

*Designing a new college program takes time, research, creativity, an understanding of the customer's need and an understanding of the workforce's expectations. In addition, the program creator must be willing to work with the allotted resources to execute a successful product. Erin Schneiderman has proven experience in designing programs for higher education. In this paper, Erin unveils a new program targeting international students faced with recent political uncertainty as they realize their educational goals in the United States.*

Designing The International Student 2017+ Program (IS17) and Why it is Important  
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When President Trump was running for office, many in higher education were worried that if he won, the United States would see a decrease in international students attending college in our country (Smith, 2016). With new immigration enforcement and the travel ban still being worked through, many colleges are worried that international scholars are seeking other schools to pursue their education outside of the United States (Syruga, 2017). The purpose of this paper is not to inject my political viewpoints, rather to find a new at-risk group of students who could benefit from a new program to meet their needs during an ever-changing political climate.

The International Student 2017+ Program (IS17) would aim to serve students who are already enrolled at Arizona State University (ASU) and are impacted by new governmental policies enacted after 2017 through the completion of their studies. The program would also ensure students are informed regarding their next steps after college whether that be entering into the workforce in the United States, moving back home or abroad or pursuing the next level of education.

I chose this program because there are more than 10,000 international students at ASU (ISSC, 2017). Although most students are from countries that are not impacted by new regulations, I feel that it is our responsibility to work closely with the ones that are affected to ensure their physical and emotional needs are being met as a result of new rules that were established after they received acceptance into ASU.

In the 2015-2016 academic year, more than one million international students were attending a U.S. college or university, an increase of 7% over the year prior (John, 2016). Foreign students are attracted to the excellent academic programs, career-minded learning opportunities, specialized libraries and resources and advanced English programs (Kim, 2015). Since it has been confirmed that the travel bans are not intended to affect college students, it is hopeful these numbers will stay the same or continue to rise in the coming years. Along with this trend comes the increased need to support international students in the United States through a variety of resources and personnel. As new announcements and policies are enacted, it will be critical to have IS17 resources available.

IS17 would be a student services resource located within the International Students and Scholars Center (ISSC) at ASU. To begin, the program would be staffed by one existing member of the ISSC staff titled a program manager and supervised by the department's director, Mr. Holly Singh. Since coming to ASU in 2015 peers and international students are impressed with Mr. Singh's passion and compassion in the role (Greguska, 2015).

The program would be two-fold, educational information and emotional support. The program manager would ensure all students receive timely information as rules and regulations were announced. This person would have accurate records of student's citizenship so information would be targeted at specific students only as needed. Sending mass emails to all international students would be confusing to those not affected. The program manager would need to stay current with the latest news, announcements and proposed changes. The other

side of the program manager's responsibilities would be to meet with students who were feeling uneasy about changes, had concerns about travel, their family, their educational goals and their ability to stay in school as a result of governmental rules.

Although most two and four year colleges have a department to support their international students, I had a hard time finding a program that was created especially for this niche group of at-risk students. When President Trump's travel ban was enacted in the fall of 2017 placing an infinite ban on new visas for people from eight countries (Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, Chad, North Korea and Venezuela) (Gerstein, Lin, Mihalic, 2017) colleges were forced to spring into action to educate and console students who may be impacted. Although the ban was not intended to disrupt an international college student's education, it was certainly cause for concern. Schools such as New York University posted an article with facts of the ban, what it means for students and faculty and resources available for support (NYU, 2017). When news of the ban was announced, ASU took the opportunity to remind their stakeholders of their charter which states that they measure themselves not by whom they exclude, but by whom they include. They took the message further by including that they believe that diverse perspectives and backgrounds make them stronger and better adjacent to a two and a half minute video about the cultures represented at ASU (ASU, 2017).

