

Annual Report FY 2006
International Student Services
The University of Texas at Dallas

Prepared by:
Ms. Cristen Casey
Director, International Student Services

Submitted to:
Dr. Darrelene Rachavong
Vice President for Student Affairs

Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2006
September 2006

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October 2006

Sources: IIE Open Doors, Chronicle of Higher Education, UTD OSPA Statistical Handbook, International Student Services Office records, phone, and web research.

Introduction:

This report details the activities of the UTD International Student Services Office. This office focuses its attention on one particular aspect of international education at The University of Texas at Dallas: International students enrolling in UTD on-campus programs. For the purpose of this report, international students are defined as students enrolling at UTD who are not U.S. Citizens or U.S. Permanent Residents.

Despite multiple factors which discourage international enrollment at U.S. universities, U. T. Dallas has maintained a relatively stable international enrollment level since September 2002. UTD is ranked 60th among educational institutions in the number of international students enrolled. This annual report contains information on UTD's international student population, and the services and programs provided by the International Student Services (ISS) Office to support the success of these students.

Quick facts:

UTD's National Ranking, Institute for International Education	60th
Number of international students, % of total enrollment	13%
Masters students that are international, % of total enrollment	31%
PhD students that are international, % of total enrollment	45%

During the 2005-2006 academic year, 565,039 foreign students studied in U. S. colleges and universities, a decline of 1.3% from the previous year. California and New York led the U.S. in numbers of foreign students, with 75,032 and 61,944 respectively. Texas was third with 47,367.

Dallas was the 7th largest metropolitan area for foreign students, with 13,611 studying in our area.

The number of international students in the United States has risen since 1954 (then 1.4% of total). Currently, international enrollment represents 4% of total U.S. higher education enrollment.

Nationally, international enrollment at Doctoral/ Research institutions has dropped both on the graduate and undergraduate levels from fall 2004 to fall 2005.

ISS Office Mission and General Information:

International Student Services Office Mission:

The mission of the ISS Office is to provide essential services and programs targeted toward UTD international students so that they can achieve their educational, professional and personal objectives while effectively integrating into campus life. This is served by providing complete and accurate UTD and Immigration Service information, international and cultural programs that enhance the international dimensions of UTD, and student health insurance information as mandated by the U.T. System.

Location:

McDermott Library, rooms 1.310, 1.410, 1.206

Hours of Operation:

Monday:	8:30am – 6:30pm
Tuesday:	8:30am – 6:30pm
Wednesday:	8:30am – 6:30pm
Thursday:	8:30am – 6:30pm
Friday:	8:30am – 5:00pm

Office Components:

The International Student Services Office, a component of the Department of Student Affairs, has four primary service areas:

Prospective International Student Services:

Staff:	Angela Compton, Receptionist
	Patty Haggard, Receptionist
	Shana Hood, Prospective International Student Coordinator
	Carole Frederick, Prospective International Student Coordinator
	Gayathri Baskaran, Student Employee
	Janani Rajendiran, Student Employee

Mission:	To provide accurate and up to date information to students, faculty, and staff so that prospective international students have the information resources that they need in order to comply with Department of Homeland Security regulations. To effectively report information to the U.S. Immigration Service as mandated by the Department of Homeland Security's Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP).
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Current International Student Services:

Staff: Roza Baczkowska, Student Health Insurance Coordinator
 Meg Morgan, International Student Advisor
 Elisabeth Walker, International Student Advisor
 Julie White, International Student Advisor

Mission: To provide accurate and up to date information to students, faculty, and staff so that current international students have the information resources that they need in order to comply with Department of Homeland Security regulations. To effectively report information to the U.S. Immigration Service as mandated by the Department of Homeland Security's Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). To provide internal controls and risk management related to the student health insurance program in support of U.T. System requirements.

International Student Programs:

Staff: Anne Caldwell, International Student Program Coordinator
 Abraham Rivera, International Peer Advocate
 Euhanna Fu, International Peer Advocate

Mission: To develop and maintain transitional programs that support the educational, professional, and cultural success of international students in line with the UTD mission.

Administrative Service:

Staff: Cristen Casey, Director of International Student Services
 Christina Spicher, Assistant Director of Int'l Student Services
 Imperio Shanks, Administrative Assistant

Mission: To provide vision, direction, and support to ISS Office staff to further enable them to succeed in their pursuit of the office mission. To oversee quality control and compliance with University and Department of Homeland Security rules and regulations. To work within the University to promote the successful realization of internationalization goals related to the UTD global mission.

