



Strategic Plan 2018 - 2020

Final Progress Report – December 2020

GOAL 1: Build and Strengthen Partnerships

Collaborate with key campus units to enhance student, scholar, and faculty experiences.

- Collaborated with the Dean of the Law School to ensure that the school followed SEVP guidance
- Collaborated with the Export Control officer and the Vice Chancellor for Research Office in establishing campus procedures for identifying students subject to Export Control regulations that apply to U.S. sanctioned countries
- Participated on the Advising Council Awards Committee
- Collaborated with IST in executing a survey of Chinese students regarding VPN and network access issues
- Partnered with the Chair of the Academic Senate to execute a plan that ensured that all students who needed to participate in in-person instruction were able to do so
- Participated in campus partner workshops and trainings for Advancing Practice advising community, Summer Sessions, Students of Concern Committee, Athletics, Office of the Registrar, Graduate Division, Haas MBA, MFE, and the Graduate School of Journalism
- Collaborated with L&S regarding Spring 2020 dismissals and process improvements for the Late Drop student electronic form
- Provided 2020 post-completion employment data and 2020 current international student lists to Career Center
- Hosted campus-wide J scholar and Employment-Based updates meeting for HR representatives, managers and supervisors
- Participated in virtual BRS regional meetings with HR representatives, managers and supervisors
- Collaborated with BRS on a Postdoctoral Scholar Town Hall meeting
- Continue close partnership with the visa team within BRS and ERSO by having regular check-in meetings to share best practices and provide regulatory/policy updates
- Worked closely with Simons Institute and ERSO to coordinate large group visit during a period with challenging logistical constraints
- Met with Immigration Supervisor of Lawrence Berkeley National Lab to give overview of BIO immigration communications, discuss collaboration

Build alliances with campus and community partners to leverage human and financial resources.

- Partnered with VC for Development and Chair of the Academic Senate to develop a plan to raise emergency funding for international students affected by the pandemic
- Partnered with the Graduate Division to coordinate increased COVID emergency fund
- Participated in the Economic Justice working group to collaborate with other campus units on financial support for international students
- Assisted Basic Needs Center in improving online resources for international students
- Engaged with the new Executive Director of Alumni Relations

- Continued to strengthen liaison with Berkeley Postdoctoral Association
- Participated in committee for visa process improvements for the staff H-1B visa process
- Built new working relationship with the Division Finance Leader who oversees BIO and other units in the Office of the VP for Academic Planning
- Made new contacts in the Controller's office while completing annual Cybersource re-certification/assessment process
- Maintained strong working relationships with BIO's HR partner and BIO's previous control unit, OVCR

Collaborate with external partners, including other UC campuses and professional associations, to build upon synergy and advocate for our client populations.

- Collaborated with other UC programming counterparts to co-host pre- and post-election discussion groups for international students
- Continued to collaborate with external partners, including UC campuses and NAFSA to advocate for our client populations via teleconference calls and webinars
- Served on NAFSA Postdoc SIG leadership team and NAFSA Employment-Based subcommittee
- Co-presented and organized regional and national webinars to advocate for international scholars
- Continued membership in AILA (American Immigration Lawyers Association) and SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) for immigration information and updates

Engage with campus leadership to coordinate and promote campus internationalization.

- Collaborated with the senior international officer and other campus leaders on multiple communications to both internal and external stakeholders
- Regularly updated the International Activities Coordination Committee (IACG) on international student/scholar/employee issues
- Continued to work with Berkeley International Group to plan monthly panel discussions on international issues that affect the university
- Met regularly with Global Engagement Office staff and ASUC student senators

Collaborate with on and off-campus entities to improve user experience with technology.

- Worked extensively with the Support and Software Development teams at Ellucian on various fixes and enhancements for ISSM and ISD
- Continued to serve on Ellucian focus groups to improve user experience with technology
- Co-presented at the annual Ellucian Virtual Conference on ISSM

GOAL 2: Enhance Effectiveness of Products, Services, and Internal Processes

Streamline, standardize, and automate processes.

