



Strategic Plan 2023-2025

July 2025 Progress Report

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GOAL 1: Serve as a vital partner to campus and external entities to advance international engagement and advocacy

Highlight the value of the international community and advocate for their needs and concerns

- Began attending regular meetings of the newly constituted Government Activities Management Team (GAMT) to communicate issues and concerns related to international students and scholars
- Began attending meetings of the Council of Deans to communicate issues and concerns related to international students and scholars
- Presented about the issues and concerns related to international students and scholars at the Vice Provost campus mega meetings
- Hosted the UC Directors for their annual meeting addressing the needs and concerns of the international community
- Served on several campus committees to advocate on behalf of international students
- Presented at a NAFSA-sponsored webinar on Navigating Change
- Presented to the Board of Visitors. An External Board that is Chaired by the Chancellor
- Collaborated and consulted with Undergraduate and Graduate Education leadership units, Campus Counsel, and Academic Senate related to current F/J student immigration crisis issues and campus support
- Served on the National Postdoc Association (NPA) International Committee
- Organized and moderated NPA webinars in order to provide essential immigration information to the larger post-doc community
- Presented an overview of the DACA program to International Office Staff at Truckee Meadows Community College
- Organized, scheduled, and promoted various immigration update webinars for faculty/staff to keep them abreast of any large immigration changes, guidance updates, and impacts to the international population at UC Berkeley.

Collaborate with campus partners to advance international engagement at UC Berkeley

- Established a regular partnership with Public Affairs for them to take the lead on all media requests related to international students
- Shared data with campus partners and leaders engaged in the visa revocation issue, including academic personnel and select academic units
- Worked with campus counsel to develop a due diligence letter in support of the recertification of the Form I-17
- Served on the search committee for the Associate Director of the Center for African Studies
- Collaborated with Graduate Division and Transfer Center and Career Engagement Center to present populations specific webinars for prospective international graduate students and newly admitted transfer Undergraduate students

- Presented alongside campus colleagues who support visiting scholars, visiting student researchers, and postdocs at the VSPA New Affiliation Orientation
- Launched a student visa issuance dashboard for Fall 2025 that empowers BIO staff and campus leadership with crucial data on visa trends, enabling more informed decision-making and a clearer understanding of visa impacts on students and the campus

Leverage relationships with campus and external partners to meet the needs of our clients

- Continued collaboration with leadership from the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office to address critical financial challenges faced by students
- Collaborated with Student Affairs leadership to establish and manage a financial aid program for students who were experiencing financial challenges as a result of visa revocations
- Participated in a meeting with select faculty addressing the legal representation needs of international students whose visas were revoked
- Partnered with WR Immigration to provide web-based workshops for our clients
- Collaborated with Arctic Intl (GTP) and GLACIER, Sprintax and VITA for international student/scholar tax service support and process enhancements
- Met with external partners to explore opportunities to collaborate to increase support for international students including YWCA, LEP (Language Exchange Program)
- Spoke at Graduate Divisions Beyond Academia Conference on international student employment
- Collaborated with ASUC student leaders on initiatives for international student support
- Provided Student Advocate Office with BIO Financial Aid Program overview, strategizing continued mutual support for international students in financial need
- Worked closely with Graduate Division regarding complex graduate funding issues: 2025 graduate academic year funding letter, as well as feedback on GLACIER International Students Tax Memo
- Collaborated with community volunteers to offer campus tours for newly arrived visiting scholars
- Forged relationships with new campus partners by providing individual and group trainings to colleagues who are new to working with international scholars
- Contributed to a SIS initiative to streamline SIS Access requests by defining specific SIS security roles tailored to different BIO staff functions
- Worked with University Business Partnerships & Services to update BIO logos to comply with UC Brand guidelines
- Collaborated with the campus Housing department to update and streamline the BIO housing web page
- Worked with various dept liaisons to clarify and establish streamlined processes regarding CPT policies related to internships
- Continued representation on the NAFSA Region XII team, including positions such as Chair-Elect and Communications Representative
- Completed the full annual recharge certification in Jan 2025 so that Berkeley International Office (BIO) could continue providing recharge services to campus departments that host visiting scholars or hire international employees

