

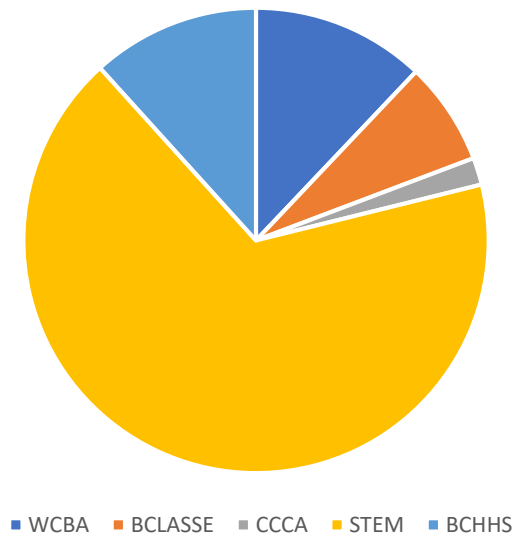
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*Plan for Strategic Actions to Take Charge of Our Future: Internationalization Strategy
Evolving a Global Perspective Consciousness in the Context of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

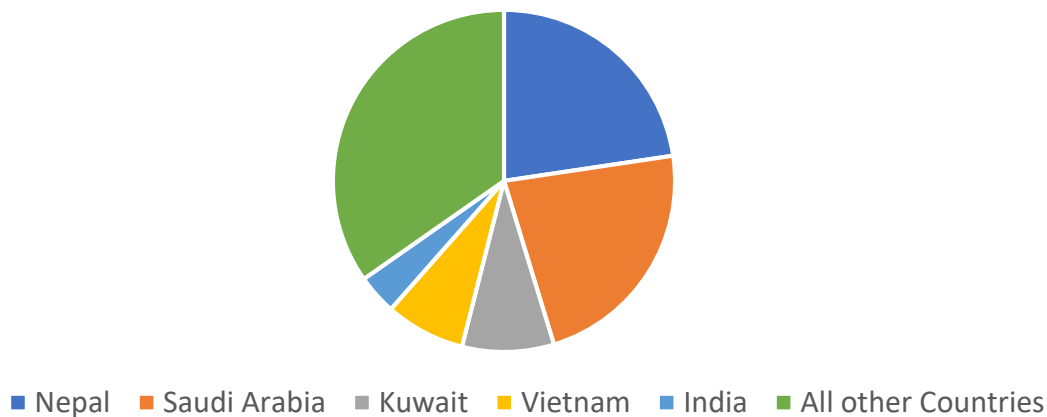
I. Introduction

The earliest evidence of YSU’s international engagement can be traced to 1959 when the institution reported that 22 students from India were enrolled and studying in the engineering program (Skardon, 1983). Since that point, a variety of factors, strategic and otherwise, produced a slow, yet steady growth in international enrollments so that by Fall 2020, YSU reported 265 international undergraduate students enrolled in 60 different majors from 59 different countries.

F20 International Students - By College

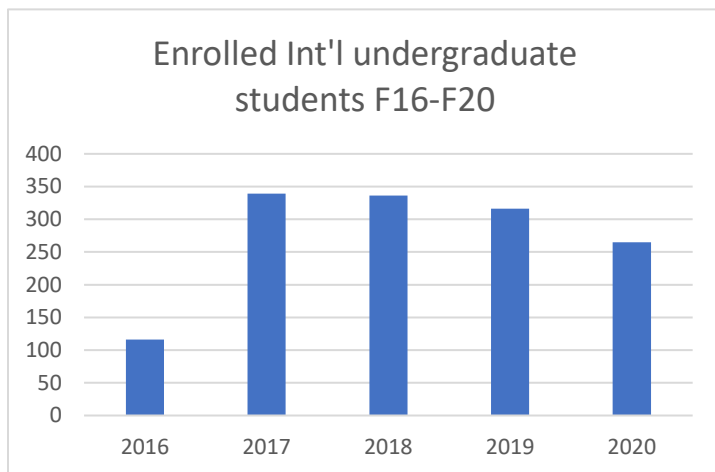


F20 Int'l Students - Citizenship



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YSU's growth occurred as international enrollments increased across the U.S. While it is true that the burgeoning international enrollments at institutions were driven by larger market forces, many institutions embraced the influx of international students, recognizing that "we no longer can think in terms of living in a world in which we can or should avoid learning, meeting, and living with others with very different and potentially conflicting cultural backgrounds, habits, perspectives, customs, religious beliefs and aspirations" (Zakria, 1). The increases in international enrollment across institutional types over the last 20 years is also consonant with the

