

# International Affairs 2024-2025 Annual Report

*A report on the Summer 2024 through Spring 2025 terms*

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## Executive Summary

During the 2024-2025 academic year, significant advances to promote and support international students and scholars and education abroad participants at UCCS continued to advance.

Below is a summary of some 2024-2025 academic year highlights included in this report:

- The International Affairs (IA) Office and the UCCS community hosted 8 international scholars from 7 countries.
- IA provided programming, immigration support, and a friendly environment to 203 total international students from 54 countries.
- Engineering and computer science continued to serve as the top degrees international students pursue at UCCS.
- 166 UCCS students studied abroad in over 25 countries during the 2024-25 academic year.
- Europe remains the most popular continental destination for education abroad experiences in all categories, followed by Asia.
- For the second year in a row, IA hosted the Study Abroad Fair with great success in Fall 2024, with over 100 students attending alongside 6 external partners.
- The IA office filed for UCCS redesignation for the J Visa program with the Federal Government and received federal-level approval on the petition; therefore, able to continue to host J-1 international students and scholars.
- A combination of hybrid, in-person, and virtual meetings and programming continued to support international education efforts.
- The 2024–2025 academic year marked record growth for International Affairs student participation and event attendance. IA served the highest number of international students and education abroad participants in its history, with workshop and event participation more than doubling compared to the prior year.
- Highest number of total workshops and events offered in a single year (182).
- IA facilitated a campus-wide workshop, Teaching the Teachers: Enhancing Faculty and Staff Support for International Students, and presented at multiple conferences to share best practices in international student support.

## Introduction

The International Affairs (IA) Office provides all core international student and scholar advising functions and federal immigration reporting, as well as education abroad advising, including risk management abroad. UCCS students continue to receive the utmost attention due to international education expertise and staffing. Annually, campus programming that bolsters internationalization is facilitated in addition to supporting students and sharing partnership development opportunities with the colleges and schools.

It is essential to recognize that the UCCS IA Office continues to be a young international center within higher education. In addition, the office has limited staff compared to similar institutions in Colorado and across the U.S. The office was established in 2012 as a result of the UCCS 2020 strategic plan, in which Goal 4 focused on internationalization.

IA's mission and programming directly support UCCS' strategic goals around global engagement, inclusive excellence, and student success. International Affairs contributes to a more globalized campus culture while ensuring that international students and scholars feel a sense of belonging and connection throughout their academic journey.

### International Affairs Office Structure

As of July 1, 2022, International Affairs reorganized to better advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and internationalization. As a result, the division reported to the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). The division experienced some staffing updates in Fall 2024 as the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion position was vacated. Consequently, the IA team reported to the Director of DEI Education and Outreach, who later became the Director of Inclusive Culture Development, from August 2024 – May 2025. An administrative assistant was hired in October 2024 to support the IA Office. However, funding for that position was eliminated, and the role ended in May 2025.

The organizational chart below displays the chain of command for the International Affairs Office:



The International Student and Scholar Program Manager (ISSPM) formally supervises the Administrative Assistant, the student employees and interns for the office. However, all the IA staff works with every student employee for additional mentorship, training, and direct assistance within their respective areas.

IA's student employees continue to play a critical role in front-line service delivery, peer support, and event execution. With enhanced training protocols and cross-training between education abroad and ISSS functions, student employees helped manage office traffic, assist during peak advising periods, and contribute to a welcoming atmosphere. Their work amplifies the office's reach and positively impacts the student experience.

### Office Visits

The IA Office offers centralized international education services for students and scholars with a focus on education abroad and international student and scholar services. To provide flexibility, IA continued to operate in a hybrid format, allowing for in-person and remote functions and meetings. IA offered 182 workshops and events with a cumulative total of 1,548 participants from June 2024 to May 2025. This is a significant increase in IA-affiliated student participation in workshops and events compared to last year. The IA Office had a total of 407 individual in-person or virtual visits/meetings from June 2023 to May 2024, reflecting a decrease in one-on-one appointments due to the implementation of more targeted workshops and events designed to address common questions, reducing the need for students to schedule individual advising sessions. This shift was an intentional effort to scale services while maintaining the same level of individualized support for students.

### Fulbright Student and Scholar Advising

IA continues to uphold Fulbright advising liaison responsibilities that were transitioned to the office in 2016. Fulbright advising is shared with an additional official Fulbright Advisor and Representative at UCCS, specific to faculty advising, Dr. Fred Coolidge. One-on-one student and scholar Fulbright advising is facilitated by the Education Abroad Program Director (EAPD) and the UCCS Faculty Advisor. The EAPD also manages the Fulbright student nomination process. Collaboration with the UCCS Communique to honor UCCS Fulbright participants and support campus-wide promotion of opportunities continued.

### Community and International Partnerships

Partnerships further UCCS' profile within the greater community and include delegation visits and collaboration with community organizations to provide international perspectives and opportunities. Below is an outline of such efforts:

- Student Exchange Visitor Program (Regional Representative), International Student and Scholar Overview.
- Meetings with international organizations, like EducationUSA and StudyColorado, that explored virtual partnerships and interests.
- Participation in state-wide meetings with an international focus as related to education abroad and international student and scholar services (ISSS).
- Several meetings with incoming higher education-focused international mobility and internationalization contractors/providers focused on a variety of locations including Japan and Finland.



### Agreements and Memos of Understanding

The IA Office works with faculty, colleges, and academic units to support the establishment of partnerships that are strategic and sustainable. IA continues to defer to the College of Business on the renewal of several business-focused student exchange agreements to continue to balance the exchanges originating within the college. Additionally, IA has added 2 new exchanges and maintains over 15 Memos of Understanding (MOUs) and Letters of Intent.

### International Risk Management and the Chancellor's Appointed International Risk Management Committee

As outlined in the Student International Travel Policy, the International Risk Management Committee reviews student travel to high-risk locations abroad. Appointed by the UCCS Chancellor in the Spring of 2016, and includes the following members:

- Telma Frumholtz, International Affairs, Chair
- Tia Grigg, Legal Counsel
- James Duval, CU Risk Management
- Michele Companion, Faculty
- Curtis Holder, Faculty
- Michael Sanderson, Export Control

This committee was integral to establishing student safety during the pandemic and was proactive with its recommendations for student travel abroad throughout the aftermath. The committee convenes monthly to review student travel to at-risk countries and make recommendations to the Chancellor for their review and final decision.

The EAPD and the CU Risk Manager at UCCS work together and attend CU International Risk Management meetings. Lists of students going abroad with relevant emergency contact details are sent each semester to the CU Risk Manager and the Vice Chancellor for DEI. The protocol is followed in accordance with direction and best practices from the CU System and peer schools.

### International Education Programming

The IA Office organizes events and initiatives that bring students together in social, cultural, and educational settings.

IA's programming for international students and scholars and education abroad participants is an important facet of fulfilling the mission of the office. Programming has several important functions for the office:

1. Introduce students to important information about the university and international student compliance requirements (orientation, events).
2. Connect students to networks that provide strong sources of support.
3. Keep students informed throughout their educational path (workshops).
4. Provide opportunities to experience different facets of U.S. life (events and collaborations).
5. Provide opportunities for students to share their cultural backgrounds with the campus and community.
6. Help to internationalize and inform the campus community (events, workshops).

7. Offer resources to students interested in studying abroad, covering academics, finances, and life abroad (events, workshops).
8. Support participants in international programs before, during, and after their experience abroad (events, workshops).

Collaborating, specifically in relation to programming, is important for several reasons:

- The legacy of previous international student programming at UCCS requires that IA highly collaborate with other university units. Prior to 2016 there were no international education events out of the IA office.
- There are a multitude of events on campus, and collaboration is needed to ensure that events do not conflict with other programming from other offices, thereby harming each event attempted.
- The limited budget(s) of the offices involved means that collaboration is a better use of programming dollars and can offer the most value.
- Expertise differs among offices, and collaboration leverages that collective knowledge.
- Collaboration helps keep stakeholders involved, interested, and motivated on the IA mission and helps to internationalize the UCCS workforce.

Collaboration introduces students to the many campus partners invested in their academic, professional, and personal success. In all these functions, there are common threads of promoting efforts to improve international student success, retention, and engagement with the campus and community. IA offered a variety of hybrid, remote, and in-person programming for the 2024–2025 academic year, increasing accessibility for students and scholars who could not always attend events in person.

This year in addition to student-facing programming, IA expanded professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. The ISSPM presented a session titled Teaching the Teachers: Enhancing Faculty and Staff Support for International Students at the University of Denver's Internationalization Summit. This workshop focused on equipping faculty and staff with strategies to better engage and support international students in academic settings, based on the last year's presentation of International Students in the Classroom at UCCS that was presented campus wide.

### [International Week 2024](#)

International Education Week is a celebration of campus-wide international programming. This nationally recognized week, designated by the U.S. Department of State and Department of Education, is celebrated in unique ways on campuses across the nation. International Affairs provides daily programming and collaborates with campus partners to highlight international activities and expertise. In addition to advertising across campus, IA promotes its activities for national recognition with the Department of State and with the State of Colorado via StudyColorado.



In 2024, International Education Week events were held from Monday, November 18, to Friday, November 22. The week's programming resulted in a total of 201 event attendances, reflecting participation across all sessions, including instances where the same individual attended multiple events. The schedule and descriptions of events are shown on the right. The week's activities included EA advising events, How to Leverage Your International Experience for Career Success with the T. Rowe Price Career and Innovation Center, an OPT Workshop for international students, an IA Open House, and several additional events that engaged students, faculty, and staff in celebrating international education.

### International Affairs Strategic Planning and External Review

The 2019-2025 International Affairs Strategic Plan was finalized in 2019. Throughout 2019, IA staff met to identify strengths and opportunities to develop and define goals. Goals were identified, and the plan was developed to align with the divisional plan. Feedback was received from students with experience in each area as well as the Vice Chancellor for Student Success. Implementation efforts commenced in Fall 2019, with the completion of various elements occurring throughout the planning cycle. As the plan reaches its final year, IA has begun evaluating outcomes and identifying priorities for the next strategic planning cycle.

The IA Strategic Plan goals:

- Goal 1: Strengthen the diversity of education abroad opportunities
- Goal 2: Enhance the campus climate for international students and scholars
- Goal 3: Enrich opportunities for international partnership and community relations
- Goal 4: Implement an assessment plan that measures student and scholar success
- Goal 5: Contribute to the Division of Student Success and University's strategic plan

These goals share a common purpose of ensuring a vibrant international experience for students. While some goals and strategies are one-time, many involve ongoing processes. To review the IA strategic plan, please visit [uccs.edu/international](https://uccs.edu/international) and click on "About Us."

# INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK

**NOVEMBER 18-22, 2024**  
 EMAIL: [INTERNATIONAL@UCCS.EDU](mailto:INTERNATIONAL@UCCS.EDU)  
 PHONE: 719-255-5018

**UCCS**  
 International Affairs  
 UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
 COLORADO SPRINGS

MONDAY 11/18	TUESDAY 11/19	WEDNESDAY 11/20
<p><b>International Coffee/Tea Break</b>            7:30-11:00 AM            Outside IA Office            (Copper House 9202)  <b>Rangoli Event</b>            2:00-4:00 PM UC (Outside Bookstore)  <b>Virtual Short-term Programs Info Session</b>            4:00-5:00 PM Online</p>	<p><b>Picnic</b>            Everyone Welcome!            11am-1pm            Upper Lodge  <b>Abroad 101</b>            3pm via <a href="#">Teams</a>  <b>Education Abroad Trivia Night</b>            5-6pm @ UC304</p>	<p><b>Options After Graduation for International Students With Immigration attorney, Lisa York</b>            10am via <a href="#">Teams</a>  <b>Abroad 101</b>            11:30am via <a href="#">Teams</a>  <b>Psychology in France Info Session</b>            3:30-4:30pm            via Teams and Columbine 4026</p>
THURSDAY 11/21	FRIDAY 11/22	
<p><b>International Career Success Day:</b>            8:30am-4:30pm            T.Rowe Price Career and Innovation Center  <b>Resume Reviews</b>            Drop off your resume in the drop box outside the Career Center in the UC.  <b>Mock Interviews</b>            Sign up for a in-person 30-minute Mock Interview  <b>CPT and Academic Training Info Session</b>            9-10am via <a href="#">Teams</a>  <b>Optional Practical Training (OPT) Workshop</b>            10-11am via <a href="#">Teams</a>  <b>How to Leverage your International Experience</b>            1-2pm via <a href="#">Teams</a> and in-person  <b>Business Education Abroad Info Session</b>            3-4pm via <a href="#">Teams</a></p>	<p><b>International Affairs Open House</b>            10am-12pm @ UC 122  <b>Passport and Pastries</b>            10am-12pm @ UC 122  <b>Winter Safety Prep Pizza Party</b>            12-1pm @ UC 122  <b>Global Perspectives: The Flagmakers Documentary</b>            5-7pm @ UC Room 122            An exploration on the different perspectives and the significance of flags as symbols of identity and culture.  <b>MORE INFORMATION ON MLC PAGE</b>  </p>	

To continue to highlight the external review conducted for IA in 2021, the summary below highlights some core strengths, opportunities, and recommendations:

#### Strengths

- Well-respected and knowledgeable team with expertise in international education
- Effectively supports internationalization efforts with minimal staffing (International Risk Management Committee, a Crisis Management Plan, growth in education abroad, and strong support for visiting international scholars and students)
- Collaborates across campus and within the community on international education efforts

#### Opportunities and Recommendations

- Elevate staff titles to reflect unique areas of responsibility
- Return education abroad funding to base funding
- Consider organizational alignment with academic affairs per national data
- Establish a task force/advisory council (faculty and staff membership with appointment by senior leader(s))
- Provide administrative support for the office - a recommendation underscored by the loss of the administrative assistant in May 2025, which has placed critical strain on IA's ability to maintain compliance and programming at required levels
- Fundraise for scholarships for international students and for study abroad
- Ensure risk management compliance also comes from the provost, deans, and department, not just IA
- Consider centralizing all international efforts on campus into IA
- Further the development and support of faculty-led education abroad programs
- Introduce and virtual exchange or collaborative online international learning (COIL) at UCCS

## Education Abroad

Education abroad professionals require people skills as well as data management skills. The information collected for this report reflects both of those aspects, addressing both the data itself as well as the outside elements that may be relevant as well. The Education Abroad Program Director (EAPD) continued to be consistently the only position supporting Education Abroad at UCCS. This role involves nuanced advising for and outreach to students, staff, and faculty across a wide range of fields. With need-to-know information about administrative processes on-campus, as well as the visa requirements of various countries and program details of the many partners. This expansive knowledge base includes an in-depth understanding of world travel, education systems, and other countries. For the duration of 9 months of the academic year, International Affairs hired an Administrative Assistant which assisted both Education Abroad (EA) and ISSS. While this position proved to be a significant addition to the team, it was ultimately eliminated due to budget cuts.

The Terra Dotta system is used to manage and track EA participation and risk management data requires the EAPD to have technological savvy, data maintenance knowledge, and report writing skills. Through Terra Dotta, the EAPD creates and maintains lists of students going abroad and relevant emergency contact details for each term, thereby contributing to risk management abroad. After the transition to the

modernized and updated interface of TerraDotta, the EAPD was able to implement new SOPs to drastically improve existing processes, including the creation and updating of program information pages. In addition to the administrative duties that include the use of Terra Dotta, the EAPD assists students with the application process, and oversees program offerings to ensure a diversity of excellent options for students.

Via orientation and information sessions, the EAPD works to foster greater campus participation in and awareness of the range of education abroad opportunities available at UCCS. The EAPD also uses social media, tabling, and group-specific programming in this effort.

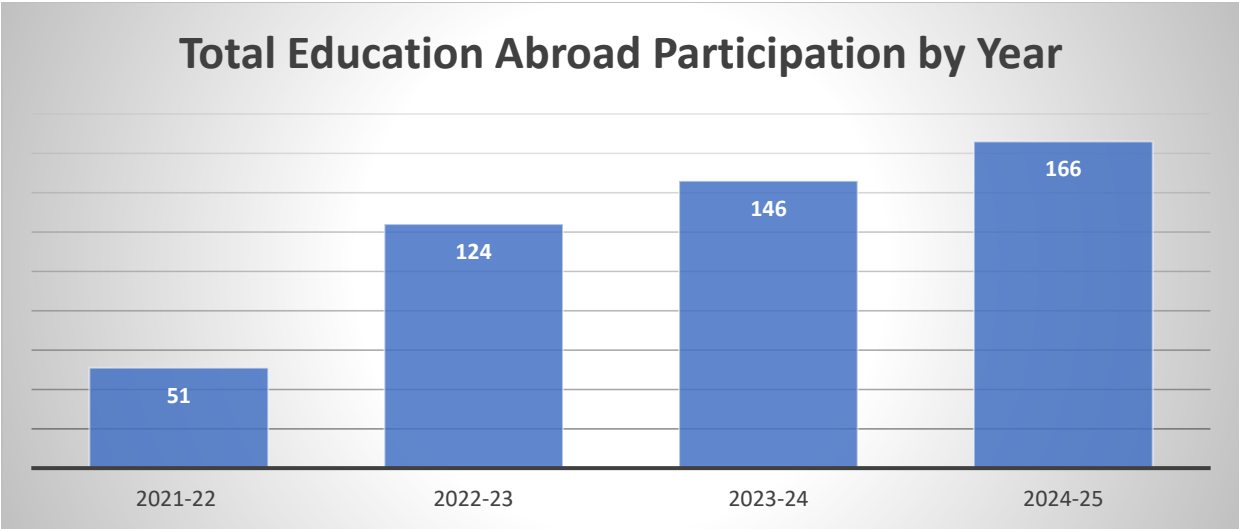
Through all the above, as well as close partnerships with other departments and offices across campus, the EAPD works to incorporate meaningful experiences abroad degrees and learning outcomes to grow interest and participation in education abroad at UCCS. Below is an application and summary report for EA. This summary report will be used to set future application and enrolled student goals.

Year on Year	Applications	Pending	Accepted	Committed (Went Abroad)	Withdrawn	% Applicants Abroad	% Accepts Abroad
2024-2025	411	0	166	166	275	40.60	40.60
2023-2024	373	0	146	146	199	39.10	39.10
2022-2023	279	0	124	124	155	44.50	44.50
2021-2022	163	0	55	51	108	31.30	33.70
2020-2021	256	0	0	0	256	0	0
2019-2020	344	0	178	178	166	51.70	51.70
2018-2019	416	0	190	190	226	45.70	45.70
2017-2018	262	0	178	178	84	67.90	67.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>2093</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>1194</b>	<b>41.42</b>	<b>41.62</b>

### Annual Overview

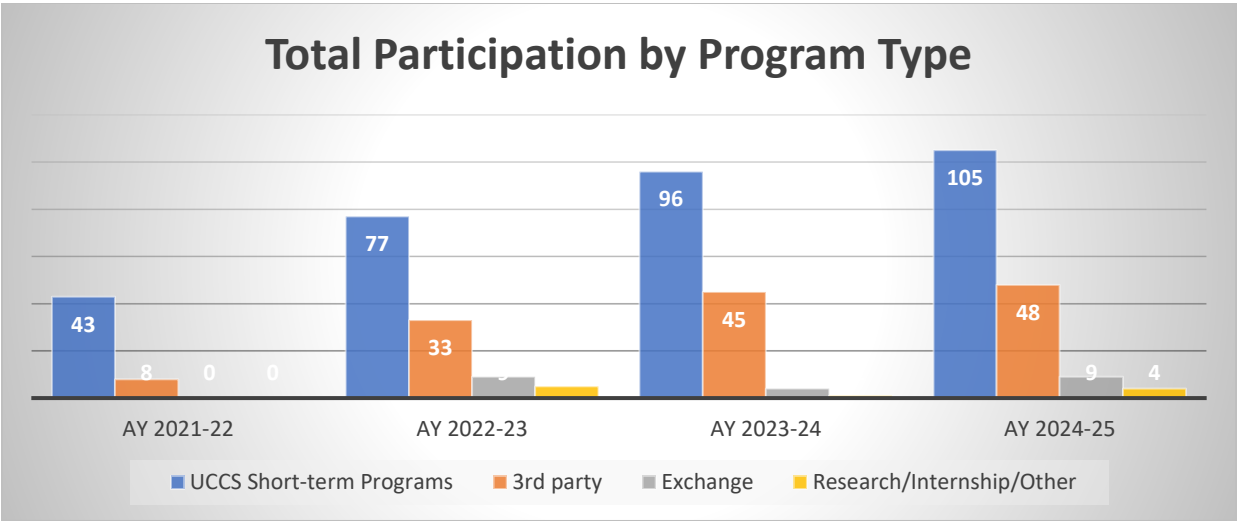
During the 2024-25 Academic Year, Education Abroad at UCCS saw a steady level of increased participation. International Affairs once again sent students abroad during every term, showing overall participation numbers increase by about 20 students. According to the Institute of International Education, Open Doors report for 2024, national education abroad participation continues to see a significant increase from the prior academic year. As can be seen in the outlines of the next sections, UCCS EA is well on its way to returning to pre-pandemic levels as a consistent increase since the pandemic has been occurring.

It is important to note that in the charts to follow, all terms that sent zero students abroad due to the pandemic have been omitted for better comparison of true terms.



The popularity of summer abroad programming, especially short-term options, continues to be a highlight of Education Abroad participation. Student interest in shorter programs is a growing trend nationally and at UCCS, as it allows students to gain international experience while balancing responsibilities at home, work, and school.