International Trends Impacting UTD and the ISSO:

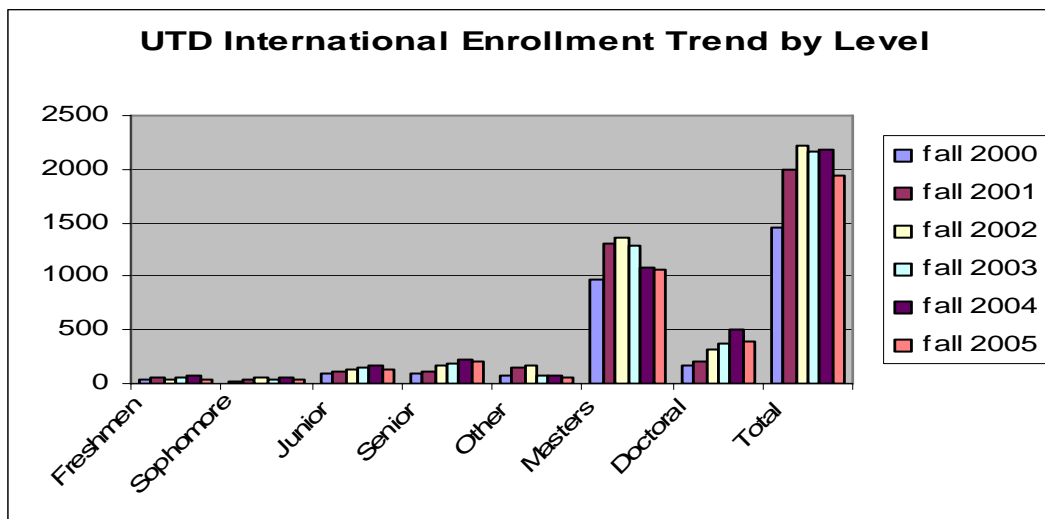
World events, the U.S. economy, and U.S. federal policies designed to regulate the exchange of international students have impacted international exchange over the last several years. Those policies most impacting U. T. Dallas students and therefore the UTD ISS Office include:

- Rising costs of U.S Higher Education.
- Tightening of visa application process, including increased security checks performed at the time of visa application.
- Increased Department of Homeland Security investigations into currently enrolled International Students.
- Restrictions on the number of H1B1 work visas issued, limiting international mobility from the student sector into the work sector.

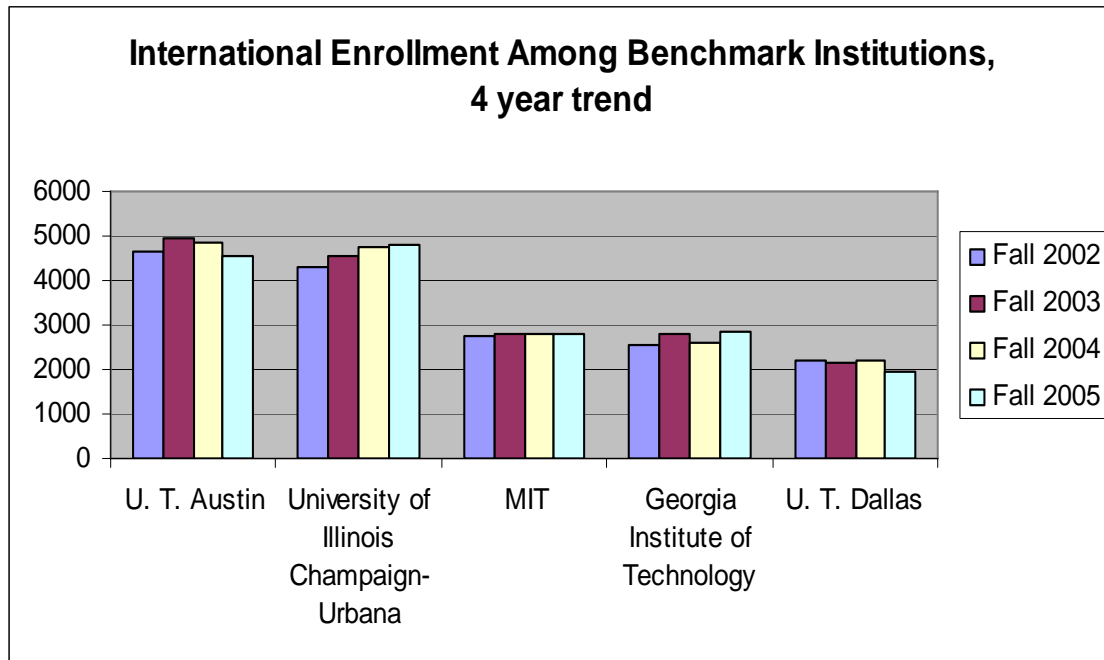
World events that will likely impact the future flow of students from abroad to the United States include:

- Strong competition from other countries actively recruiting international students, including Australia and the United Kingdom.
- Increased work opportunities in countries that have historically sent high numbers of citizens to study in the United States, including India.
- The standardization of curricula within universities in the European Union.