United States' national strategy for international enrollment, enunciated by the Department of Education's 2018 report, *Succeeding Globally through International Education and Engagement* (US Department of Education International Strategy, 2018). The U.S. national strategy affirms that increased international enrollments at American universities advances U.S. international interests by:

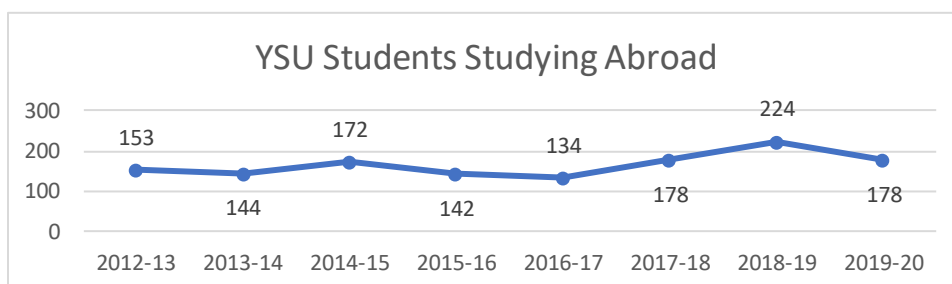
1. Increasing American students' global and cultural competencies;
2. Strengthening U.S. higher education through our interactions with other countries; and
3. Engaging in active education diplomacy to advance U.S. international priorities.

Complementing the growth of international enrollment, YSU has also witnessed a slight increase in the overall number of YSU students traveling to study outside of the United States on Study Abroad programs. The incorporation of an international experience into a YSU degree program is a value-added proposition that enhances the cross-cultural exposure that students have while attending YSU. Giving students such an experience is in-line with the above-cited US national strategy for international education, as an overseas experience assists American students in more fully engaging with those who are culturally different by facilitating a sense of "**perspective consciousness**" in study abroad participants (Trilokekar and Kukar, 2011).

Perspective consciousness refers to the awareness that one's beliefs, views and values represent a perspective on the world that are not necessarily shared by others. Perspective consciousness, therefore, is in many ways a prerequisite for the creation of a more diverse, more equitable and more inclusive educational environment. Research has demonstrated that overseas educational experiences are instrumental in developing such an understanding (Trilokekar and Kukar, 2011; Maharaja, 2018; Byker and Putman, 2019). In a typical year, 1-2% of YSU students study abroad.

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Study Abroad Participation by Academic Year:

Academic Year	YSU Students Studying Abroad	YSU Total Enrollment	Percentage of Total Enrolled who studied abroad
2012-2013	153	13,813	1.1%
2013-2014	144	13,381	1%
2014-2015	172	12,551	1.4%
2015-2016	142	12,471	1.1%
2016-2017	134	12,756	1%
2017-2018	178	12,644	1.4%
2018-2019	224	12,696	1.7%
2019-2020	178	12,155	1.4%
2020-2021	0	11,788	0%

II. Internationalization and *Taking Charge of Our Future*

In June 2020, YSU’s Board of Trustees approved by [Resolution](#) the “[Plan for Strategic Actions to Take Charge of Our Future.](#)” *The Plan* identifies the Goal to “[develop a recruitment and enrollment strategy that aligns with a completion strategy](#)” with an accompanying Strategy to “develop and enhance partnerships and collaboration agreements with international universities”. The increase of international collaboration through partnerships and international dialogue is a larger trend across higher education as universities seek to increase their students’ exposure to different ways of thinking, knowing and living. “This context has repositioned international affiliations as both key strategy and core philosophy for internationalization” (Sutton, Egginton & Favela, 2012). Recognized models for the development of international partnerships exist (Sutton & Obst, 2011). Successful collaboration tends to produce mutual benefits for both sides of the partnership. Benefits may include the enhancement of cross-cultural educational opportunities, sharing of resources, enhanced overseas branding, overseas faculty development opportunities, as well as opportunities to realize additional net revenue through joint programs. YSU’s international agreements will continue to draw from best-practices that create those mutual benefits.