At Thunderbird School of Global Management, a college at ASU, student services personnel ensured their two students from the banned countries (both from Iran) were educated about the ban, their options and how the ban will affect their personal travel. Director of Student Services Angela Mitchell also found it important to ensure the student's mental capacities were not affected. "These students are far from home and we wanted them to know they could talk to us about anything that was on their minds regarding the executive order" (A. Mitchell, personal communication, December 4, 2017).

One of the goals of many colleges is involving students in order to realize success. As UCLA Professor Alexander W. Astin stated one outcome goal coming directly out of the involvement concept is retainment (Richmond, 1986). This could also be said for the program outcome of IS17. If at-risk international students feel like they are being supported at their college and have the tools to excel in their education, they will have the confidence to stay in school.

Another program outcome will be to empower international students with the tools they need to take their next steps after graduation. Whether it is staying in the United States and joining the workforce, pursuing another degree, moving back to their home country or another country, the IS17 will provide resources to students to make these decisions. Navigating the visa process, understanding the travel bans and communicating with employers are all skills that the program manager in IS17 will help their students develop.

A learning outcome that would be important to gauge would be if this student support service was really necessary. The program manager would report frequently to their supervisor and at their monthly ISCC meetings. Data would include how many students are utilizing the

service now and an estimate of how many will use it in the future. In addition, likelihood that a student would feel comfortable asking for support given multiple variables such as country of citizenship, peers in a similar situation, academic standing, character traits and family dynamic.

The IS17 program would be measured by surveying and student feedback on a yearly basis. The surveying would take place at the beginning and end of the academic year. All students who receive support from IS17 would be asked to take a short survey at the beginning of the year. Questions would include; what are their expectations from the program, how often would they like communications from the program manager, would they be interest in group meetings with peers in similar situations, etc. At the end of the year, students would receive a similar survey asking if their expectations were met and if there were anything IS17 could do better to improve service to this at-risk group. Students will also receive spontaneous emails asking how they are doing and if they would like to set up an appointment with the program manager just to ensure they are being communicated with during the school year as well. Due to cultural sensitivities or characteristics some students are simply not comfortable asking for help or admitting they are struggling so the reach out emails will be very important. The overall goal of ensuring students are staying in school in a safe and comfortable environment is always at the forefront.

Since the program manager would be re-assigned internally from the same ISSC department, their average salary of \$50,000 per year would simply be reallocated to the program (ASU H.R., 2017). Overhead costs would not be a concern as this person would utilize the same office and department resources such as supplies, journal subscriptions, etc. Additional funding for the program manager to attend conferences and workshops that is topic specific would be included in the budget. As an example, the NAFSA annual conference to be held in Philadelphia in the summer of 2018 will likely host several sessions on this topic. NAFSA: Association for International Educators states on its website that the organization and its members believe that international education is fundamental to fostering peace, security, and well-being (NAFSA, 2017). The IS17 would also be given \$10,000 to host events throughout the year for international students. Although it is nice for the program manager to be a resource, it is also nice for students to meet with peers in a comfortable environment to discuss their commonalities or simply to socialize.

The total increase in budget (if the program manager's position was replaced in the ISSC) would be \$70,000. The funding would come out of the Office of the Provost's budget as ASU Provost Mark Searle currently oversees the ISCC.

In conclusion, the United States was once the top destination for talented undergraduate international students. With the changing climate and competition from other schools, we are in a global battle to recruit their students in STEM and other fields (Skrentny, 2017). Attracting students to our U.S. colleges are half the battle, the other half is making sure they are comfortable with rules and regulations. As we continue to see a decline in prospective international students, they are citing reasons such as not feeling welcome at U.S. colleges. With this knowledge, IS17 is needed now more than ever. We need compassionate, educated,

student services professional to help these students navigate through their college experience. The rigors of academic and social life in college is hard enough, we need to make it easier for these students to overcome the travel ban as well as any other future executive orders that may be enacted. Let's keep these students at ASU and not give them the option of dropping out due to frustration and fear.

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