The chart below details EA applications by program type, displaying growth in third-party programming and UCCS short-term programs. Third-party programming (provider programs) encompasses full-term education abroad experiences organized by companies or non-profits that partner with universities to provide avenues abroad. These partnerships are essential to UCCS, ensuring robust student support while abroad and helping to mitigate risk management and emergency issues.



Provider programs offer a wide variety of countries and areas of study with a high level of student support prior to, during, and after the student’s time abroad. Some providers also offer scholarship funding for students. Students pay a "program fee" directly to the provider, which usually includes tuition and fees, accommodation for the duration of the program, insurance, some excursions, and on-site support. The continued growth of

short-term programming aligns with national trends and reflects IA's ongoing efforts to expand accessible, high-impact education abroad opportunities.

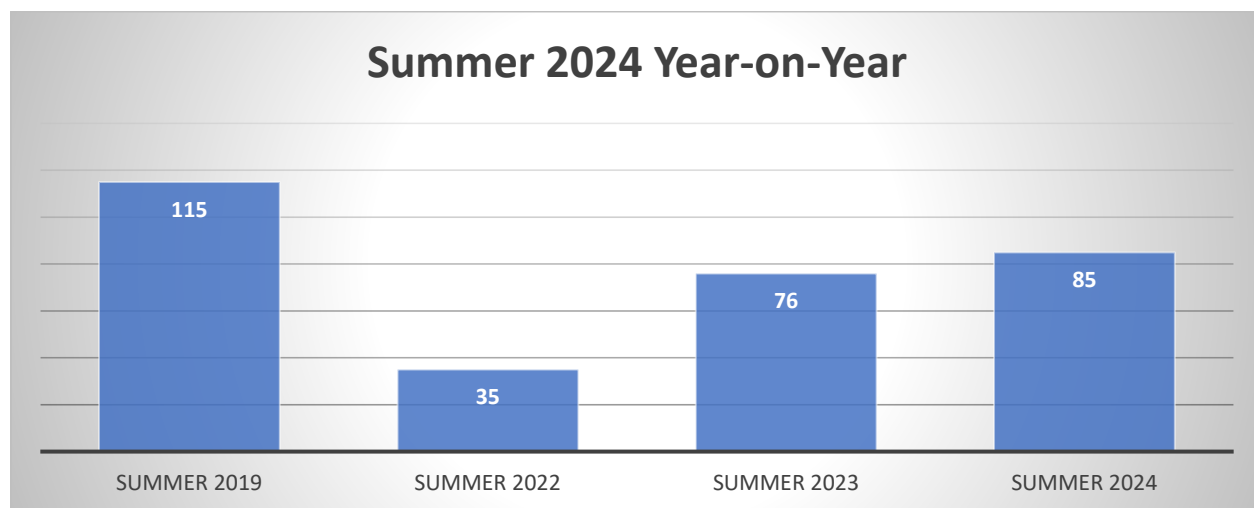
The 2024-25 Academic Year had an increase from 96 participants to 105 in short-term programming. This is a likely result of a major push to promote UCCS short-term programming on a cyclical schedule. With calls to faculty and staff for program development in the winter and early spring. Requests for proposals and paperwork due April 1 and development of promotional materials prior to the end of the spring semester. This cycle allows program leaders to share their upcoming programs with students earlier and helps students prepare for participation in the next academic year's short-term programs. This method continues to be effective as the office turns its attention to the 2025-26 academic year, garnering over 12 anticipated programs.

### Education Abroad Participation - Term Overviews

The summaries below provide a semester/term overview of education abroad student mobility and capture the students that went abroad. Each section includes a summary with charts that detail current and historical analysis of education abroad participation by term.

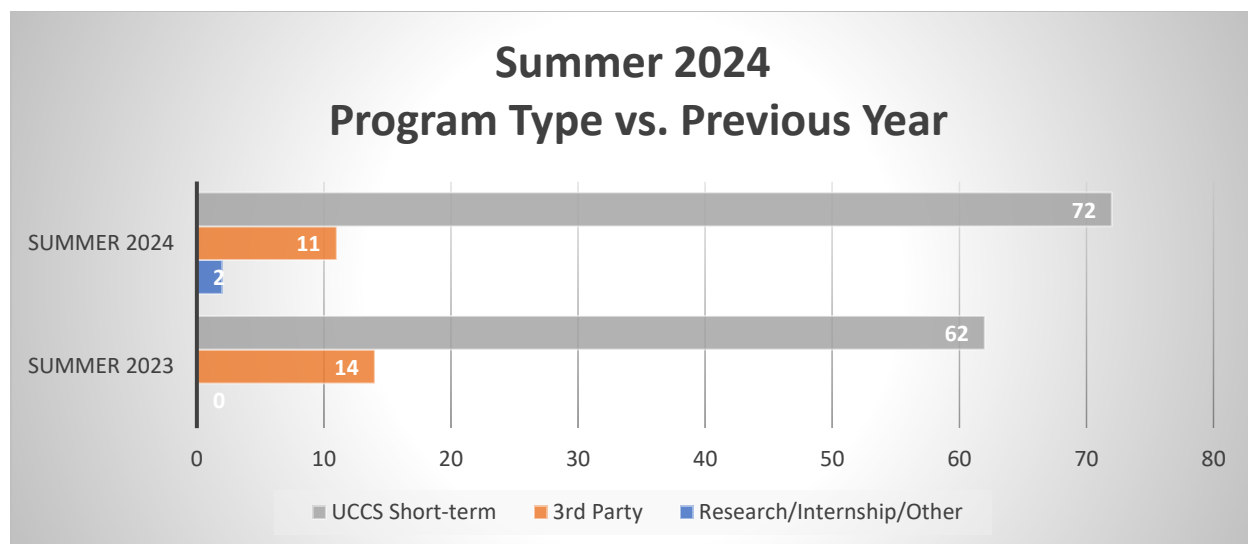
#### Summer 2024 Overview:

Total: 85 participants



As the chart above demonstrates, a sustained trend is clear, which UCCS continues to build up to with the Summer 2024 numbers as numbers return to pre-pandemic levels.

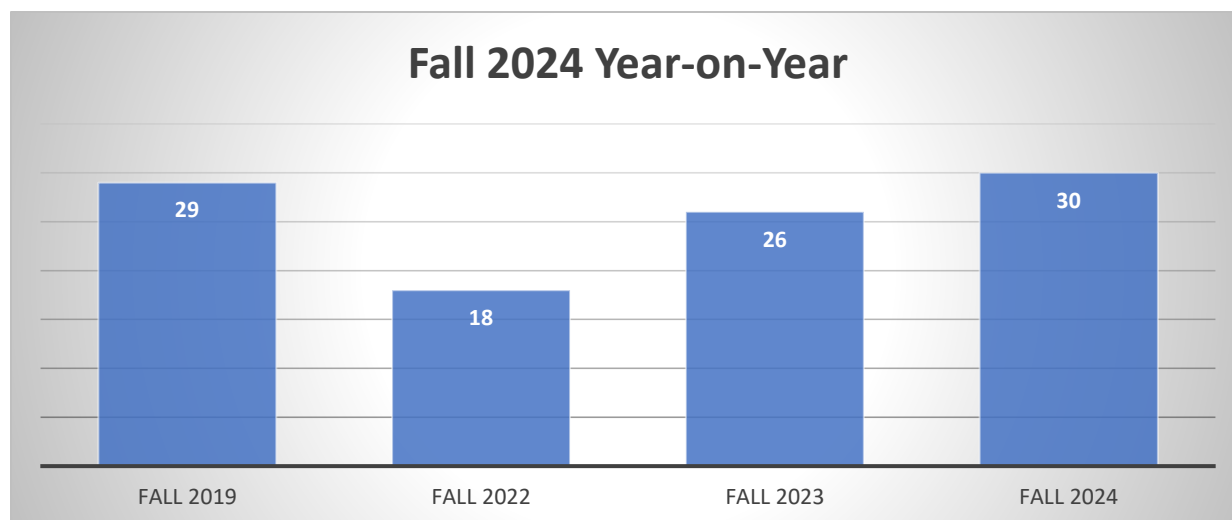
Maintaining focus on summer short-term programming is necessary as it continues to be the most popular option for education abroad experiences. Along with supporting UCCS faculty and staff with short-term programming, a diversity of other summer programs, like student groups, should continue to be encouraged. As more student groups become interested in education abroad programs, there will be larger growth in summer participation. Summer Programs can more readily accommodate school schedules and cost considerations (that tend to be less due to the shorter period of study).



**Countries of Destination Summer 2024:** Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Multi-destination, Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland

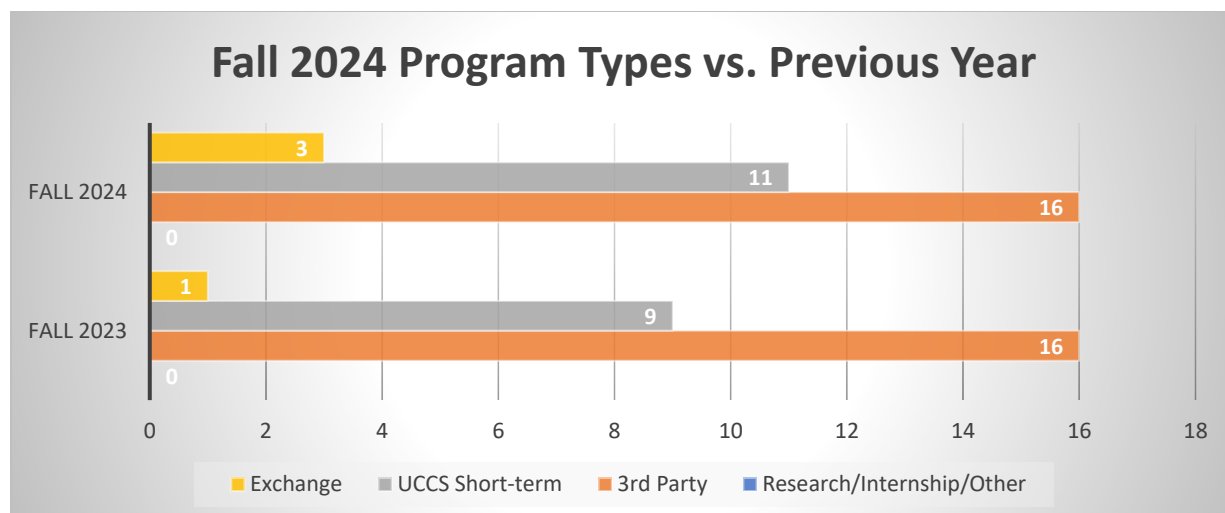
#### Fall 2024 Overview:

Total: 30 participants



Fall 2024 saw 30 students in EA programs. Reaching the same levels seen back in Fall 2018 (pre-pandemic), continuing the steady rise towards consistent pre-pandemic numbers. The overall increase in program provider participation suggests that interest in more traditional education abroad programming is on the rise for UCCS students.