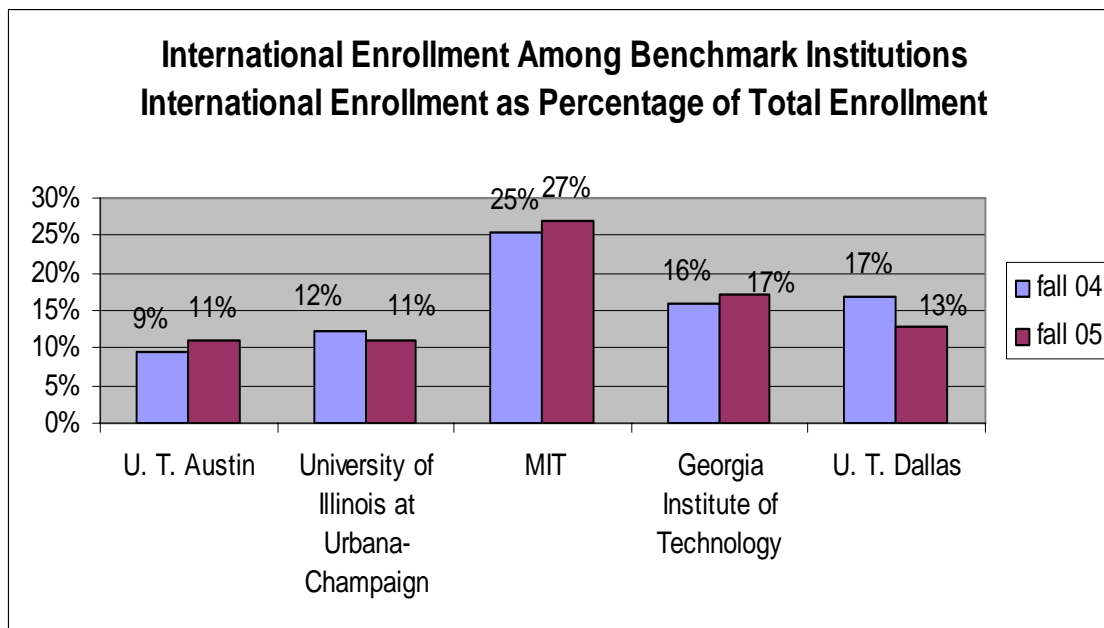
As a result of these factors, many universities across the United States have experienced drops in international enrollment. U. T. Dallas' international enrollment has declined slightly, primarily among UTD's graduate population. International undergraduate students on the freshmen and sophomore levels continue to utilize local community colleges to relieve the financial stress of out-of-state tuition costs. There is an increase in junior and senior level international students electing to transfer to U. T. Dallas to complete their undergraduate education.



Among many of our benchmark research institutions, international enrollment has held steady or increased over three years.

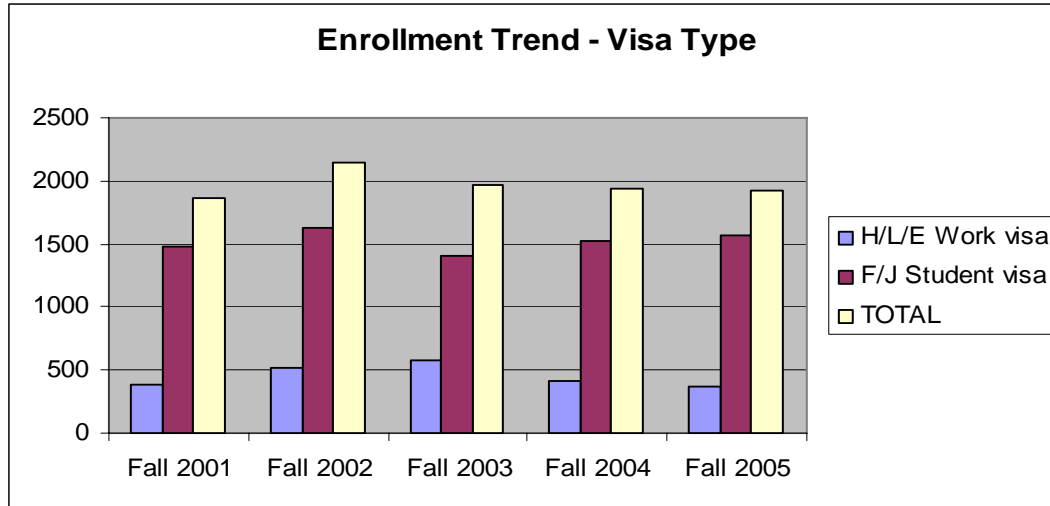


In addition, international student enrollment as a percentage of total enrollment remains high at benchmark research institutions.