GOAL 2: Enhance the client experience through our services and programs

Provide a personalized client experience through clear, accurate and holistic advising

- Provided nimble communications to clients as the immigration environment grew more complex and uncertain
- Created new immigration webinars in response to the current immigration environment and changes/updates
- Strategized with LLM regarding new summer program dates, extension process and communications
- Updated program extension form and AT forms with 212e waiver info
- Supported international student population through relevant informational webinars and workshops:
 - 2 Pre-Arrival Applying for Your Student Visa webinars
 - 1 Summer Travel & Visa Webinar for Continuing & Post-Completion Students
 - Pre-Arrival webinars for new students related to academics, financial success, housing, student life
 - 2 Introduction to the U.S. Tax Filing Workshops: January and February
- Offered additional Two-Year Home Residency Requirement workshops to respond to increased participation following the updated 2024 Exchange Visitor Skills List
- Offered “Connect at Berkeley International Office” event to provide regulatory updates, address scholars’ concerns and to provide opportunities to network
- Updated the ISSM EV Skills List field calculation from the 2009 to 2024 Skills list to ensure that advisors have up to date, accurate information about students’ and scholars’ Skills list status at their fingertips while interacting with clients

Maintain a flexible, hybrid service model to best serve the changing and diverse needs of our clients

- Transitioned to a two-day in person work week for office staff as BIO adjusted to seasonal shifts
- Hosted a hybrid orientation model for Spring 2025 incoming students: virtual orientation informational sessions with an in-person social event
- Implemented virtual appointments into the student team's seasonal advising model for the spring and summer months, broadening support options for students.

Utilize data to inform and evaluate our services and programs

Leadership and Operations:

- Utilized data to inform our work as it related to student visa revocation and visa issuance rates
- Analyzed 2024 data to adjust BIO’s Spring and Summer student advising services
- Utilized prior attendance data to plan for future scholar events, such as the Bernal Hillwide Garage Sale Event

- Analyzed BIO's financial data and updated projections to keep Director informed of current and future financial trends regarding BIO's payroll and non-payroll expenses, campus funding, recharge income, and document processing fee income sources

Pursue creative improvements of our services and programs to meet new challenges and identify opportunities for growth

- Moved Managers meetings to Monday's and increased frequency to weekly meetings in order to address changes and updates in a timely manner
- Kept resources and webpages up to date concerning new immigration updates and impacts
- Presented workshops and webinars on new topics relevant to recent immigration updates:
 - 3 F-1/J-1 Student Workshops on Immigration Updates and Q&A, containing information on urgent immigration topics
 - Tailored support workshop for students impacted by travel bans
 - 2 BIO co-sponsored webinars with Wolfsdorf Immigration:
 - "Immigration Updates: Summary of Legislation, Executive Orders, and Policies with Potential Impact on the International Community"
 - "Immigration Update: Know Your Rights while Encountering Immigration or other Law Enforcement Officials"

Enrich the client experience by facilitating connections with the campus and local community

- Made improvements to the organization of and access to the Client Attorney Referral List
- Offered Visiting Student Researcher Community Hours to promote connections within this community and introduce scholars to local dining venues.
- Provided scholars the opportunity to connect with each other and the BIO staff at "Connect at the Berkeley International Office" programs
- Introduced scholars to UC Berkeley campus history by offering a Big C hike event

Maintain and build on existing emergency protocols to ensure effective response to emergency situations

- Provided nimble support services to students whose visas were revoked
- Completed review and preparation of Government agency visit protocols with Managers team
- Student forms updated to require current phone number, allowing alternate documentation for urgent phone contact needs if Cal Central or BIO SSU are not properly updated
- Provided continuous monitoring of SEVIS records during the April 2025 DHS-initiated termination events. Ensured timely communication of updates to BIO leadership and maintained a comprehensive dashboard to support BIO, campus leadership, and legal counsel with essential data
- Introduced the bioemergency email for clients to contact us and receive a rapid response during emergency immigration situations