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*Plan for Strategic Actions to Take Charge of Our Future: Internationalization Strategy
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As evidenced by [The Plan's statement](#) that concerns for human dignity, guided by “integrity, mutual respect, collegiality, equity and inclusion” guides YSU’s values; the ability to understand cultures and appreciate values outside of one’s home culture is a disposition that is necessary in developing such an understanding and appreciation that can be cultivated through intentional opportunities during a traditional undergraduate college program. One key ingredient in assisting students in acquiring these cross-cultural dispositions is by creating a diverse campus culture, with various nationalities, viewpoints and cultures represented (Brustein, 2007).

YSU aspires to create an environment where students can become globally competent through living, studying and interacting with others from various cultural backgrounds. YSU also aspires to offer programs which allow students to access transformative overseas educational opportunities. The international strategy, therefore, is by necessity, a two-way strategy that recognizes the educational value of both the enrollment of international students as well as YSU students pursuing international experiences as part of their degree (commonly referred to as Study Abroad). Given these aspirations, YSU will optimize the potential for a stable and diverse international enrollment that is a percentage of YSU’s total enrollment. The institution will also support a variety of dynamic intercultural experiences. This YSU Internationalization Plan models several different enrollment and study abroad scenarios

While campus-wide cultural diversity through international enrollment is a primary goal, it is an aspiration that requires careful planning in the current global environment. In Fall 2020, the Institute for International Education reported that *new* international enrollments in US institutions had declined by 0.6% during the 2019-2020 – the fourth straight year of declines. At the same time, the total number of *all* international students (new and continuing) studying in America also declined for the second year in a row. Within this larger data set, the numbers of students in the U.S. from countries that contributed to international enrollment in the US overall fell precipitously in 2019-2020. Students from China fell by -0.8% and the number of students from India fell by -4.0%. More precipitous declines were recorded for students from the major originating countries of South Korea (-4.7%) and Saudi Arabia (-16.5%) (Martel, Baer, Andrejko & Mason, 2020).

Changes in international enrollment in the US that can occur under otherwise normal (non-COVID related circumstances) requires that the institution carefully determine both the appropriate level of international enrollment to meet the objectives of *The Plan*, while also considering the appropriate level of scholarship and related resources to enable the institution to meet the international enrollment goals which are set. It is an open question whether the overall data represent a perpetual receding tide as opposed to the absolute low-water mark that will precede a period of future sustained growth. It is also unknown how COVID might continue to influence enrollment, particularly from countries with low vaccination rates, and how U.S. education-related immigration policies might influence overall international enrollments in higher education. Any Internationalization Plan adopted by YSU will need to carefully consider these factors and adjust strategic actions appropriately and responsibly.

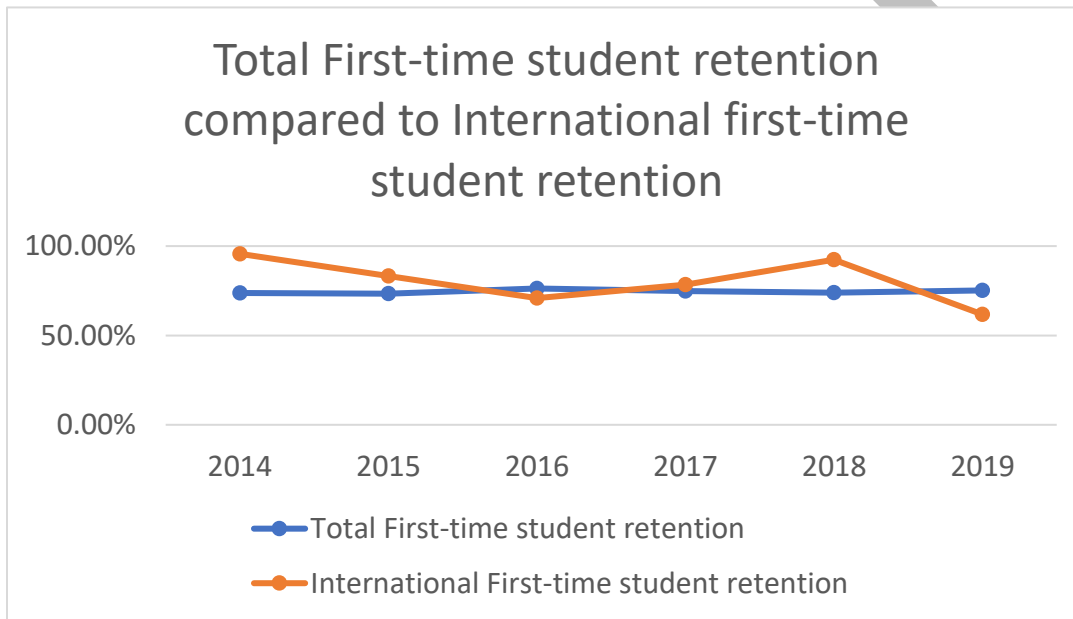
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The Plan also sets out to “create a Culture of Assessment that Assures the Quality of Academic Program Majors, Minors, and Other Credentials.” As a part of YSU’s institutional assessment, the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) found that YSU students scored below peer universities on items associated with “understanding people from other backgrounds.” As a part of the strategy to utilize institutional data to further student success, measuring international student outcomes, including persistence and graduation, are key. Simply put, the institution’s efforts to imbue an understanding of people from other backgrounds is intertwined with academic success efforts related to the enrollment and success of international students. The effort to increase cross-cultural understanding is also facilitated by global experiences situated within the YSU curriculum. The YSU global strategy will embody the Goals and Strategies associated with the *Plan for Strategic Actions to Take Charge of Our Future*.