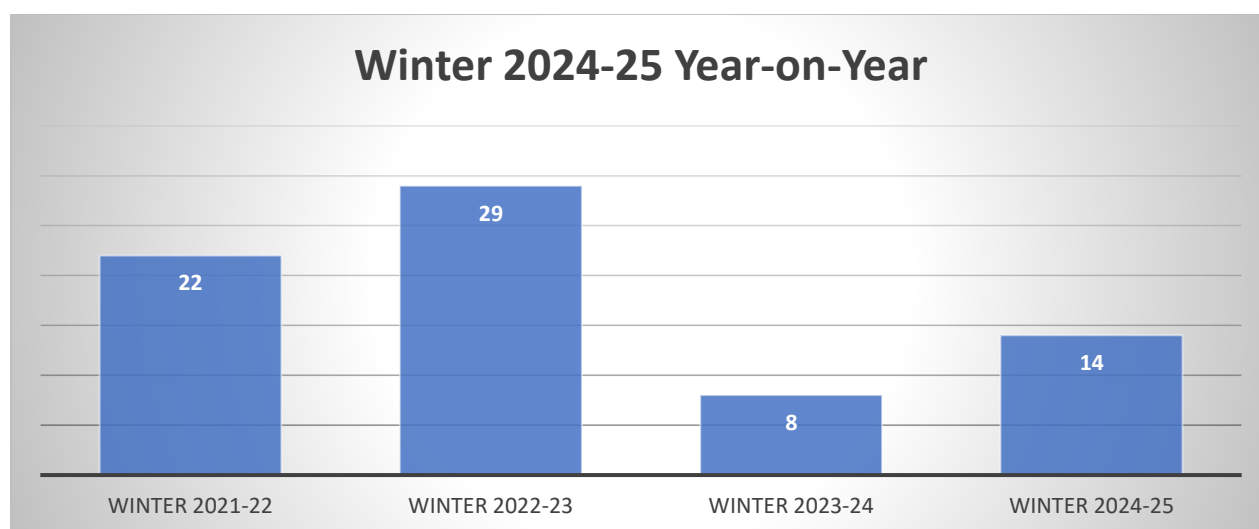




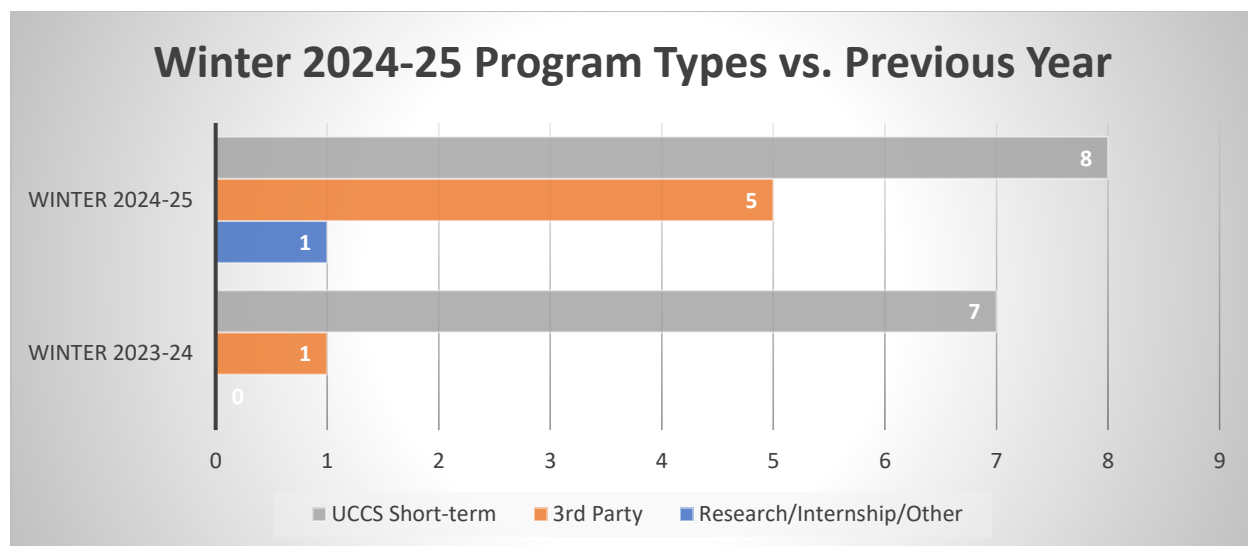
**Countries of Destination Fall 2024:** Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Poland, Scotland, Sweden, Thailand, UK

#### Winter 2024-25 Overview:

Total: 14 participants



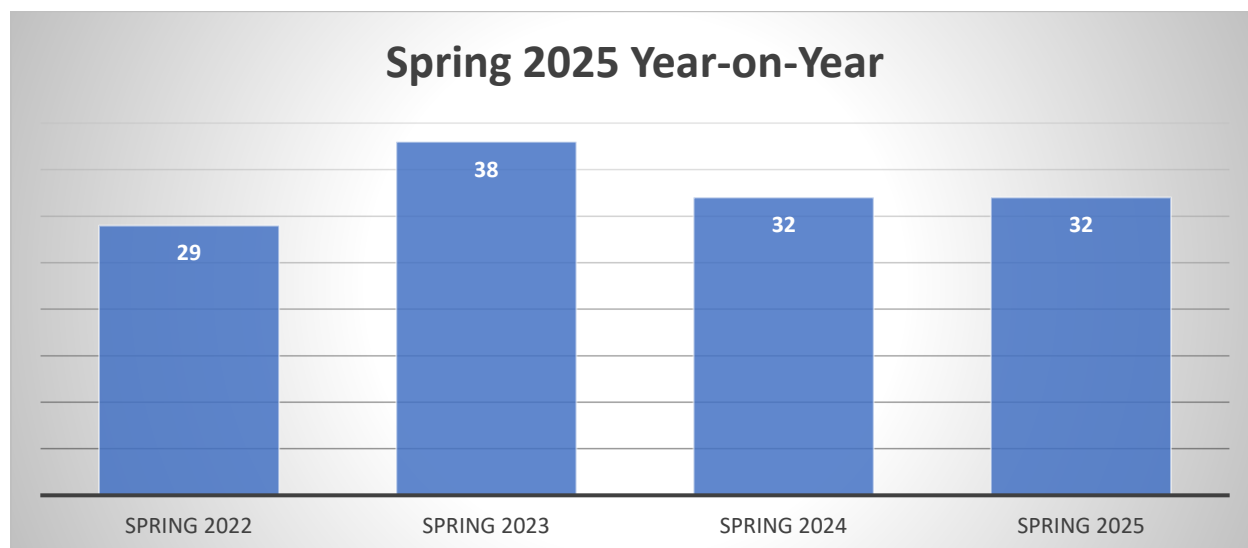
Winter 2024-25 saw participants go on short-term faculty-led programming but due to limited number of programs offered, participation was accordingly low. While there has been a rise in available January session third party provider programs, the interest remains with short term faculty led programs. Most faculty and staff leading short term programs alternate years and terms, explaining the increase in participation for Winter 2024-25.



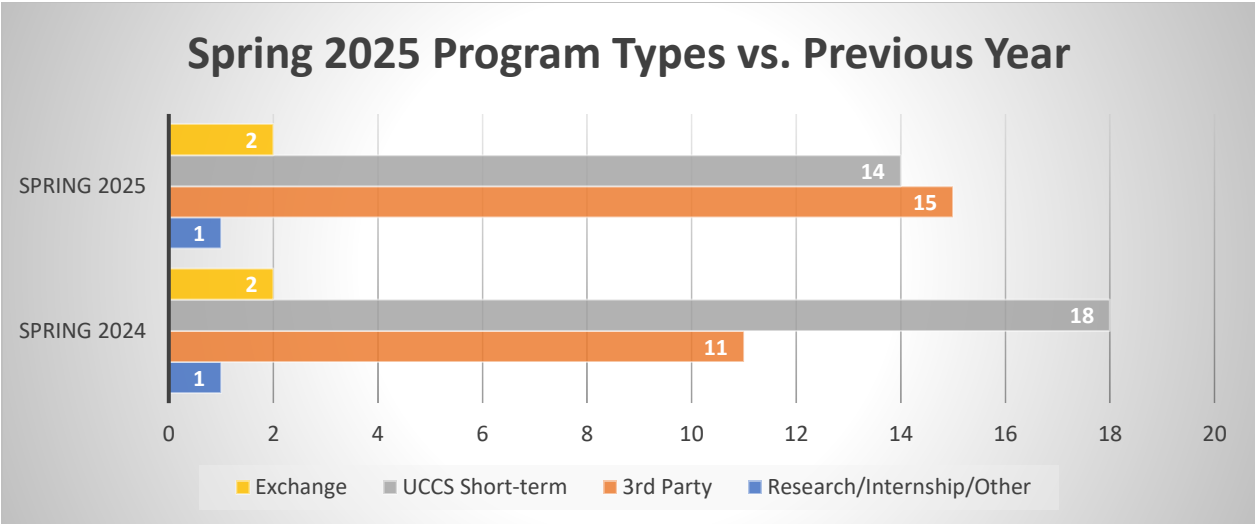
**Countries of Destination Winter 2024-25:** Guatemala, Multi destination, Uganda, UK

**Spring 2025 Overview:**

Total: 32 participants



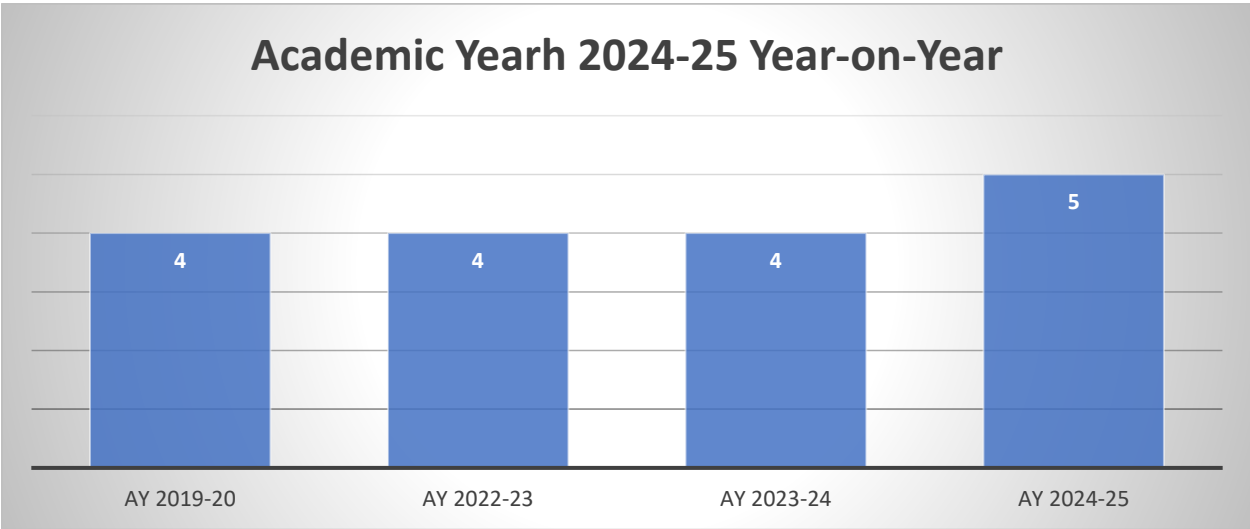
Spring 2025 shows a consistency in participation compared to the previous year, emphasizing the nationwide trend that is happening, highlighting the once most popular term to go abroad (spring semester) is starting to come in after summer term study abroad experiences.