- Kept clients and campus partners apprised of sudden immigration updates and the impacts of those changes through timely emails and workshops
- Posted regular summary reports of immigration updates and impacts to the BIO Immigration Policy Updates web page
- Developed formalized process for creating and sending urgent communications to our clients
- Kept Immigration Policy Updates page up-to-date with any new changes and content
- Created new web pages to address pressing topics: a Know Your Rights web page and a Legal Assistance web page
- Worked with the new property manager who reports directly to the owner of 2150 Shattuck. Communicated all building safety updates from the property manager to all BIO and GEO employees

Improve the user-friendliness of client-facing materials and procedures

- Updated and clarified information on Shih loan docs (borrowing limits; personal reference requirements) in an effort to have less student confusion, fewer student questions, delays in application process
- Updated the NIF form to improve overall usability and to align with SEVIS policy changes
- Updated BIO US Tax Filing page for usability and increased GTP & Sprintax webinar announcements and visibility on BIO website, BIO bulletins, and tax announcements
- Updated the Peer Mentorship Program webpage with new 2025 academic year information
- Completed final changes to BIO Medical Withdrawal advising form and began form implementation in advising
- Created a “Use of Outside Counsel” page on BIO website
- Updated the “Permanent Residents” page created two new PR sponsorship forms: one for Tenure Track Faculty and the other for Staff and Lecturers
- Added new TN forms to reflect two types of TN cases: USCIS applications and Port of Entry applications to Customs and Border Protection
- Launched the CPT e-form in January 2025, the highest-volume student request form that had not yet been transitioned to an e-form, resulting in more streamlined processing for students, their academic advisors, and BIO staff for the 1,680 CPT form submissions that we process per year
- Launched OPT Re-Recommendation e-form in March 2025
- Began process of creating a BIO Brand section of the internal BIO wiki, containing guidelines on overall image, logos, color palette, and fonts in order to comply with UC-wide branding
- Introduced Docusign process to clients through email outlining steps and process in easy-to-understand format
- Upgraded BIO Zoom account to allow for up to 500 attendees for our virtual webinars
- Updated website with top banner addressing travel concerns

GOAL 3: Support international student retention by utilizing a holistic approach

Offer a flexible array of programs to assist with connection, inclusion, and intercultural engagement

- Facilitated and attended bi-weekly Coffee Hours programs at new location in collaboration with International House
- Organized and led community building events for students including
 - Student/Scholar Big C Hike
 - BIO Picnic Day
- Represented BIO at International House Cultural Festival
- Represented BIO at ASUC International Carnival event
- Promoted all student-related programming, especially the new Bias/Discrimination workshop series to students through social media, the weekly newsletter, and occasional direct emails, in order to ensure that they are aware of all opportunities
- Provided financial expertise and services to pay honoraria and I-House expenses for two interfaith panel events in the “Our Difference is Our Strength” workshop series, student events such as Spring 2025 Student Orientation. Extended student employee appointments and led off-boarding of student employees who worked on these events

Provide resources and support for international student housing and basic needs

- Financial Aid team collaborated with the Basic Needs Center involved in financial aid to support students in urgent basic needs
- Presented Finding Housing webinar in collaboration with the Basic Needs Center
- Collaborated with a CAPS counselor to develop a workshop for incoming Peer Mentors, equipping them with the skills needed to support mentees and assist incoming students effectively
- Provided financial expertise and services to pay medical and dental expenses for international students in need

Demonstrate a helpful and caring approach when supporting students in crisis.

