result of the evaluation process, for example, we shortened the program, we increased the role of student leaders, and we adjusted the session order and length as well as the teaching/learning styles used. Because one of our learning objectives is specifically focused on regulatory issues, we also added a formal F-1 Compliance Statement and developed the IPOC Handbook. This year, our assessment too was combined with a survey previously conducted by International Admission. We combined our efforts to reflect more comprehensively on the recruitment, admissions, pre-arrival, and initial arrival experience that is supported by both of these offices.

For two years we had conducted a **Senior Survey** to gather feedback from the graduating class. This feedback has been used as we set priorities for the office. In addition, we use the survey to gather names of staff/faculty who have been supportive of our students – and we thank them for their service! Last year, we expanded the Senior Survey and sought feedback through an **OISA SURVEY** from all international and global nomad students (via Survey Monkey) about their experience at Grinnell and about their perceptions regarding the OISA staff and mission.

Last spring, the OISA initiated a formal (IRB approved) Focus Group to study the over-representation of international students with Academic Integrity violations. We conducted 6 interview groups and met with

30 students. This data will be useful not only to our office, but to faculty and students overall – especially the faculty Committee on Academic Standing.

We offer a brief evaluation to **Host Family Program** participants annually. The evaluation helps us feel more confident that program participants are truly engaged, and it also provides valuable feedback to improve our efforts! The evaluation has resulted in several specific initiatives – including the upgrade of our Magazine, the addition of a special event during Family Weekend, the Winter Potluck event, and a regular newsletter from our Host Family Volunteer Coordinators.

We do not formally assess **Cultural Speaker Bureau** visits from a qualitative perspective, but we do track them. Last year CSB facilitated 13 programs with 51 students participating.

This past year, we held a **Fischlowitz Feedback Group** with international students to learn more about their knowledge of and perceptions about the Fischlowitz Travel Grants. We adjusted the program in several ways as a result, including an extension of fund availability through the entire school year.

**9. What ethical principles, standards, statements, or codes guide the department or program and its staff members? What are the crucial legal issues, if any, faced by the department or program? How does the department or program ensure non-discriminatory, fair, and equitable treatment to all constituents?**

We are responsible to uphold the standards of FERPA. In addition, our standards of ethical practice are reflected in the NAFSA Code of Ethics:

[www.nafsa.org/about.sec/governance\\_leadership/ethics\\_standards/nafsa\\_s\\_code\\_of\\_ethics/](http://www.nafsa.org/about.sec/governance_leadership/ethics_standards/nafsa_s_code_of_ethics/)

Legal issues are at the core of our work in the OISA. It is our responsibility to “Maintain the College’s SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor System) records, support institutional compliance with this and other government regulations that impact international students and scholars, and teach students and scholars about their legal rights and responsibilities to help them remain in lawful status.”

Karen Edwards is Grinnell’s Principal Designated School Official (PDSO) and Responsible Officer (RO). Brenda Strong is a Designated School Official (DSO) and an Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO). Both Karen and Brenda have been trained in F and J regulatory issues, have significant experience advising and staying current on these issues, and maintain active NAFSA membership and regulatory reading practice. We subscribe to the NAFSA Advisory Manual, and also maintain the print version of this document. We depend a great deal on each other, brainstorming through complex cases and serving as a ‘check and balance’ to one another’s interpretation and advising styles. We also have an extremely valuable network of colleagues, especially peers at other small private liberal arts institutions with similar populations and similar issues.

*Pre Arrival:* Once an accepted international student has declared their intent to attend Grinnell, the Admission Office initiates our request for the I-20 Request for, as well as the Verification of Financial Resources. This documentation is submitted through Admissions, who also create an I-20 mock-up. This is passed on to the OISA and we review and approve (or deny) the VFR documentation and we then issue the initial I-20 through SEVIS. The I-20 is sent out by Admission, and sent to the student along with a packet of information for admitted Grinnellians. Initial I-20 issuance is coordinated differently on many campuses. We have found our protocol to work well, as it splits the work load across two areas and because it provides a ‘check and balance’ between our desire to enroll a strong international student body and our need to ensure their ability to support themselves financially once they arrive. We have also used

this process to help us identify students with unique regulatory situations, if they are already in the US for example, and need to view their transition to post-secondary studies in the US differently.

*Enrollment:* Our numbers are such that we comply with SEVIS through Real Time reporting. Brenda is our primary data manager in this regard, and is responsible for the initial registration of active F and J students and scholars, as well as the required registration confirmation at the start of each academic term thereafter. Brenda is also the ‘keeper’ in terms of our Datatel Alerts, helping us monitor address updates, major declarations, full time enrollment, etc., as recorded through our Office of the Registrar. Our Accounting Office monitors campus employment limitations, and communicates any changes or violations (including the 20 hour per week employment limit) directly to our office.