**Countries of Destination Spring 2024:** Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Korea (South), Scotland, South Africa, UK

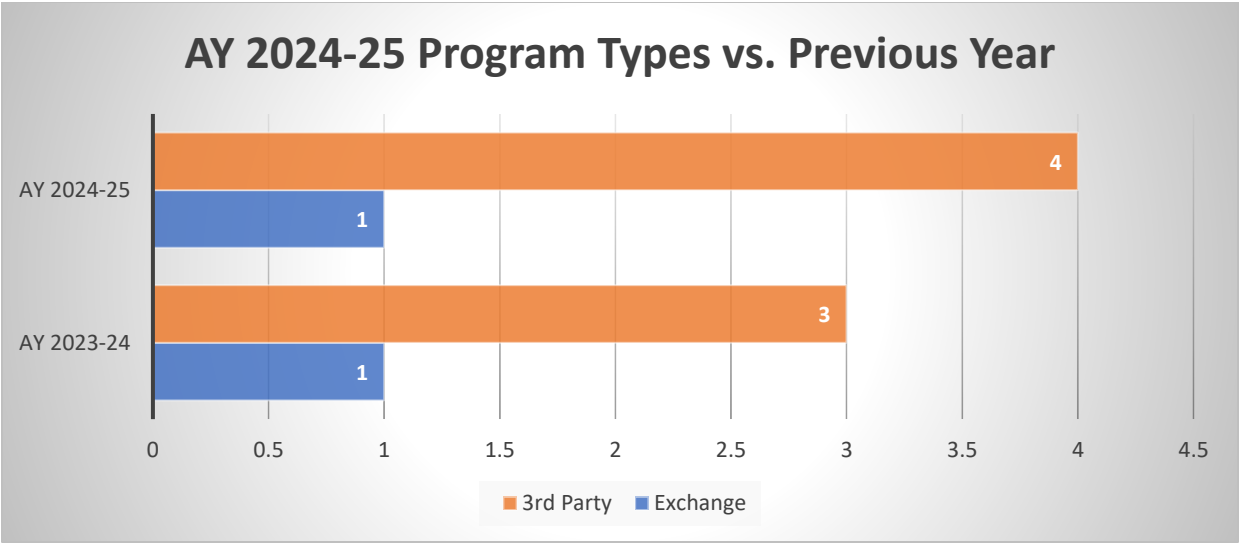
**Academic Year 2024-25 Overview:**

Total: 5 participants



The generally low participation in academic year-long programs is likely due to the significant monetary and time commitments involved in going abroad for nine-to-ten months. Especially since UCCS students strongly value affordability and flexibility, as demonstrated by the popularity of short-term programming. Nevertheless, there continues to be steady interest in these programs.

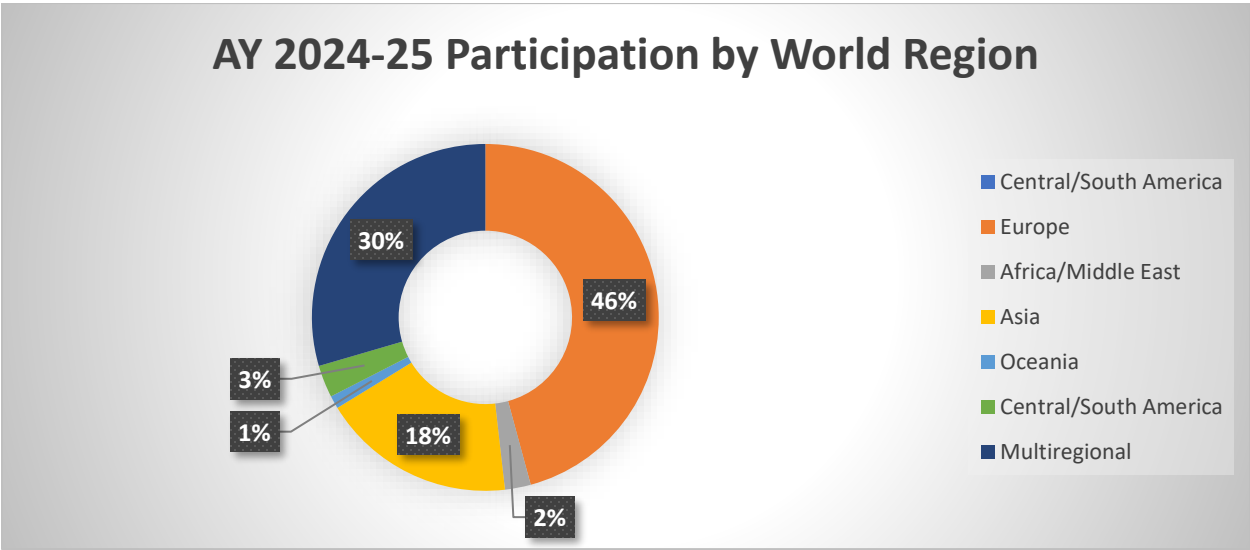
There continues to be strong interest in exchanges specifically when it comes to full year experiences, however due to the limited number of placings, provider programs are growing in popularity for students who have their minds set on a full academic year abroad.



**Countries of Destination AY 2023-24:** Japan, UK

### Regional Participation

As with national trends, Europe remains the most popular destination for education abroad experiences in all categories. Overall, the International Affairs Office sent 166 UCCS students to almost 25 countries during the 2024-25 Academic Year.

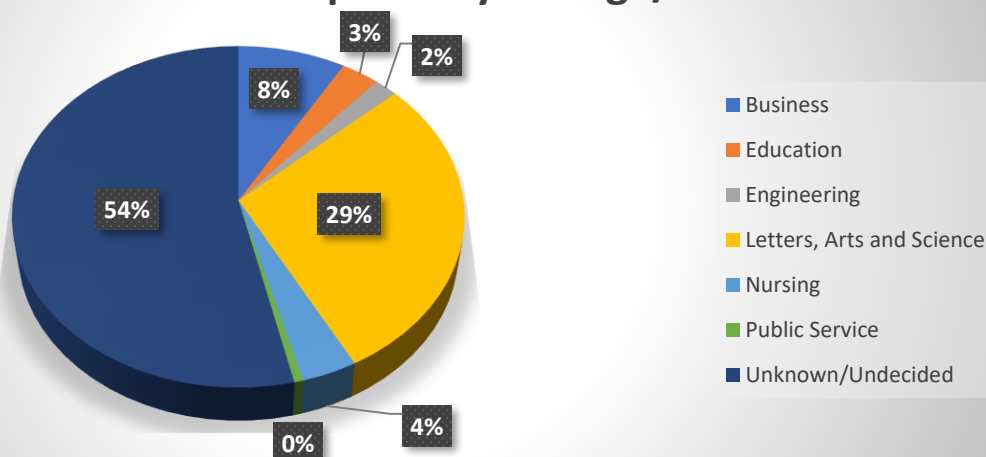


UCCS has a close split of just under half the education abroad participants going to Europe, with the other half split among the remainder of the popular areas. Multiregional programs continue to represent a small percentage of total students abroad, while Asia and Central/South America are slightly on the rise.

### Participation by UCCS College/School

The chart below details participation rates by self-identified school or college, containing a total of 166 participants. It shows overall participation rates by college/school and highlights the continued overall dominance of the College of Letters, Arts, and Science in education abroad.

## AY 2024-25 Participants by College/School



### College and School Data Summaries

The **College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences** continues to be the most represented among those who apply for and participate in education abroad programs, accounting for 29% of total participants. While LAS contains the largest number of majors on campus, programs such as foreign language majors and minors also lend themselves particularly well to study abroad opportunities.

The historical relationship that the **College of Business** has with exchange partners, as well as having an international marketing major, makes it well represented. While the option to list the major is optional for students, we do receive informal data from COB regarding those that apply for internal study abroad scholarships, providing additional support in highlighting a higher COB participation rate in Education Abroad programs at UCCS.

The **College of Nursing and Health Sciences** continues to have a low attendance rate, in main part due to the structure of their programs and the incompatibility with a longer-term study abroad experience.

The **College of Education** shows a significant slight decrease in participation in programming this year.

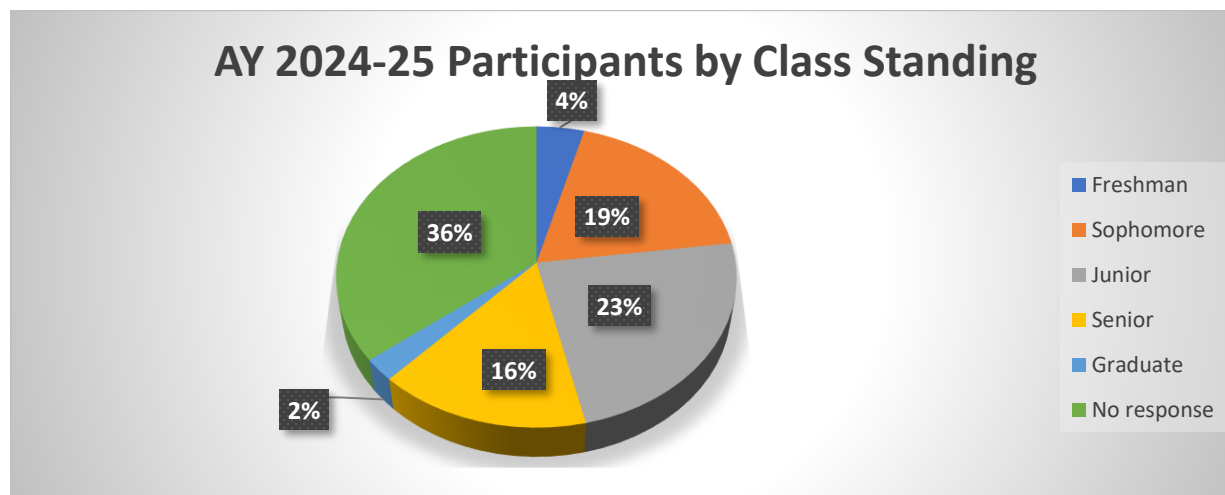
The **College of Engineering and Applied Sciences** students mostly go on summer or winter STEM programs. With one of the small faculty-led trips being engineering geared, these rates can be expected to continue fairly consistently and/or grow at a slight incline based on the popularity and growth of STEM programs. Looking to the future with the addition of a new Engineering specific exchange, the hope is to see these numbers increase.