- Changed data source and methodology for annual student statistics to include nonimmigrant students who are not on F or J status
- Added additional logic to student Arrival Confirmation form in Mercury to increase the accuracy and efficiency of processing
- Made use of ISSM custom fields and CS reports to make the compilation of Academic Probation lists more efficient and reliable
- Continued to refine and document remote data entry and mail out processes
- Designed and implemented new IOF reconciliation process that provides total transparency and an overall improvement of the IOFs being submitted for income collection
- Initiated audit of IOF recharge fees in order to ensure fees are collected on all cases processed
- Created ability for NIF to handle several new LLM programs that all share the same plancode
- Added enhancements to the J Scholar Portal
- Worked with Cybersource credit card processor to handle deployment of new fields in their system
- Upgraded the rich text editor in the Mercury Forms Editor, TinyMCE
- Changed the starting status of J Scholar Portal Address Forms to avoid confusion
- Implemented new process for creating and storing electronic recharge journals
- Continued to implement PAF (Public Access File) reform by eliminating personal information and redundant documentation to only disclose to the general public information required by the Department of Labor (DoL), and to conform to various data/privacy information standards. 80 percent of our PAFs are now personal information free
- Continued to re-strategize the H-1B process for staff positions with members of the BRS Visa Team
- Performed second recharge recertification for BIO

Utilize assessment to ensure high-quality products and services that meet evolving client needs.

- Reviewed data on OPT/STEM OPT Document Check Workshops for process and presentation improvements for Spring 2021
- Developed survey for Fall 2020 SEVIS transfer students to collect information about their plans in order to efficiently manage their SEVIS records

Monitor and adjust internal processes to best serve clients in a changing environment.

- Engaged with UCOP attorneys and university legal counsel before settling on a methodology of issuing I-20s for new students for Fall 2020 that was not redundant
- Sought out early decision making from FASO regarding BIO annual financial aid allocation
- Updated budget worksheet for 2020-2021, Tang Center medical RCL form, OPT/AT/STEM forms in Mercury, NIF/Reactivation Form for Spring 2021 re-entry and special COVID-era rules, ITIN procedures to accommodate office closure
- Updated OPT, STEM OPT, J-2 tutorial updates due to USCIS form/fee changes, increased scrutiny of fraudulent OPT/STEM employment
- Created Virtual Student Advising webpage to rebrand student team's virtual services and be more consistent with other campus "virtual desks"
- Used Google Voice to field questions from students and staff
- Convened Virtual Orientation Working Group
- Continued ongoing virtual programming and launched new programming (Global Pen Pal Program) to support student belonging and community
- Provided 212(e) workshop in webinar format
- Made numerous updates to J scholar and Employment-Based webpages in response to government form and process updates
- Continued to implement "electronic" online department posting notice in connection with LCA filings
- Continued to implement virtual advising appointments for the international scholars and campus units
- Provided remote department administrator training via video conferencing

Increase accessibility and reach of products and services to target audiences.

- Identified current/incoming students who did not yet have an active F or J record but should or would like to receive BIO messaging; created opt-in email list for these students

Create and implement a proactive and robust external communications strategy.

- Initiated many essential communications to our clients in light of the present regulatory and policy environment
- Made frequent updates to COVID-19 FAQ webpage; redesigned headers to improve appearance and page navigation
- Informed affected populations about regulatory changes, government procedural changes, executive orders and other government actions via email, newsletters, listserv and website updates

- Created Immigration Email Archive webpage to organize important BIO messaging and share with campus community and clients
- Made frequent updates to Advocating for International Education webpage to inform clients about immigration policy changes and resources for advocating for international students and scholars
- Created welcome video featuring BIO student advisers to send to incoming students to personally introduce them to BIO
- Adjusted BIO holiday closure messaging for COVID era and created new email account for emergency contact during closure
- Created and published annual student statistics report
- Conducted live COVID-19 Q&As for students and campus staff
- Revised Travel Alert and COVID-19 Updates red box on homepage to reduce length and improve clarity
- Updated cyclical scams email and Scams and Safety webpage to add new scams and improve wording
- Implemented J scholar pre-arrival resource with scam information
- Created all new content for International Education Week in order to help international students feel informed, welcome, and engaged
- Updated orientation presentations to use Berkeley-branded templates
- Established virtual programming/event promotion best practices

GOAL 3: Provide an Agile Response to a Changing Environment

Establish internal protocols to respond to government requests for information and changes in policies and practices.