*Benefits and limitations:* We advise F/J students and scholars on a wide variety of issues related to their immigration status and benefits, and increasingly related to a variety of other regulatory issues. Here are a few of the issues that we encounter on a regular basis:

- Travel: travel endorsements, visa and passport renewal, transit visas, I-94 replacement, study abroad and third country visa issuance, automatic revalidation, Special Registration, etc.
- Employment: 20-hour limit (for on-campus employment); Social Security Cards (and replacements); Curricular Practical Training; Pre-Completion and Post-Completion Optional Practical Training; 17 month STEM Extensions; cap gap issues and H1B petitions; etc.
- Other F-1 benefits: short course load; medical/personal leaves or withdrawals; SEVIS transfers; change of status; termination; reinstatement; letters of invitation; etc.
- Other J-1 benefits: Engagement with a secondary employer; J-2 dependent requests; Health Insurance compliance; program extensions, transfers, or changes; etc.
- Tax Compliance: upon initial hire (I-9, W-4, FICA) We collaborate with our Accounting Office and rely heavily on Windstar in this regard; Annual return compliance (W-2, 1042S, 1040NREZ, 8843) We purchase and rely heavily on CINTAX (Glacier Tax Prep) in this regard.
- other: State of Iowa ID Cards and Drivers License; bank documents (W-8, 1099 DIV, etc.); Health Insurance claims; Arrests and criminal charges; etc...

*Unique Situations:* We also, and increasingly so, work with unique situations that don’t conform to the standard “F-1 student, coming from abroad” routine. This can present a dilemma for our office. Not all international students fall into the category of SEVIS Reportable, but they often still need and can often benefit from our office’s services. They may come to us holding another non-immigrant status, and need our advice regarding Change of Status applications or other such options. They may be foreign citizens who have lived in the US for some time, or they may be US citizens who have lived abroad for some time! The OISA has a broad definition of ‘international student’ and we invite students outside of the government defined ‘reportable’ F/J students’ to connect with our office.

*Scholars:* The OISA supports visiting J scholars through the issuance of DS-2019. We collaborate with a variety of offices and departments across campus in this regard, including the Center for International Studies, Dean of the Faculty, the Language Departments, individual hosting departments, and the Office of Accounting. Our visibility in this regard is minimal, but there are times when we encounter time-consuming complex issues. I feel highly dependent on our Advisors Manual and on other colleagues in the field.

*Legal Counsel:* Grinnell has a long standing working relationship with Davis Brown Law Firm in Des Moines Iowa. They are on retainer with the College for immigration issues – I-9 compliance, H1B petitions, PR sponsorship, etc. The OISA also has access to the firm for other issues that come to our attention, and we have used them on a regular basis for clarification on a variety of unique situations.

They have been a good source of support, though they do not have an in-depth working knowledge of SEVIS details or of F-1 or J-1 basics.

**10. As you look ahead to the next five year period, what if any resource needs (personnel, equipment, space, operational funding) demand attention? What goals or objectives for the next five years could be met within existing resources? What goals or objectives would require additional resources?**

International student numbers at Grinnell have increased dramatically over the past 10 years (from 101 in 1997 to 190 now) with little adjustment to staffing. Over that same period of time, the regulatory demands have dramatically increased – not only with regard to SEVIS but also in relation to the variety of other government agencies that our students encounter throughout their stay. That said, the need for community building, support for cultural transitions, and attention to individual student needs has not gone away. In fact, the advent of full need scholarships and higher need students has increased the necessity of solid support structures. Anti-immigrant sentiments post 9/11 have made soft diplomacy increasingly valuable, and the condition of the world economy has placed new challenges in the laps of our students – from paying their bills, buying books and having options for breaks, to adding new dilemmas and the need for creative solutions re: how to support their entre into the career and grad school search process.

The Technical Assistant II position (Brenda Strong) has grown substantially over the past few years, and we recently rewrote the job description. Brenda's position is that of a specialist. The regulatory issues with which she works on a daily basis are far more complex than simple data entry and maintenance. Her work involves legal reading and interpretation and an eye for nuance and caveat. We were extremely pleased to formally extend this position from an 11 month to a 12 month contract this year.

I would like to grow the work we do around global education and outreach, both on campus and in the local community. We have an amazing resource in our international student body, and there is tremendous untapped potential in engaging their skills in efforts of soft diplomacy. This is not possible with our current staffing, but I have drafted an initial proposal to this effect and have shared it to some extent. I have also begun to explore the possibility of external grants to facilitate this growth.