The **School of Public Affairs** historically has significant presence with short-term programs abroad, though did not lead a short term trip this 2024-25 year.

It is important to note that not all students going abroad identify a major or degree as part of the registration to go abroad. Further, over half the participants this year indicated no major.

### Participation by UCCS Class Standing

As the chart below shows, the 2024-25 Academic Year had a consistent split.



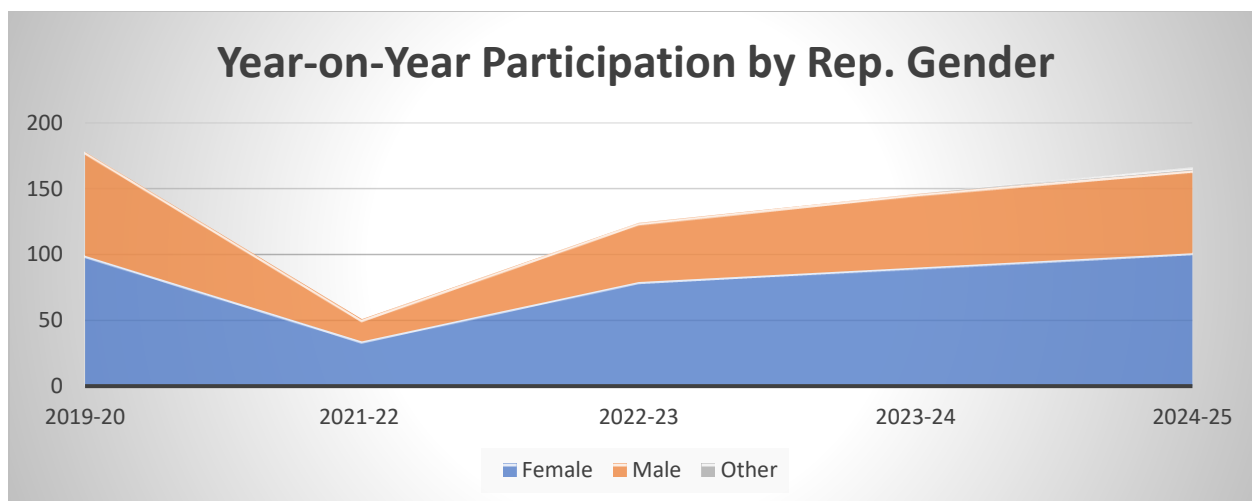
Given the complexities of upper division coursework and schedules, it's interesting to note how many juniors and seniors are participating in education abroad. This suggests that upper-level coursework may not be quite as big a barrier as previously thought. Further research on the intersection between class standing and college/school should be considered to determine if there are certain programs or areas of study in which traveling later in the undergraduate career is more manageable for students.

### Education Abroad by Reported Gender

This year's report highlights a gender gap similar to last year, with women consistently participating at higher rates than men. Female students comprised 90 participants (approximately 62%), while male students accounted for 56 participants (approximately 38%). Tracking future participation trends will help determine whether the continued emergence from the pandemic leads to a more balanced gender distribution.

Now that short-term programming is increasing, it is important to monitor if the steady rise in participation will continue thanks to outreach efforts and on-campus marketing. While the change is small, there has been a steady increase in male participation in Education Abroad opportunities.





### Education Abroad by Reported Ethnicity

Overall, the trends in reported ethnicity by education abroad participants remain relatively level in recent years. These percentage levels are on par with the national averages for participation by these groups and indicate strong growing diversity in EA at UCCS, though this year did yield the largest number of students that did not respond.

<b>Rep. Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
<b>African (American)</b>	1.8 % (3)	1.4% (2)	4.8% (6)	5.5% (9)	6.2% (11)
<b>American Indian/Alaska Native</b>	0.6% (1)	<1% (1)	<1% (1)	<1% (1)	1.1% (2)
<b>Asian (American)</b>	4.2 % (7)	5.5% (8)	2.4% (3)	6.1% (10)	2.8% (5)
<b>Caucasian</b>	28.3 (47)	47.9% (70)	49.2% (61)	49.7% (81)	58.4% (104)
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	3.0% (5)	18.5% (27)	12.9% (16)	11.1% (18)	9.6% (17)
<b>Multiple Selected</b>	1.8% (3)	1.4% (2)	2.4% (3)	2.5% (4)	2.2% (4)
<b>Did not respond</b>	56.6% (94)	18.5% (27)	24.2% (30)	17.8% (29)	14% (25)
<b>Other</b>	1.8% (3)	2.7% (4)	2.4% (3)	6.1% (10)	3.4% (6)
<b>Did not wish to report</b>	1.8% (3)	3.4% (5)	<1% (1)	<1% (1)	2.2% (4)

As the data also shows, students classifying themselves as Other or who did not respond or report remained fairly consistent.

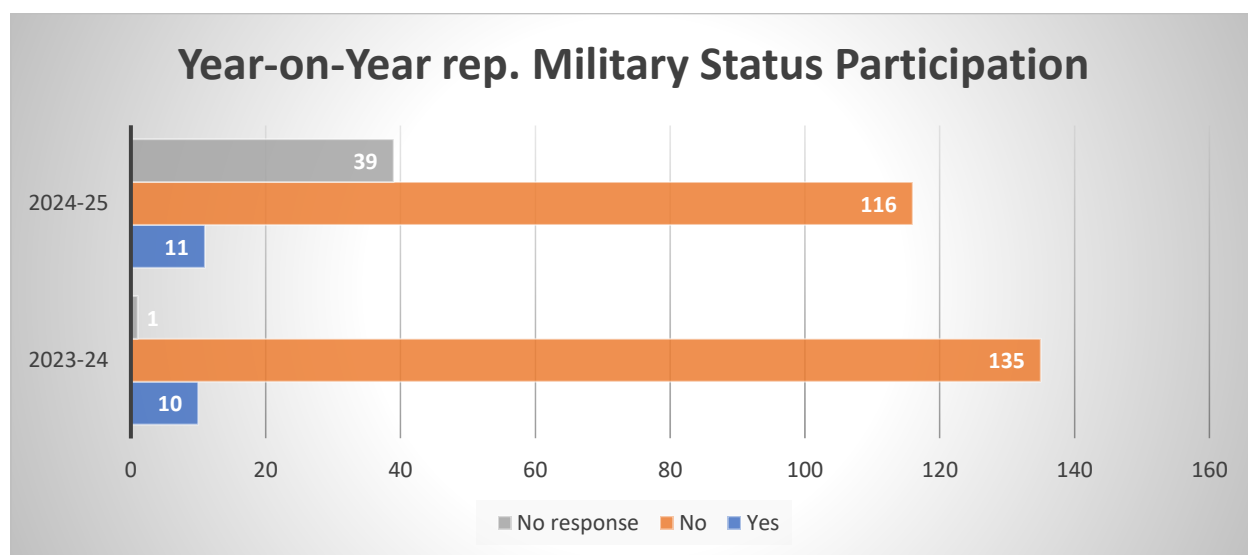
### Education Abroad and Reported Military Status

UCCS prides itself on being a nationally ranked military-friendly institution, with nearly 20% of students having military affiliation. However, there continues to be challenges to their participation in education abroad experiences that are not faced by other students. Tightening of interpretations of the Department of Veterans Affairs benefit eligibility for education abroad continues to impact participation. Currently, students can only use their benefits for direct exchanges, not third-party provider or short-term programs.

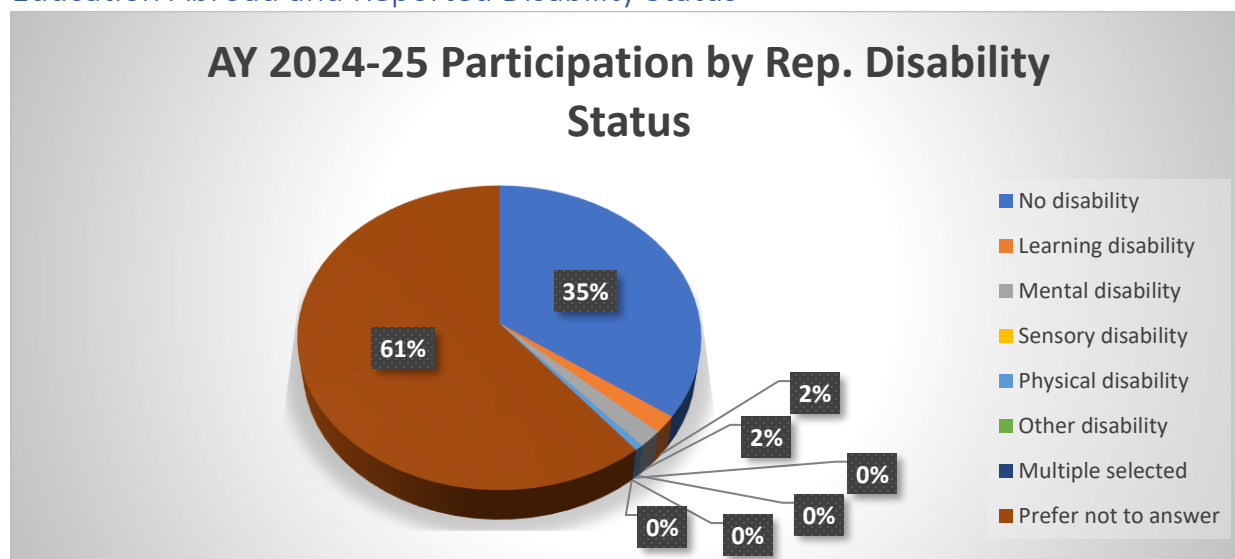
Nevertheless, of the 166 students in this year's data, 11 listed an affiliation with the military on their application. A slight increase from the previous years, likely due to the slight VA policy changes. While these changes were minor, the Education Abroad world holds high

hopes for continue changes into the future, making study abroad more accessible to student using military affiliated funding.

It is important to note that the issue with veteran benefits for programs abroad is not unique to UCCS. All Colorado schools continue to face similar concerns working with veterans for education abroad due to the changes in the interpretation and use of veteran benefits. Overall, the UCCS approach has been measured and, with continued coordination, could present an area of growth given the continued national increase in veteran and military-affiliated members seeking higher education and overseas experiences. An area moving forward for consideration is the use of the VA's WEAMS database of approved overseas schools to establish new agreements for partnership. Using these schools to develop partnerships should assist in finding locations for military-affiliated students that meet the requirements for the use of aid. However, it is important to note that support services at such institutions will be minimal.



#### Education Abroad and Reported Disability Status



There continue to be few students who self-reported a disability in 2024-2025. The major area of concern regarding EA and disabled students is those who do not report their disability or those with multiple disabilities who report only one. Additionally, there may be some concern about the mental disability label being used – or not used – to reflect nuanced mental health issues students may experience. Data collection in this regard is not perfect and will continue to be a work in progress. Greater training of faculty and staff who lead trips overseas, as well as the EA and IA staff, will also continue to be important moving forward.