- Developed detailed but also clear outreach for students on Academic Notice or who have been dismissed, including information about their options, logistics, etc.
- Provided urgent ongoing support for crisis and high level student casework related to SEVIS terminations
- Worked collaboratively and in consultation with campus leadership, Campus Counsel and external attorneys for SEVIS termination student support and outreach
- Made extra efforts to call clinics and speak with clinic administrators to waive certain policies in order for BIO to pay students’ time-sensitive, post-treatment expenses
- Communicated with students about payment status and provided receipts on time

Strengthen academic retention through the creation of new academic tools, promotion of resources, and collaborating with key campus partners

- Worked with Colleges on academic standing specific cases to help protect impacted students' immigration records when possible; assisted students in liaising with academic departments

Support students' mental health at varying levels of need through collaboration and outreach

- Reviewed essays from both undergraduate and Graduate/Parent Grant financial aid applications—regardless of application status—to identify students in distress and provided outreach, advising, resource connection and ongoing support
- Collaborated with colleagues in CAPS to host joint BIO-CAPS listening session for students in distress
- Collaborated with CAPS, CTL colleagues to develop Our Differences workshop series:
 - Strategies to Regulate Emotions
 - Interfaith Panel Discussion

Assist students by providing them with the tools they need to succeed on campus and post graduation

- Facilitated post grad work authorization workshop for multiple graduate professional departments
- In collaboration with Career Engagement Office and I-House, developed and facilitated Networking 101 for International Students workshop
- Supported organization and implementation of Breaking Boundaries: Insights from International Women Thriving in the U.S. Workforce workshop
- Executed a semesterly outreach campaign for graduating students, proactively providing timely reminders and guidance on crucial visa status maintenance actions (e.g. applying for a program extension, SEVIS transfer, or OPT) to ensure compliance
- Re-made admission yield video (modernized and updated) for prospective students to learn about BIO, our services, and the UC Berkeley campus at large
- Updated pre-arrival videos by removing background music to make information easier to digest and revising content

Provide training for campus staff to understand and improve the campus experience of international students

- Presented 5 Faculty/Staff Immigration Updates and Q&A sessions related to current Immigration issues (SEVIS Terminations, Travel Bans, Visa Delays and Vetting)
- Presented "Introduction to BIO and F1/J1 International Students" workshop for new Colleges of Letters and Science advisors

GOAL 4: Optimize staff, financial, and space resources to strengthen organizational effectiveness

Ensure that staff have the necessary tools, technologies, and training to support their work

- Made the decision to acquire new laptops for staff to use at home and who are working remotely
- Approved the purchase of computers and other hardware for all staff as part of the cycle of replacing hardware in regular intervals
- Supported staff to attend professional development conferences
- Worked with People & Culture to plan a retreat centered around StrengthsFinder and served on the BIO retreat planning committee, preparing retreat materials and arranging breakfast and lunch
- Made major revisions to the BIO internal wiki, expanding on our processes and advising around medical withdrawal, the 12 and 24-month bars, and added a video of the J transfer out process.
- Organized in-person mental health workshop with Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) to support staff well-being
- Advisors/Managers attended training workshops related to changing immigration policy as well as changes in UC Berkeley staffing:
 - Rapid Response: SEVIS Terminations and Visa Revocations (NAFSA)
 - IE30 with Dr. Fanta Aw: Holding Space (NAFSA)
 - NAFSA Live Web Event: Regulatory Perspectives: Current Issues - Legal Actions Occurring in Response to Enforcement Actions Against Students
 - UC Berkeley Unionization Overview & Q&A for Supervisors and Managers
 - NAFSA Live Web Event: Regulatory Perspectives: Alien Registration Requirement
 - UC Berkeley Managing in a Union Environment
 - UC Berkeley Manager's Forums
 - Understanding President Trump's New Travel Ban & Its Implications (Wolfsdorf Immigration)
 - UC Berkeley BPM 102 People Management in a Union Environment
- The Staff Development Committee continued to offer events to the BIO staff to support them and their work
- Presented a staff professional development training on employment based topics
- Participated in workshop on detecting fraudulent documents
- Attended NAFSA Region XII and Northern District Conference, in order to both present sessions and share knowledge, as well as attend sessions and develop professionally
- Completed various systems trainings to enhance operations and processing effectiveness
- Launched the final phase of a DocuSign integration for signing and transmitting student I-20s and DS-2019s. As of January 2025, BIO is now signing and sending all student and scholar I-20s and DS-2019s (well over 10,000/year) through DocuSign, a significant savings over the pre-covid paper-and-mailing-based process and a significant efficiency and information security improvement over the prior emailing process