III. International Retention, Persistence & Success

Historically, YSU’s international retention has been favorably comparable with domestic student retention. The following chart demonstrates Fall-to-Fall Retention. First-time international students entering in Fall 2019 retained at a slightly lower rate when compared to previous cohorts due to factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic.



An additional way to view historical international student success measures is to compare the institutional persistence data for international cohorts compared to the total student cohorts. Historically, international students have persisted towards a degree at relatively higher rates than the total student body. There were 12 entering Freshmen cohorts between Fall

2008 -2019. During those years, 10 of the international cohorts had a Freshmen to Sophomore retention at rates exceeding the general student body. Additionally, 11 of these cohorts saw 4-year student persistence rates which were higher than the general student body. The full-data set demonstrating international 6-year persistence as compared to overall student 6-year persistence can be found in this document’s **Appendix**.

IV. Rationale and Framework for Engaging in Specific Countries and Regions

While developing an appreciation for global cultures requires a significant undergraduate international enrollment; it is necessary to simultaneously balance natural market forces in terms of global student

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movement with the imperative to maintain a diverse international population. Therefore, YSU aspires to enroll a diverse number of international students to create and maintain the conditions necessary for students to develop an appreciation for a wide range of cultural backgrounds. This Section attempts to define the market conditions under which YSU will enroll international students. This Section also captures the geographic scope of current originating countries and the countries and regions of the world from which YSU intends to enroll students.

As the world emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that the future of the international enrollment plan be informed by forecasted economic trends as well as historical data. The World Bank has forecasted that the global economy is expected to rebound in 2022 with a 4.4% growth rate worldwide (World Bank, 2021). While a 4.4% growth rate is modest, there are opportunities within specific global economies that suggest emerging trends. While it is expected that developed country economies will rebound faster than developing country economies, there are still global areas where post-pandemic economic growth portends a growing middle class and the related desire and ability to afford a U.S. higher education.

The alignment of potential students to the University's academic programs is another consideration. Currently, 67% of international students are enrolled at YSU are in the STEM College – the majority of whom are engineering majors. This fact is demonstrative of the overall trend in international enrollment. Over the last decade, STEM programs at U.S. universities have proven to be the most popular for international students due to the US government-created opportunity for engineering students to complete a three-year paid internship upon completion of the degree (Institute for Int'l Education, 2020). Overall, STEM programs and Business programs are the most sought majors by international students, with smaller numbers seeking programs in the Social Sciences, the Arts, Education and Health-related fields. While overall demand for STEM programs are the greatest, international students are not monolithic in motivations. Certainly, there are modest opportunities to enroll international students in the fine arts or history, for example; however international students seeking these types of programs are the exception rather than the rule.

Beyond forecasted market-conditions, there may be unforeseen opportunities that arise which YSU can realize. Such opportunities could include foreign government / NGO scholarship programs which present a specific enrollment opportunity thereby, beyond the enrollment strategy, that could further enhance the success of YSU's International Strategy.

Given these perspectives linked to a YSU Internationalization Plan, the following "market" types have been identified as illustrated below.