### Marketing and Outreach

Marketing and outreach were increasingly tailored and effective during this reporting cycle. Programs this year were focused on remote communications, promotions, education through Abroad 101, and cultural participation sessions that students could participate in from their own location.

### Abroad 101

The main objective of Abroad 101 sessions is to take the confusion out of how to start the study abroad process. The popularity of these sessions has faltered somewhat due to their virtual status and limited programming. Over 50 students participated in a session this year. Marketing efforts to promote Abroad 101 continue to include connecting with academic advisors and departments as well as campus-wide flyer distribution via email and social media posts. These events will continue to be held virtually multiple times a week with some additional program spotlights in hopes of increasing popularity.

### Study Abroad Fair

For the second year in a row, UCCS has been able to bring the Study Abroad Fair back to campus, providing yet another opportunity for providers and the International Affairs Office to connect further with students and engage them in conversations around Education Abroad. This year over 100 students attended the fair.

### Student Group & Classroom Presentations

Based on the increased interest in overseas travel by UCCS student groups, the 2024-25 year saw a significant increase in requests for EA presentations at all academic levels and at a variety of student group meetings.

### Social Media

Social media became a heightened area of focus thanks to the new Administrative Assistant. Consistent posting led to measurable growth in followers and interaction across platforms, demonstrating the importance of dedicated staffing for outreach efforts.

### General Campus Outreach

Tabling events continue increased greatly for the 2024-2025 Academic Year, allowing EA to reach incoming students and passersby again and leveraging external partnerships to table as well. As these continue to return and be fully present on campus, it is likely to have several more of these moving forward in order to target all campus students.

## New Events

This year an implementation of a variety of new events was highly successful. Some of the new events included:

- College of Business specific study abroad info sessions (6 sessions throughout the year, 10+ attendees total)
- Short term program info sessions (4 sessions throughout the year, 10+ attendees total)
- A presentation on planning an international adventure (4 sessions throughout the year, 5+ attendees total)
- Waffle Walk in Wednesdays (weekly sessions throughout the year, 120+ attendees total)

New events will continue to be added in the following academic year to determine best practices and events that maximize student engagement.

## Education Abroad Advising

EA advising is done on a walk-in and appointment basis. Students are encouraged to attend an information session as well as meet with an advisor to explore programs and individual questions. Individual advising sessions last between 30-45 minutes, depending on their questions. One-on-one meetings are an important method of connecting with interested students. Virtual offerings continued to supplement in-office appointments.

## Pre-Departure Orientations

The pre-departure orientation continue to be online asynchronous experiences with information to prepare students for their overseas experiences. The pre-departure orientation is comprehensive, covering things like health and safety, banking, communication, culture, education, and travel best practices. The orientation was augmented with several optional emergency contact and participant virtual sessions that were interactive and meant to be an open forum for students and guardians to ask questions to EA staff.

## Faculty/Staff-directed Programming: Short-term Program Leader Information Sessions

One-on-one meetings occurred to discuss the process over the past year. Topics include the following:

- Overview of the process
- Compensation and budget
- The planning processes
- Responsibilities of the program leader and IA
- Program providers
- The proposal forms

In response to these sessions, the forms and resources for faculty and staff have been updated and aligned with best practices and procedures, and guidelines of other CU-system schools.

### Education Abroad International Partnerships

Below is a summary of UCCS bilateral exchanges. The balancing of these exchange agreements remains a challenge as there is increased interest in sending students to UCCS rather than UCCS students going abroad on these programs. In addition, the support offered abroad is minimal and requires very independent and internationally savvy students to navigate the exchange partner institution.

#### **Institutional Bilateral Exchanges**

- Waseda University – Tokyo, Japan
- ICES Institute Catholique d'Etudes Superieures – La Roche-sur-Yon, France
- Radboud University Nijmegen – Nijmegen, Netherlands
- Loughborough University – Loughborough, United Kingdom
- University of Hertfordshire – Hatfield, United Kingdom
- Hankuk University of Foreign Studies – Seoul, South Korea
- Southern Institute of Technology – Invercargill, New Zealand (fee-paying exchange)
- NEW Engineering Specific Exchange Linköping University – Linköping, Sweden

#### **College of Business Exchanges**

- Frankfurt School of Finance and Management – Frankfurt, Germany
- Cologne Business School – Cologne, Germany
- MCI Management Center Innsbruck – Innsbruck, Austria
- Munich Business School – Munich, Germany

### Funding and Scholarships

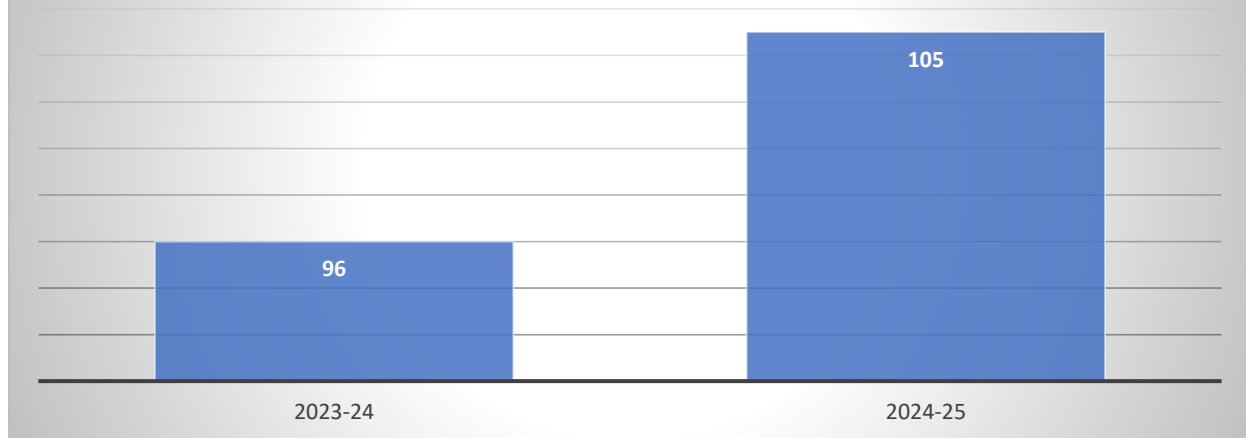
IA continues to pursue and consider opportunities for external scholarship funding. To date, there has been no internal, university-wide scholarship funding source identified to help fund study abroad scholarships. Ad-hoc scholarships have been given to students by individual departments and funds, but no consistency has been established. The Gilman Scholarship program is administered by the US Department of State to support undergraduate students with high financial need, specifically those receiving a Federal Pell Grant. Receiving a Gilman Scholarship is prestigious, and Gilman scholars are eligible for noncompetitive eligibility hiring status with the federal government.

UCCS consistently sees 1-2 Gilman recipients each year.

### UCCS Short-term Programs Abroad

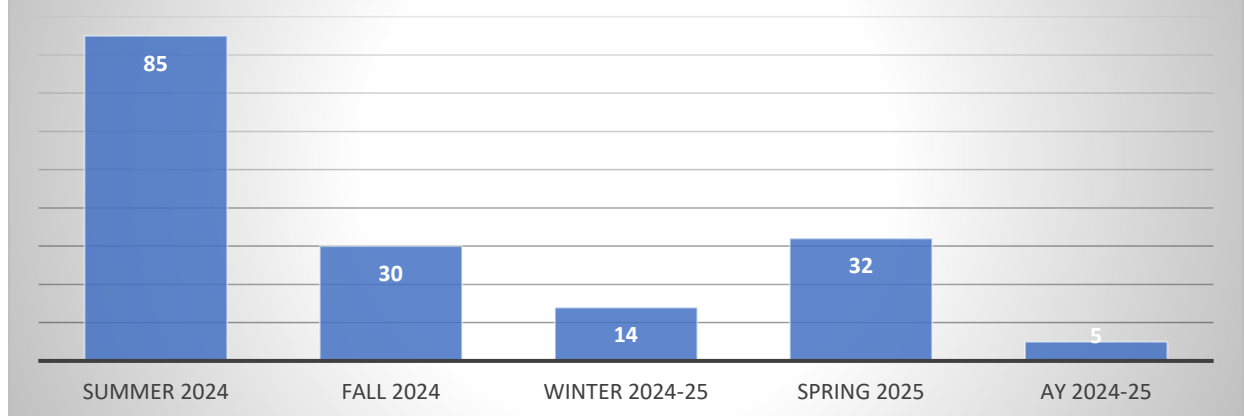
This reporting cycle reflects the impacts of the continued efforts to align UCCS short-term programs with best practices related to guidelines, procedures, and policies. These efforts encompass both student groups and faculty/staff-directed programs.

## UCCS Short-term programs Year-on-Year



As prior discussions and the above chart indicate, short-term programming remains an area in which UCCS students have a strong interest. A centralized approach to the faculty/staff-led program development and proposal process continues to benefit study abroad program participation and helps campus officials ensure administrative practices such as risk management.

## Total Participants by Term



This year, short-term programming accounts for a smaller percentage of education abroad participation at UCCS, though it is an area necessary to continue to invest in. Future efforts to accelerate this momentum should include considerations such as:

- Incorporating costs/fees into students' accounts for ease of use
- Providing access to financial aid and assistance for non-traditional education abroad programs, such as faculty-directed programs.
- Outreach to student groups who demonstrate strong interest: The support of IA regarding logistics and enrollment may help to boost participation by additional groups that could further the success of UCCS education abroad programs overall.



#### 2024-2025 Short-term Programs:

- Business and Culture in Cologne, Germany
- UCCS Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Senior Design Program in Sweden/Poland/Czech Republic
- UCCS Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Senior Design Program in East Africa
- UCCS Practicum in Languages and Literacy in France
- Japanese Language and Culture in Japan
- Literature in England
- Psychology in France
- Service Learning in Guatemala

#### Future UCCS Short-term Programs: Summer 2025 – Spring 2026 Anticipated Programs

- Japanese Language and Culture in Japan – Summer 2025
- Gender Politics in Italy – Summer 2025
- Luxury and Sustainability in France – Summer 2025
- Practicum in Language and Literacy in France – Summer 2025
- Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering Senior Design Program in Sweden – Fall 2025
- Business in Japan – Winter 2025-26
- Computer Science in S. Korea – Winter 2025-26
- SAHE in Japan – Winter 2025-26
- SOLE in Costa Rica – Spring 2026
- Business and Culture in Berlin, Germany – Spring 2026

#### Moving Forward in Education Abroad

The future of Education Abroad at UCCS continues to be very promising. EA is rebuilding and moving forward, establishing groundwork to increase participation rates. The world is vast, and cultural understanding and the need to learn and be united globally are never more evident. International Affairs continues to believe the future will be bright, and learning opportunities abroad for UCCS students will continue to be a priority and interest.