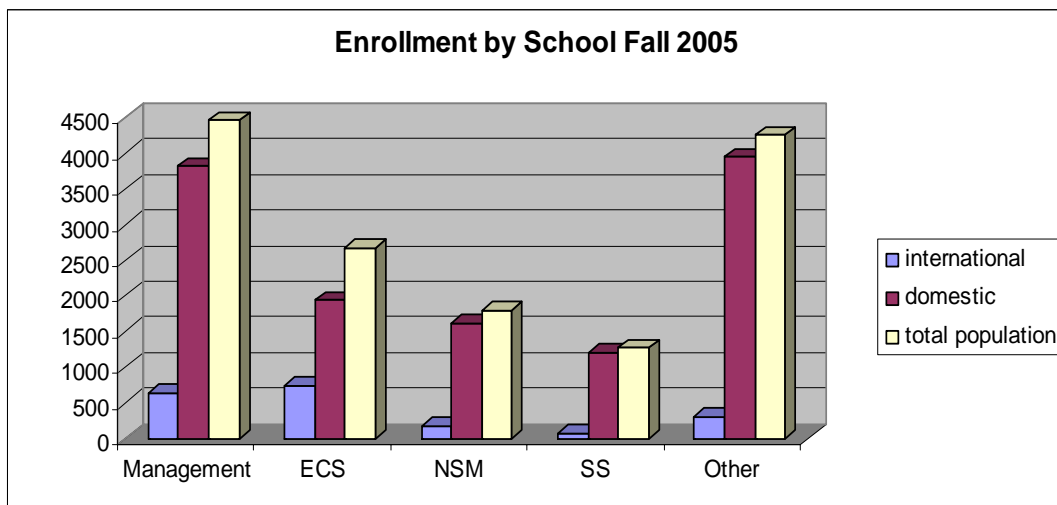


ISS Office Customer Profile:

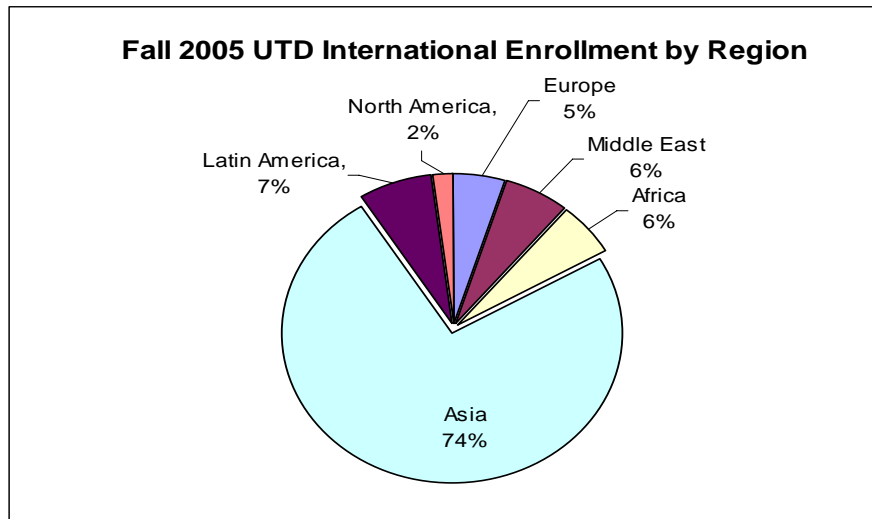
The majority of international students that attend UTD have entered the United States on an F-1 student visa and are therefore subject to the F-1 SEVIS requirements as set by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Other visa types heavily represented at UTD include work visas (H1B, L1, E1) and those pending U.S. Permanent Residency. Over the past 2 years, the number of H1B enrollees has decreased significantly, reflecting the additional difficulty to obtain this visa type.



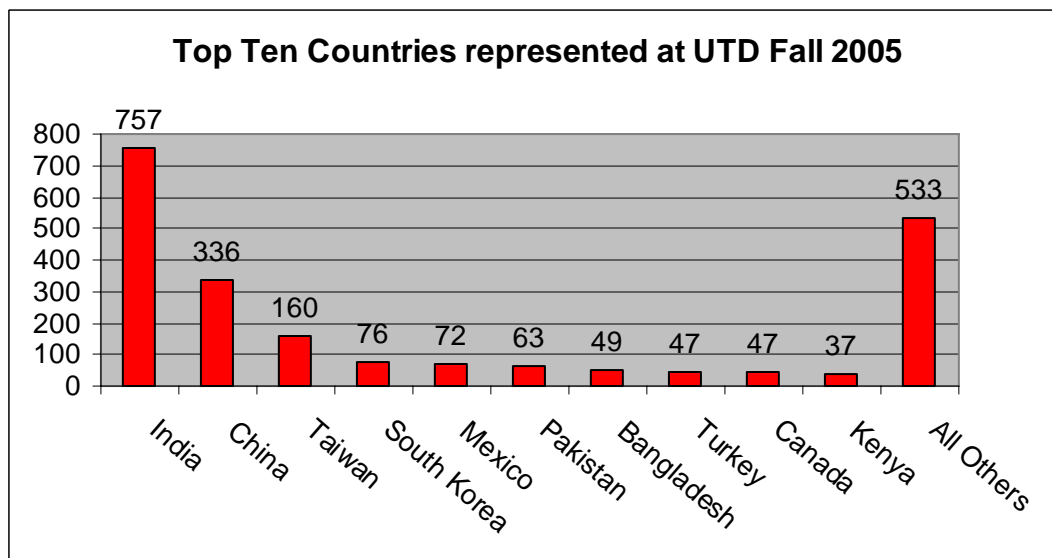
Reflecting the national trend, most UTD international students enroll in the School of Engineering and Computer Science (27% of total UTD ECS enrollments) or the School of Management (14% of total UTD SOM enrollments). On a national level, in the past year enrollments in these disciplines have declined by 8% and 2.4% respectively. On the rise are international student enrollments in the Health Professions (+2.1%) and Intensive English (+7.5%), and Agriculture (+3.1%).