- Placed orders for replacement of staff workstation computers to address out of warranty computers and computers not compatible with Windows 11, in addition to ordering university-owned laptops to ensure that staff are able to perform work on university-owned rather than personally-owned computers for cybersecurity reasons.
- Performed IT onboarding procedures and provided systems training for new International Student Advisor
- Performed timely ISSM hotfixes to restore RTI Access functionality at a critical time of year, as well as updates to USCIS form versions
- Developed several new staff “Tech Tips” emails on topics aimed at developing staff’s familiarity with helpful resources and processes:
 - Keepass
 - Autohotkey
 - Website file management
- Developed AI workshop to be held in the near future
- Identified available funding for replacing old workstation computers, communicated funding amounts to BIO’s IT Team, attended meetings with BIO IT and campus IT Client Services to communicate important fiscal close deadlines for the computer expenses. Made many blucard peripheral purchases for employees’ new computers to meet deadlines. Reviewed BIO financial reports to ensure that BIO was charged for the equipment in FY25
- Updated BIO’s financial projections to identify the financial resources that are available to BIO
- Attended a campus training to begin using the new campus deposit system in April 2025
- Worked with Division Finance Leader Jules Freedman and completed all requirements and tasks to take BIO thru a successful fiscal close of FY25

Align staffing levels and address staff workload based on bandwidth across the organization

- Proceeded to recruit student advising staff that has now become ongoing
- Moved NIF processing away from advisors
- Added a seasonal Admin Assistant 3 to support the work of BIO and NIF processing
- Offboarded & transitioned duties for 2 departing SSA3s
- Completed search, onboarded and began training new SSA3 Student Advisor (Student team)
- Worked with campus HR and Recruitment to extend an AA3’s limited appointment
- Off-boarded one PPA2 and recruited a replacement
- Revised student team advising schedule for the busy Spring season, NAFSA week professional development leave period, and summer increased remote work
- Trained and added additional support responsibility for late drop/withdrawal approvals in CalCentral/BCS
- Re-posted a prior SSA3 job ad to recruit two additional SSA 3s
- Off-boarded one AA3

Prioritize a diverse and versatile staff who can provide the highest level of service

- Created a new role within the student advising team to provide more support for student Engagement and Support

Use a holistic approach when focusing on staff retention, addressing their financial, personal, professional development, and career growth needs

- Advisors attended NAFSA 2025 conference and contributed to work on NAFSA's Regulatory Sessions working group, including chairing SEVP Current issues session
- Completed equity increases in March 2025
- Showed two BIO employees how to use an ergonomic calculator to adjust their workstations and reduce/prevent work injuries

Ensure continuity of services through cross-training, documentation of shared knowledge, and transparency of staff responsibilities

- Continued cross-training on Shih Loan and Medical Fund application processes
- Cross trained a J scholar advisor with the employment based team to provide coverage during a temporary vacancy on the employment based team
- Cross trained a J scholar advisor with the employment based team to provide coverage during a temporary vacancy on the employment based team (SEE ABOVE - SCHOLAR TEAM)
- Wrote detailed shared doc travel guides for SSAs attending national NAFSA conferences and for AA3s attending Bay Area NAFSA conferences
- Wrote detailed instructions for BIO employees holding several events that involve I-House Catering and paying honoraria

Maintain a strong financial footing to address short and long-term economic challenges

- Received formal notification that provided approval for a new student fee
- Introduction of Visa Document Processing Fee (VDPF) for NIF
- Increased the recharge rate for J deferrals to align with the workload involved with adjusting program dates
- Implemented functionality to collect payment for the newly-approved Visa Document Processing Fee (VDPF) from incoming students through the NIF
- Worked with Director and Communications Manager to participate in Big Give 2025

Adapt the use of space to address evolving needs

- Adjusted office occupancy to accommodate additional advising staff