Market Type Definitions:

Natural/Core Markets: Countries from which YSU has had history recruiting and enrolling Students

Institution-Specific Markets: Countries/regions with factors specific to YSU where it is important to maintain a recruitment and enrollment stance in order to maintain/create opportunities in study abroad, English Language Institute, and institutional relations

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Emerging Markets: Countries/regions that YSU has begun to actively develop where Institute for International Education, and Gray Associates trend data and YSU recruitment data suggest further enrollment gains over the next 2-5 years can be developed

Future Markets: Countries/regions where YSU has not had an intentional recruitment footprint, but for reasons pertaining to market prospects, including those identified by Institute for International Education and the World Bank, as well as for reasons pertaining to diversity, will develop recruitment plans

Given the marketing perspectives identified above, the following are regions of the world identified to align with a YSU Internationalization Plan.

Natural / Core Markets	Institution-Specific Markets	Emerging Markets	Future Markets
Saudi Arabia REGION: Middle East	Japan REGION: East Asia	Sri Lanka Region: South Asia	Region: Central Asia
Nepal, India REGION: South Asia	Thailand REGION: East Asia	Central America REGION: North, Central America & Caribbean	East Africa REGION: Africa
Canada REGION: North, Central & Caribbean	Western Europe REGION: Europe	Korea	REGION: Oceania
Vietnam REGION: East Asia	Jordan	Colombia REGION: South America	UAE/Oman/Yemen REGION: Middle East
Bahamas REGION: North, Central America & Caribbean	Taiwan REGION: East Asia	Brazil REGION: South America	Higher growth South American markets (Paraguay, Guyana) REGION: South America
West Africa (Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Niger) REGION: Africa	China REGION: East Asia		Russia REGION: Europe

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*Plan for Strategic Actions to Take Charge of Our Future: Internationalization Strategy
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While “Market-type” is simply a snapshot in time, diversity is a goal that transcends the way things currently stand, looking forward to a goal of bringing elements of many different global cultures to YSU. Within each incoming undergraduate class, YSU will align recruitment, admission and scholarship awarding procedures in such a way that about 3% to 4% of the student body each year will be represented from the following world regions. The world regions are:

1. North/Central America & the Caribbean
2. South America
3. Europe
4. Africa
5. South Asia
6. Central Asia
7. Middle East
8. East Asia
9. Oceania

V. Strategic Components of Enrollment

Different recruitment inputs and investments are necessary to achieve both an overall international enrollment as well as to balance diversity amongst different countries and regions. This section illustrates the strategies that the institution will employ to meet the stated goals.

English Language Institute (ELI)

The ELI provides a gateway by which students who lack the necessary English proficiency for college, can complete a preparatory intensive English curriculum, allowing them to matriculate to YSU and study towards degree completion. These students “discover” YSU through their own means, are willing to pay the full costs of ELI programs, and over 80% matriculate into YSU academic programs where the typical student would pay full or slightly discounted tuition.

The objective will be to have a minimum of 20 students in this self-funded program annually.

Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

YSU has signed MOUs with institutional partners in different countries. MOUs are a key way to enroll students on J-1 visas, helping to meet overall enrollment and diversity goals. MOUs also occasionally present positive student and financial opportunities for initiatives that are not explicitly enrollment related. Such initiatives could include Joint-Programs, Articulation Agreements, Overseas Program Centers, Study Abroad Agreements, and cooperative research arrangements.

YSU’s Joint Program in Electrical Engineering with Jilin Architecture University (JLJU Program) is an example of one such program. Collaborations like the JLJU Program are desirable because they can produce a combination of international student enrollment as well as external revenue which can support YSU’s academic programs.

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*Plan for Strategic Actions to Take Charge of Our Future: Internationalization Strategy
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YSU partners with a number of government and NGOs which sponsor students to study at YSU. Currently YSU's main partners include Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Japan. In certain instances, YSU may choose to grant a small reduction in fees in order to facilitate the enrollment and retention of these students. YSU aspires to develop other similar relationships with government and NGO partners. The maintenance and development of these sponsored scholarship programs will be a priority for international enrollment efforts in the future.

Commissioned Agency Agreements

YSU has agreements with commissioned agencies in many different countries to facilitate the enrollment of students. YSU's Agency Agreements commit to paying the respective agent a \$2,000 flat fee commission for each student who enrolls and pays tuition if the student was referred and applied through an agency. Agency agreements allow YSU to cast a wider recruitment net than would otherwise be possible. The student must persist through two-semesters and fully pay the tuition and fees due for those semesters for the commissioned agent to be eligible for a \$2,000 payment.