UTD continues to draw the majority of its international students from Asia. Compared to the national average of 57%, UTD Asian international students make up a larger percentage of the total international student body at 74%. This can be contributed to the large number of research and technological programs offered at UTD, the absence of English as a Second Language programs, and the under-representation of Liberal Arts curricula. World events like the 2005 Tsunami, therefore, can have a disproportionate effect on UTD's international student population.

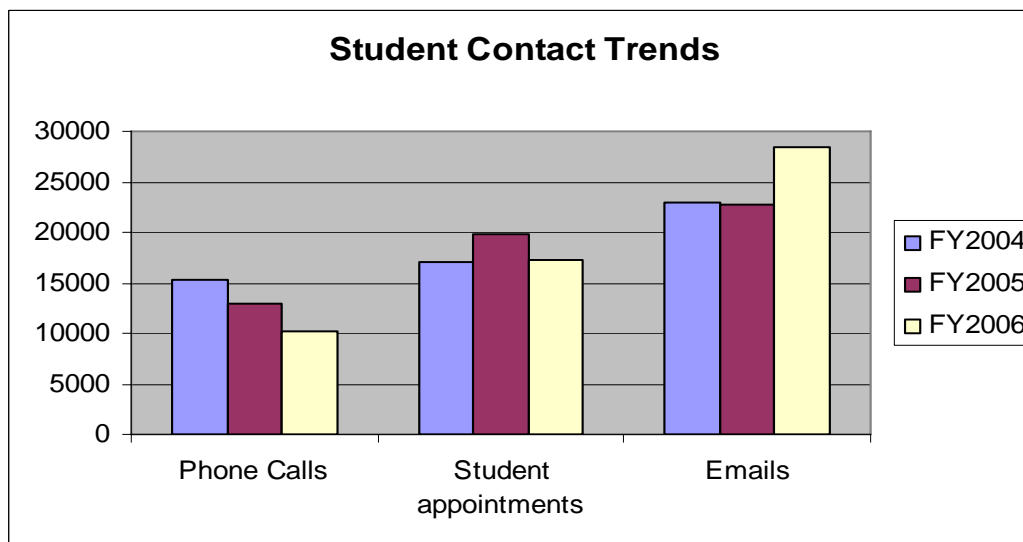
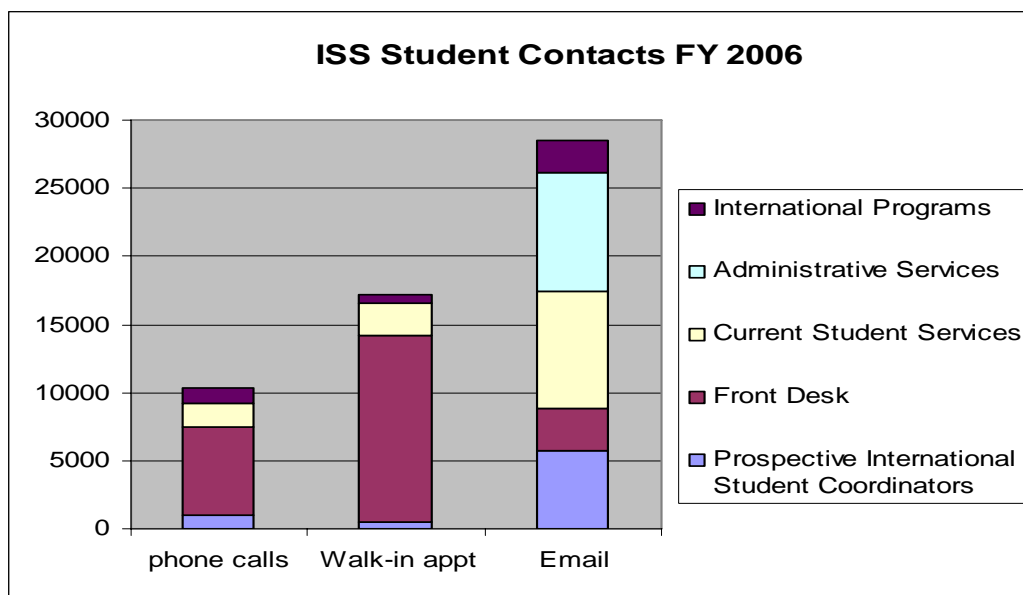


In parallel of the national figures, India is the top country of origin for international students at UTD. Indian students make up 35% of UTD's international enrollment. This imbalance is significant as UTD's enrollment and research activities can be greatly affected when there are economic, environmental, and social factors impacting these few countries.