We will maintain our efforts with our current staffing, clearly. We will, however, continue to review our goals and re-set priorities in order to meet our responsibilities while supporting our students as well as we can.

**1. Miscellaneous**

- a. OISA Mission & Learning Objectives
- b. OISA Timeline
- c. International Enrollment list
- d. Flag Gallery (protocol, invite and bookmark)
- e. OISA Web Site
- f. FYI from the OISA (samples)
- g. MOSAIC (sample) and Outline
- h. Break Programming (sample)
- i. Leadership Certificates



**2. OISA Staff**

- a. Job Descriptions for Karen, Brenda and Hanna
- b. Staff Meeting Agendas
- c. Examples of professional engagement
  - i. Poster sessions from NAFSA (Karen and Brenda)
  - ii. International Student Guide, “A Gem to be Discovered” (Karen)
  - iii. NASPA '10: Academic Coaching (Hanna)
  - iv. MASEA Program & CIS FORUM presentation (Karen)
- d. Examples of materials used in training
  - i. Student Assistant Training (sample)
  - ii. My Job at Grinnell (sample presentation in local community)
  - iii. Staff Training: Barriers & Benefits: Working Well With Our International Visitors
  - iv. Culture Learning (Public/Private; Body Language Quiz; Sunglass Analogy; etc.)

**3. Collaborative Enrichment Position (CEP)**

- a. Position overview
- b. ISO & CSB EOY Report from Michael Hunt
- c. ISO Fall Retreat
- d. ISO Food Bazaar Timeline
- e. CSB Promo email & client list
- f. Student sign up – Share Your Expertise
- g. What it’s like to be me...

**4. First Year Student Focus**

- a. Pre Arrival Communications
  - i. Email introducing the OISA to admitted students
  - ii. I-20 Request Form and Verification of Financial Resources
  - iii. Pre-Arrival Packet (with cover letters) & screen shot of IPOP Face Book Page
  - iv. Summer E-mails to Paid Students International Pre Orientation Program (IPOP)
- b. International Pre-Orientation Program, IPOP
  - i. IPOP Team Leader job description, application, interview, and training
  - ii. IPOP Handbook
  - iii. IPOP Schedule
  - iv. Grey Binder and inserts
  - v. Power Point Programs, Session Outlines, Goal Sheet, Scavenger Hunt
  - vi. Postcard
- c. First Year Interview template
- d. Tutorial Faculty Memo

## 5. Host Family Program

- a. Recruiting materials (postcard; E-mails; church letter; etc.)
- b.** Family & Student application forms
- c. Hosting Handbook and Match Mailing (student and family)
- d.** Match Mailings
- e. Fall E-mail to upper class students
- f.** Miscellaneous event promo (Family Weekend / Winter Pot Luck)
- g.** Volunteer Coordinator Job Description
- h.** Volunteer Coordinator E-newsletters

## 6. Regulatory Advising

- a. F-1 and Internships
- b.** F-1 Compliance Statement
- c. Faculty Handbook re: F-1 Status
- d.** F-1 Internship Handout
- e. Optional Practical Training Overview\*
- f.** F-1 Employment Application Request\*
- g.** Economic Hardship Employment
- h.** 17 Month STEM Extension
- i.** Consulting an Attorney
- j.** Driver's License and State ID
- k.** Letter Templates (invitation, good standing, visa renewal, military, etc.)
- l.** F-1 Senior Packet (\*additional items included above)
  - i.** Cover Letter & Pink Slip
  - ii.** When to Reveal My Status
  - iii.** Re-Entry Shock
  - iv.** SEVIS Release
  - v.** H1B Basics
- m.** CINTAX User Guide
- n.** CINTAX Compliance Statistics
- o.** J-1 Scholar Support
  - i.** Annual State Department Report
  - ii.** Exchange Visitor Appointment Request
  - iii.** Scholar Letter and Scholar Check-In
  - iv.** Scholar, Occasional Lecture or Consultation
- p.** Language Assistants
  - i.** LA IPOP Addendum
  - ii.** J-1 Compliance Statement
  - iii.** Language Assistants Flow Chart
  - iv.** Certificate of Completion

## 7. Assessment

- a. 2009 Senior Survey and Thank You Letter
- b. OISA EOY Report 2010-11
- c.** 2010-11 Office Traffic Report
- d.** IPOP Evaluation Analysis 2009, 2010
- e. 2011 IPOP Survey (Admissions, Pre-Arrival and IPOP Assessment)
- f.** Host Family Annual Evaluation (family and student)
- g.** Open Doors Survey Fall 2010
- h.** Focus Groups on Academic Integrity
- i.** CAS Self Assessment Guide
- j.** 2010 Survey (via Survey Monkey) *\*not included here.*