Overseas Country Representatives

YSU currently has Independent Contractor Agreements with two individuals who serve in the capacity of regional YSU Country Representatives. One individual is responsible for Vietnam and one for Nepal and India. These individuals are a key factor in past enrollment growth from these regions. These individuals are not commissioned, rather they are contracted for a set-amount each fiscal year. The terms of the contact range from \$13,000-\$24,000 per year. Additionally, representatives are reimbursed anywhere from \$3,000-\$5,000 for travel expenses.

Recruitment and Digital Marketing

In order to meet enrollment and diversity targets, digital marketing and recruitment is necessary. YSU participates in events arranged by schools, universities, the U.S. government and foreign governments to further establish YSU's brand and facilitate the enrollment of international students. YSU has an integrated approach to digital marketing which establishes the institution's online presence in different world regions.

The International Programs Office works in tandem with YSU's Marketing & Communications Office to ensure that appropriate outreach and branding is completed in advance of in-person recruitment. This maximizes the institution's impact when recruiting in a specific market. The return-on-investment for recruitment initiatives has been collected historically and paired to ensuing recruitment cycles. This data is analyzed and ensuing decisions ensure that YSU's future recruitment & marketing efforts are optimized according to their alignment with the Internationalization Plan as well as return-on-investment. For International enrollment, the diversity aspect of an incoming class is also an important part of a "return-on-investment."

Study Abroad and Global Experiences

The ability to build successful international collaborations rests on the creation of "win-win", mutually beneficial outcomes for the collaborating institutions. One recognized way of creating positive outcomes for our partner universities is to center YSU's global experiences and study abroad on a focused number of overseas partners via the creation of Student Exchange Agreements. This focus in sending activity assists YSU's students and our strategic direction by creating synergies that assist YSU meet enrollment objectives via the

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enrollment of J-1 students. This focused effort also creates more opportunities for American students to have low-cost global experiences. YSU will prioritize sending students on these low-cost experiences which will be representative of each of the world regions described above. YSU will also collaborate with the YSU Foundation, when possible, to identify philanthropic opportunities that support YSU students in acquiring a global experience.

Student Exchange Agreements should have close to an overall “zero” net cost as YSU students pay tuition to YSU and, instead study at an overseas partner university; that YSU student’s enrollment is then replaced by a student from the overseas partner who does not pay YSU tuition. Currently, YSU has nine Exchange Agreements in existence in the following locations:

- The Netherlands
- Belgium
- Finland
- South Korea (2)
- Taiwan
- Japan (3)

The existing agreements are continuously reviewed to ensure that they are a fit for student demand. The institutions on both sides cooperate so that gross imbalances do not exist. Geographically speaking, there is student demand to study for a semester in the following locations which are not covered by Student Exchange Agreements: France, Spain, Italy and Thailand. In the future, YSU aspires to offer Student Exchanges with institutions in these locations to better enable students to study overseas as part of their YSU experience.

VI. Enrollment Target and Scholarships

The Plan establishes several goals and related strategies that necessitate clearly defining the scope of the investment in scholarships for international enrollment and study abroad. These include the following:

- Goal: Develop a recruitment and enrollment strategy
 - Related Strategy: Develop and enhance partnerships and collaboration agreements with international universities
- Goal: Establish universal learning outcomes to enhance the value of a YSU degree
 - Related Strategy: Develop a plan to integrate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion throughout the University
- Goal: YSU will be recognized as a community engaged campus
 - Related Strategy: Establish community engagement and experiential learning as key components of the YSU educational experience

While it is known that study abroad and international enrollment assists in driving overall enrollment numbers while diversifying YSU and creating the kinds of experiential learning that differentiate the YSU educational experience; the identification of the number of overall international students enrolled which will effectively create the opportunity for having a diverse campus experience, can assist in identifying the overall investment needed.

The lived-experience at YSU over the last five-years has demonstrated that between 300-400 international undergraduates enrolled can create the type of rich cultural experiences that have a formative and positive impact on

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the institution and the community. In order to reach and maintain a stable international undergraduate enrollment of 300-400, it is important to consider the investment required to reach these enrollment objectives.

To achieve this objective a merit-based scholarship strategy will be implemented in collaboration with the Office of Admissions and Student Financial Aid and other University offices as needed. Implementation will be reflected in future University Budget proposals and yearly reconciliations as appropriate.