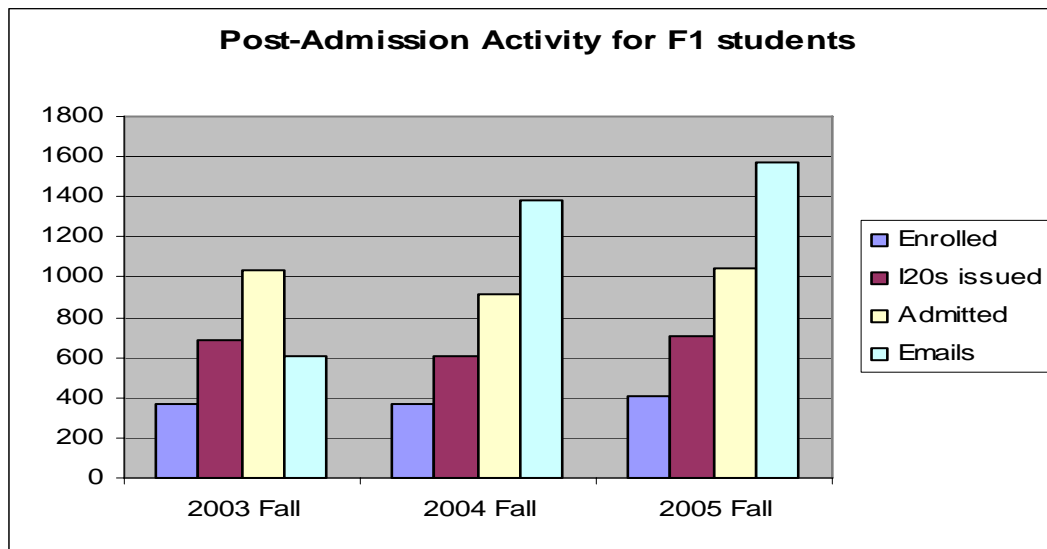


ISS Office Workflow Trends- Services:

After implementation of the Department of Homeland Security mandated SEVIS program, the workflow of the ISS Office changed dramatically. Since initial implementation in August 2003, the office has increased access to data about the activities of international students. This allowed us to better understand international student enrollment/ graduation/employment trends, changes in programs and courses of study, address information, etc. As a result, the ways in which we work and the ways that we measure quantity of work has shifted. Our student contacts went from being primarily responsive to very pro-active, and email and phone communications have become the primary method of pro-active communication.



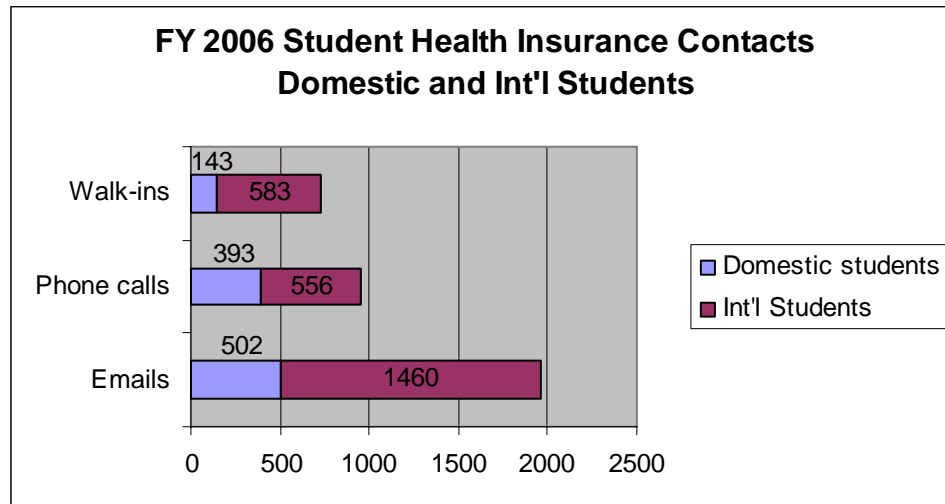
Despite falling total international enrollment, there continues to be an increase in the number of international student admissions and new enrollments into UTD. This increases the number of contacts and communications going out from the ISSO Prospective Student staff. The ISS prospective student service staff assist students after admission to UTD with the process of attaining all immigration documents necessary to enter the U.S. (if overseas) or to transfer their immigration documents to UTD (if in the U.S.). This responsibility includes contacting prospective international students regularly to advise them on which additional documents are needed for I20 issuance. In addition, much information is shared by email to aid these students' transition into their first semester at UTD.