- Moved quickly to share out regulatory updates with various stakeholders, including IACG
- Worked with VCR office to quickly initiate a verification process for the location of students from sanctioned countries to make sure that the university remains in compliance
- Annotated and distributed I-20 new Fall 2020 I-20s; updated Change of Status handout/webpage, F-1 reinstatement form, and OPT/STEM webpages related to USCIS I-765/I-539 updates, fee changes
- Managed the SEVIS records of a much larger than normal number of Change of Status cases due to COVID-19
- Further expanded our H-1B filing documentation and adjusted filing strategies to effectively respond to changing USCIS adjudication practices and to preempt RFEs
- Stayed abreast of changes in the DoL Labor Condition Application system and adjusted our internal processes to adapt to these changes

- In response to increased wage requirements, met with and advised hiring departments on new strategies for impacted H-1B cases

Maintain a supportive environment for affected populations in the face of changing governmental policies and practices.

- Drafted multiple communications to students and scholars for campus leadership in order to affirm their support for the international community
- Made frequent updates to BIO COVID-19 FAQ and sent messaging to students, faculty, and staff regarding Fall 2020 guidance and regulatory changes, 2020 Presidential Election, and mental health
- Created Spring 2021 Working group to manage Spring 2021 messaging, survey, and I-20/DS-2019 adjustment process
- Contributed questions to UC Berkeley Pulse Survey to represent specific international student needs and experience
- Reviewed USCIS proposed D/S rule in full and provided feedback for UC comments letter
- Worked with CAPS and Grad Division to prepare resources on managing stress (infographic, CAPS video, two student videos) and accessing care from outside of the U.S.; retooled “Stress Less” final exam email for COVID era
- Distributed approximately \$218K in Summer COVID-19 relief awards

Expand revenue-generating strategies to support client services.

- Implemented increased BIO service recharge fees for H-1B Academic Positions and PR
- Renewed sponsorship agreement with Deserve

Align resources to address new trends in academic and research programs.

- Published information about Intellectual Property on website
- Wrote International Student Statement of Ethical Conduct

Assess BIO departmental procedures for data vulnerabilities and develop necessary response protocols.

- Revamped datapumps, which move data from one system to another, improving their timing and efficiency to ensure data continues to get where it needs to be
- Diagnosed and corrected data transmission issues between ISSM and ISD
- Worked with database team to solve a database issue that took down all of BIO’s applications
- Rapidly diagnosed and corrected an interruption in credit card processing brought about by a surprise change to Cybersource’s systems

GOAL 4: Enhance Organizational Effectiveness through Staffing, Planning and Development

- Moved quickly to identify different ways to address budget shortfall, including keeping multiple vacancies open and fee increases across a range of services
- Continued to maintain and update fiscal year's financial projections as well as three-year projections
- Adapted to working with a significant reduction in student assistant hours
- Created "BIO Staff in Office" calendar to allow staff to coordinate their office time

Maintain high-performing staff through best practices in performance management.

- Continued the transition of new Assistant Director for Employment-Based Services
- Navigated staff leaves, departures, and FTE adjustments
- Continued to support staff working from home by ensuring they had the hardware and software necessary to perform their jobs remotely

Support staff growth through professional development opportunities.

- Attended NAFSA, AILA, and USCIS virtual webinars and NorCal scholar adviser meetings

Regularly monitor staff workload and make strategic adjustments to benefit the organization.

- Constituted a Strategic Planning Committee to undertake strategic planning for the 2021-2023 period
- Continued to monitor workload across the organization
- Continued to hold weekly team and individual check-ins to monitor the workload and strategize as needed
- Utilized advising and wait time data for staffing and advising schedule updates; piloted new models for back-up advising
- Continued cross-training NIF team and financial aid committee
- Continued Frontline cross-training on NIF and Daily Folder
- Cross-trained the SEVIS team in emergency communications
- Recruited, onboarded, and trained graduate student intern
- Reviewed student adviser liaisons
- Trained student assistants on Zoom sign-in best practices