International Enrollment Objectives

YSU will be guided by the following goals within either of the preceding scenarios:

- Objective 1: International enrollment in each class should represent a diversity of global cultures in order to maximize the benefit to students and the community. The diversity objective will be guided by the principles stated in Section IV of this Plan.
- Objective 2: International students who are eligible for Honor's College Scholarships will be a point of focus, as retention and success data in prior years suggests these students can be especially successful, retaining and succeeding at comparatively higher rates to the general student population.
- Objective 3: Government/NGO-Sponsored students are a point of focus, as these students are well-supported by their governments and require little to no institutional scholarship investment.
- Objective 4: Student Exchange Agreements are a particular area of focus because they allow domestic students to have signature overseas experiences as part of their YSU degree while assisting in diversifying the YSU campus through virtue of the two-way exchange.
- Objective 5: The development of a network of international partner institutions is an area of focus as this network will enhance the opportunities for enrollment and revenue-related joint projects in the future. The development of partner institutions require the development of related institutional agreements.
- Objective 6: The per-year enrollment goal and scholarship target is an approximate guide for an attainable international enrollment scenario. In a typical year, there may be positive enrollment opportunities that will arise. In order to realize these opportunities as they occur, regular reports will be given as they relate to international admission numbers and scholarship offers.

Study Abroad: Call to Action

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Given that *The Plan* aspires that YSU incorporates diversity, equity and inclusion in its values and activities; the following goals will guide Study Abroad activities:

- Objective 6: An effort will be made to assess the development of Perspective Consciousness by participants in YSU study abroad programs. The International Programs Office will administer a survey instrument as part of each student's post-return protocol that will give the institution actionable data in terms of the quality of each program in facilitating the development of Perspective Consciousness.
- Objective 7: Particular attention will be made toward the identification and creation of low-cost study abroad opportunities in order to increase access and diversity in overseas programs.
- Objective 8: In order to better align student demand with institutional offerings, YSU should develop Student Exchange Agreements with appropriate higher education partners in France, Spain, Italy, Thailand and other countries as needed. A maximum of 15 well-balanced Student Exchange Agreements should be sufficient to provide students with choice and access for semester-based study.
- Objective 10: A particular effort will be made to send YSU Study Abroad students to quality overseas programs where there is some synergistic benefit for the institution (i.e. Student Exchange Agreement partners) over programs of similar quality where no synergies exist.
- Objective 11: Each student at YSU will have the opportunity to choose to study abroad within their 4-year plan regardless of major. YSU's Study Abroad Office will work with the academic programs to identify a Study Abroad strategy and pathway for each academic program to ensure an institution-wide ability to study abroad.

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APPENDIX

International Student Persistence through 6 Years After Entrance

GREEN HIGHLIGHT – Denotes higher persistence as compared to Total Student Persistence

Fall	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year	6th Year	7th Year	8th Year
2008	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%
2009	54.55%	45.45%	54.55%	54.54%	54.54%	63.64%	63.64%
2010	71.43%	71.43%	71.43%	71.43%	71.43%	71.43%	71.43%
2011	100.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%
2012	81.82%	72.73%	72.73%	63.63%	63.63%	63.63%	63.63%
2013	70.00%	70.00%	70.00%	70.00%	70.00%	60.00%	60.00%
2014	95.24%	85.71%	80.95%	76.19%	76.19%	76.19%	
2015	85.71%	76.19%	71.42%	71.42%	66.66%		
2016	68.18%	59.09%	50.00%	50.00%			
2017	78.69%	67.21%	61.48%				
2018	92.45%	84.91%					
2019	62.50%						

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Total Student Persistence through 6 Years After Entrance

Fall	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year	6th Year	7th Year	8th Year
2008	70.95%	56.05%	50.27%	45.89%	43.36%	41.53%	40.98%
2009	69.23%	53.30%	45.97%	43.90%	40.86%	38.46%	38.19%
2010	65.05%	49.41%	43.69%	40.48%	38.47%	38.06%	36.91%
2011	69.20%	55.38%	48.94%	43.82%	42.72%	40.41%	39.60%
2012	68.81%	54.86%	49.13%	46.76%	44.27%	43.13%	42.71%
2013	69.48%	57.26%	51.45%	48.66%	45.70%	45.10%	44.35%
2014	74.63%	63.45%	57.89%	53.80%	51.82%	51.12%	
2015	73.84%	62.50%	56.25%	52.02%	49.66%		
2016	75.84%	63.47%	57.21%	54.05%			
2017	75.04%	65.31%	59.80%				
2018	74.40%	62.80%					
2019	75.90%						