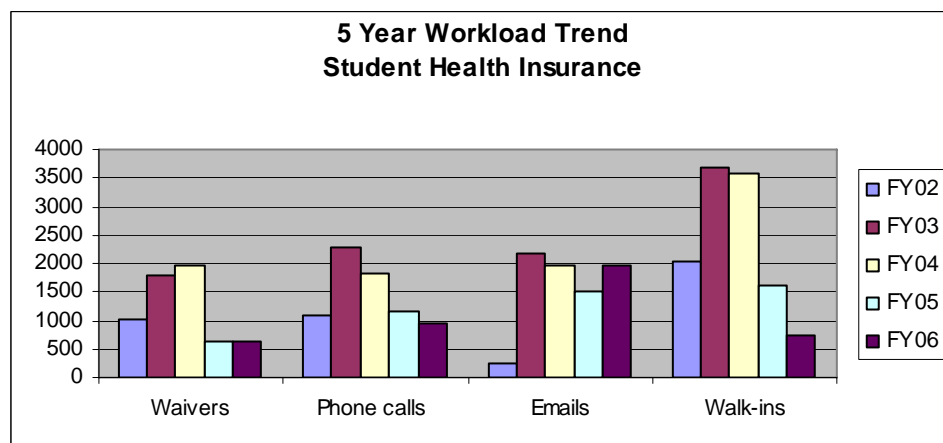
Once enrolled at UTD, students avail themselves of several different services with the ISS Office. During FY 2006, processing times for the highest priority student requests were decreased. Current processing times are as follows:

<i>Immediate</i>	Concurrent Enrollment
<i>24 hours</i>	Curricular Practical Training, travel endorsements, work authorization, concurrent enrollment, enrollment verification, invitation letters
<i>3 business days</i>	Optional Practical Training, Transfer out, I-765 Inquiries, Reduced Enrollment
<i>5 business days</i>	Change of Status to F-1, Reinstatement to F-1, New I-20s, Economic Hardship

Another function of the ISS Office is to assist students enrolled in the UT System approved health insurance plan. Health insurance is mandatory for international students, but is available to all UTD students. There continues to be an increase in domestic students who are interested in purchasing the student health insurance plan. Services available include aiding students to find providers, file insurance claims, communicate errors and problems to the insurance company, etc.



There has been a decrease in phone calls, waivers and walk-ins for the health insurance function. This can be attributed to the incorporation of the health insurance functions into the ISS Office's general functions. Where historically one staff person was responsible for all student questions regarding health insurance, this function is now shared among a team of 5. As a result, many health insurance questions are resolved without intervention by the student health insurance coordinator. In turn, the health insurance coordinator has played a more active role in responding to emails, phone calls, and walk-in needs at the ISS front desk.



ISS Office Programs:

Transitional Programs:

A major function of the ISS Office's International Student Programs is to provide transitional programs to support the success of UTD's international students as they transition to life in the United States. These programs are focused toward students in the first year of their UTD degree program.

International Student Orientation: A major transitional program is the International Orientation, required for all new F and J status students and available to all international students. In FY 2006, approximately 800 students attended international student orientation.

Texas Department of Public Safety visit: DPS offered an on-campus visit to aid new international students in their application for their Texas Driver's License or taxpayer ID numbers.

Social Security Administration visit: SSA offered an on-campus visit to aid new international students in their application for Social Security numbers. There was also an off-campus trip to the SSA in August 2006.

Internal Revenue Service visit: IRS offered an on-campus visit to aid new international students in their tax preparation, unique to non-immigrants.

Immigration Attorney visit: Immigration attorney David Swain provided immigration workshops to aid new international students in their understanding of work opportunities in the United States.

Wal-Mart off campus trips: Trips are offered at the beginning of each semester to new international students needing transportation to Wal-Mart to make initial purchases.

Adjusting to American Life Workshop: This workshop is offered at the beginning of each semester. It is designed to give cultural information for new international students to support their effective transition into American social life.

Adjusting to US Classroom Culture Workshop: This workshop is designed to give information for new international students to support their effective transition into American academic life. The program was introduced in August 2006 and will be offered at the beginning of each semester in FY 07.

Cultural and Collaborative Programs:

In addition to transitional programs, multiple cultural programs are offered through International Student Programs to provide social support to new International Students.

Friday Festivals: Friday festivals take place one Friday per month, and provide a social occasion for international students to interact. Each event highlights a different culture represented at UTD.

International Education Week: Taking place in November, this year's International Education Week was a collaborative event with programs provided by International Student Organizations, SUAAB, Office of International Education, the Multicultural Center, etc.

International Week: Occurring in April, this campus-wide event involved a collaborative programming committee. Highlights included Passport to the World, International Talent Showcase, International Potluck party, etc.

Springtime in Paris Friday Festival: Co-sponsored for SUAAB's Springapalooza event.

European Heritage Event: Co-sponsored with the Multicultural Center

Lunar New Year: Co-sponsored with the Multicultural Center

ISS Office Major Accomplishments:

Prospective Student Services:

- Decreased wait time for students to have prospective student documents evaluated for initial I20 issuance. Decreased time to make initial email contact with prospective students.
- Effectively implemented on-line process for students to request and pay for overseas express mailing of initial admissions documents.
- Consistently met requirements as mandated by U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Adjusted office procedures to effectively respond to technical problems resulting from changes made to the U.S. Immigration Service database, SEVIS.

Current Student Services:

- Reduced student wait times for all major immigration related tasks.
- Increased availability of student health insurance and immigration advising services to students with the addition of walk-in advising, e-advising, cross-training to allow multiple advisors, etc.
- Consistently met requirements as mandated by U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Adjusted office procedures to effectively respond to technical problems resulting from changes made to the U.S. Immigration Service database, SEVIS.

International Student Programming:

- Improved International Orientation by assessing the International Orientation fee more quickly, improving document collection, expanding the International Student Guidebook, etc.
- Increased student exposure to multiple offices by increasing campus-wide participation in International Week.
- Provided additional transitional programs including Introduction to American Life Workshop, Introduction to US Classroom Culture Workshop.

ISS Office General:

- Provided staff development sessions to all ISSO staff to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the new team structure.
- Initiated staff mentoring program in support of ISSO Career Ladder.

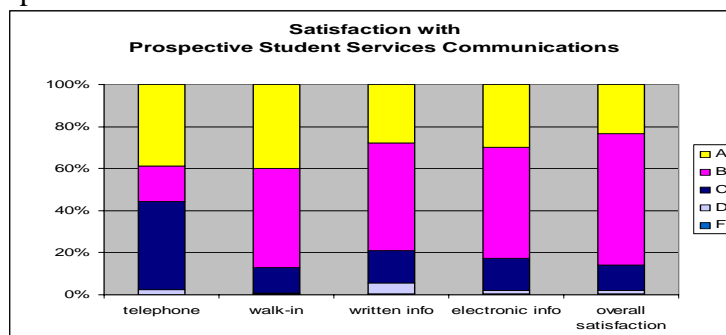
ISS Office FY 2006 Goals:

- Improve the I20 issuance process by reducing the I20 processing times and missing document/ I20 communication times.
- Increase availability of advising to international students.
- Tighten controls on federally mandated SEVIS program.
- Strengthen programs designed to support international student success in the first semester/ first year of enrollment (labeled transitional programs).
- Continue to simplify forms, ISS policies and processes.

Customer Service Surveys:

In FY 2006, the International Student Services Office surveyed our student customers in many ways. Included here are the ISSO surveys of general satisfaction with the ISSO related to prospective and current student services. After each ISSO program, the ISSO staff also measure the quality and content of our services, and have incorporated changes resulting from that feedback. Due to the program specific nature of these evaluations, the results are not included here.

Prospective Student Incoming Survey: There were approximately 400 respondents to this survey, the goal was to evaluate satisfaction with contacts between ISSO staff and students prior to their arrival at UTD. The A-F scale mirrors a US grading scale.



Current Student Survey: There were 139 responses to this survey, the goal was to evaluate general satisfaction with ISS Office services. The scale was 1 (meets your need and more), 2 (meets your need), and 3 (does not meet your need).

SERVICE AREA	RATING AVERAGE
Immigration Advising	1.8
Cultural Programs	1.8
Admissions Process	1.8
I20 issuance after admission	1.8
ISSO in general	1.8
Student Health Insurance Services	2.4

The survey also requested student feedback on the effectiveness of the ISSO website. The survey showed the following results:

Positive Response	67%
Negative Response	12%
No Response, or never used website	21%

Professional Conferences and Training:

Professional Conferences/ Training Attended by ISS Staff:

- NAFSA (National Association of Foreign Student Advisors) Region III Conference, Colorado Springs, CO. November 2005. 2 Attendees
- NAFSA Washington Leadership Training, Washington DC, February 2006. 1 Attendee
- NAFSA Region III Team Training, Colorado Springs, CO, March 2006. 1 Attendee
- NAFSA (National Association of Foreign Student Advisors) Annual Conference, Montreal, Canada. May 2006. 2 Attendees
- UTD Multicultural Peer Advocate/ International Peer Advocate Training (August 2006). 2 Attendees