Presenting the idea of education abroad at an early stage in a student's career at UCCS and developing a diversity of short-term and non-traditional experiences will continue to be the two areas of focus and growth. Furthering communications for pre-first year students and the coordinating with the admissions team to promote education abroad early on will help students not only find programs that fit their needs but also ensure they are aware of their options with enough time for planning and approval.

To focus efforts, below is a summary of goals moving forward for next year:

- Maintaining online versions of important outreach tools to continue to connect with students in addition to in-person methods.
- Continuing to strengthen interdepartmental partnerships and offering cross-departmental marketing opportunities.
- Furthering reporting efforts and data collection on education abroad participants.

- Monitoring and evaluating the safety of programming abroad for students as more and more countries become accessible.
- Increasing the short-term programming available to students.
- Open up more exchange opportunities with established partners.

## International Student Services

The primary functions of the International Student and Scholar Program Manager (ISSPM) include providing immigration advising, developing programming, and coordinating campus-wide immigration compliance and support efforts for international students and scholars. The primary functions of the International Student and Scholar Program Director (ISSPD) include interfacing with all relevant governmental agencies, staying current on federal regulations and developments in international education, providing advanced immigration advising, and maintaining university compliance so that UCCS can continue to host international students and scholars on F and J visas. These efforts are essential to both student success and institutional compliance with the federal regulations that allow UCCS to host international students and scholars.

In addition to serving international students effectively, the ISSS section of the office contributes to campus internationalization by helping campus staff and faculty be better informed and more knowledgeable about the international student population, student needs, and the rules and regulations pertaining to international students.

The ISSPM and ISSPD roles are responsible for all tasks within the J-1 Exchange Visitor Scholar program for UCCS. The J-1 scholar program makes it possible for exchange students to attend as well as temporary researchers, instructors, and professors to be on site at UCCS for collaborative activities under the sponsorship of a UCCS department.

## International Student Numbers and Profile

The international student population at UCCS includes students in F-1 and J-1 student status, as well as other non-immigrant visa types that allow study in the U.S., including L-2, H-4, and other statuses. It does not include students who do not have a legal status in the U.S. allowing study (i.e., undocumented students).

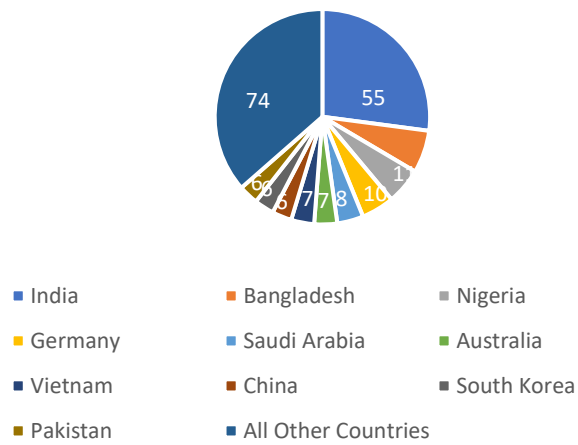
Enrollment among international students at UCCS increased slightly over the past year. For the Fall 2024 semester, there were 203 students, compared to 189 in the Fall 2023 semester. Overall, the international student population at UCCS is still significantly less compared to prior years, which is partly due to external factors outside the university such as improved educational quality in students' home countries, increasing competition among other countries to attract international students and home/host country politics that influence student mobility.

The diversity of the UCCS international student population is demonstrated by the fact that 54 different countries were represented on campus in Fall 2024. The top countries represented by population count were India (55), Bangladesh (13), Nigeria (11), Germany (10), Saudi Arabia (8), Australia (7), Vietnam (7), China (6), South Korea (6), and Pakistan (6).

To the right is a visual representation of the top countries represented at UCCS in Fall 2024 by population count:

The majority of international students at UCCS are degree-seeking and hold F-1 status, meaning they are typically here for a longer timeframe to complete their UCCS degrees. The Fall 2024 count shows that 40.9% of all international students are studying in undergraduate programs, while 59.1% are studying in graduate programs.

International Students by Country (Fall 2024)  
Top 10



The graphs below show the breakdown of international students in Fall 2024 by degree level and students' year of study:

**Total Graduate:**

Master's

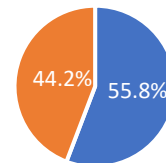
Doctoral

**120**

67

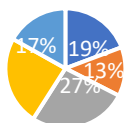
53

Graduate Students



■ Masters ■ Doctoral

Undergraduate Students



■ Freshman ■ Sophomore ■ Junior  
■ Senior ■ Non-Degree

**Total Undergraduate:**

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

**81**

15

26

18

22

**Non-Degree**

Exchange

Undergraduate non-degree

**14**

7

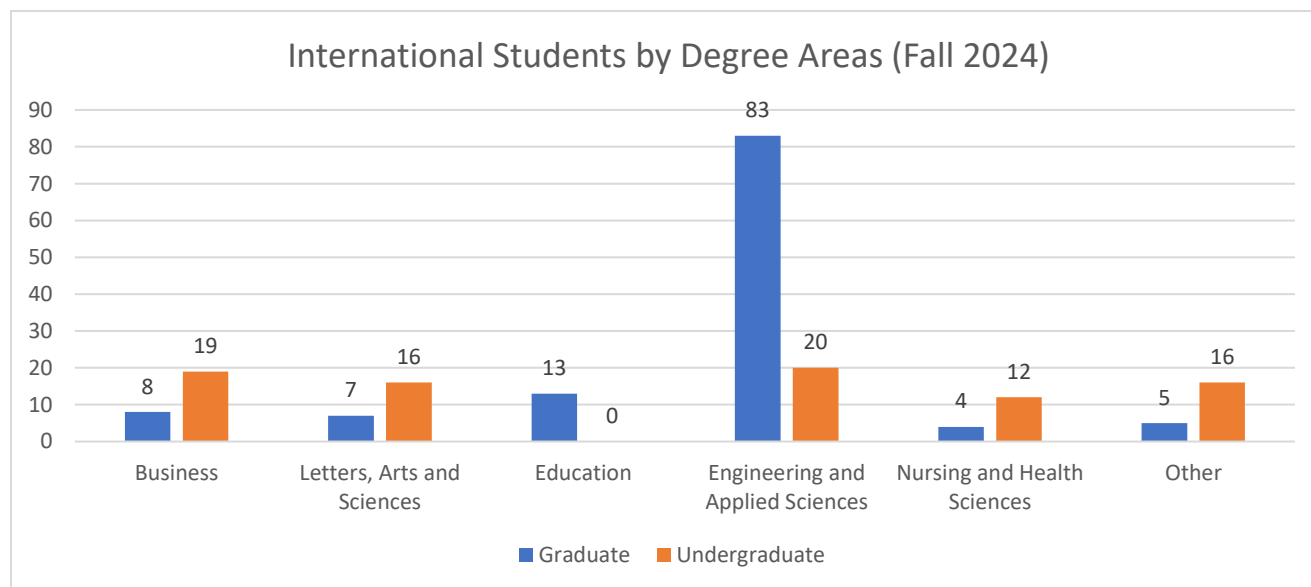
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*NOTE: All numbers come from the Fall 2024 Open Doors data as reported to the Institute for International Education following that report's protocol.*

The political environment and changes to the various foreign government scholarship programs that bring students to the U.S. continue to negatively impact international student enrollment at UCCS and elsewhere. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have had strong government scholarship programs in the past, but these programs have changed. In particular, the Saudi Arabian program has seen severe policy changes and subsequent declines in student numbers at UCCS as well as other U.S. schools.

The chart and graph below show the degree areas where international students are found at UCCS:

International Students by College Fall 2024	Graduate	Undergraduate	Total
Business	8	19	27
Letters, Arts and Sciences	7	16	23
Education	13	0	13
Engineering and Applied Sciences	83	20	103
Nursing and Health Sciences	4	12	16
Public Service	4	2	6
Exchange and Non-degree	1	14	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>203</b>



### Advising Services for International Students

IA places a strong emphasis on international student retention, success, and both student and institutional compliance. In addition, IA prioritizes ensuring that international students are well-supported and served throughout their time at UCCS. UCCS is similar to other small public institutions with comparable enrollment numbers, where international student advising is a full-time position at minimum.

The advising services consist of:

- Daily immigration advising available to international students by appointment (virtual or in-person) and walk-in.

- Communication protocol – responses to questions via email or phone are provided within the same business day in most cases. A proactive communication plan includes a bi-weekly e-newsletter, regular direct emails on mission-critical IA issues, programs, and events, and timely updates on relevant UCCS information.
- A schedule of workshops offered on topics of interest and need for the population.
- A dedicated webpage containing all forms needed for the most common student requests; and
- A quick turnaround time for student requests and applications, such as for changes to student immigration documents, requests for an office letter to assist with Social Security Number (SSN) applications, requests for a signature on immigration documents for travel, all of which are typically processed within 1-2 business days and often the same day.

Perhaps the most important function within ISSS is immigration advising. This function assists students in maintaining compliance with U.S. regulations and completing the mandatory federal reporting required for UCCS to host international students and scholars. Many aspects of international student life are tied to immigration-related components. Staying current with U.S. regulations, changes, and proposed changes is critical. The program manager and program director liaise with the Department of Homeland Security and Department of State as needed. IA staff are authorized officials required to use the SEVIS database to report required information and monitor international students at UCCS. Continuing education and training are essential to remain current on evolving immigration regulations and trends that directly affect students. As a result of these proactive advising and compliance measures, UCCS maintained 100% SEVP certification with no violations or compliance errors during the 2024–2025 academic year.

By ‘advising,’ this report refers to two basic functions of the program manager and program director roles:

- Proactively keeping students informed about immigration regulations, compliance, and changes through presentations, workshops, emails, and newsletters.
- Working with students individually and in groups to address concerns and questions as needed and requested.

Advising in both senses begins pre-arrival and continues throughout a student’s time at UCCS, often extending beyond graduation. Institutional interpretations of the various regulations pertaining to F-1 and J-1 students and scholars have been formalized and are in place on all IA forms and informational materials, including the website.

### OPT Advising for Former Students

The ISSPD continues to dedicate a significant amount of time to advising former UCCS students who hold F-1 status while on OPT (Optional Practical Training). At the time of this report (June 2025), IA is actively monitoring 37 OPT students compared to an enrolled international population of approximately 183, demonstrating the significant compliance workload carried beyond active enrollment.

OPT advising for specific cases typically begins in a student’s final semester. Attendance at an OPT workshop is required as an introduction to the process and regulations. In the

final semester, the student applies to USCIS with an I-20 issued by the ISSPD recommending permission. If eligible, the student is granted one year of work permission tied to their major. STEM graduates maintaining compliance may apply for an additional 24-month STEM Extension OPT, which carries even stricter reporting and monitoring requirements that IA manages.

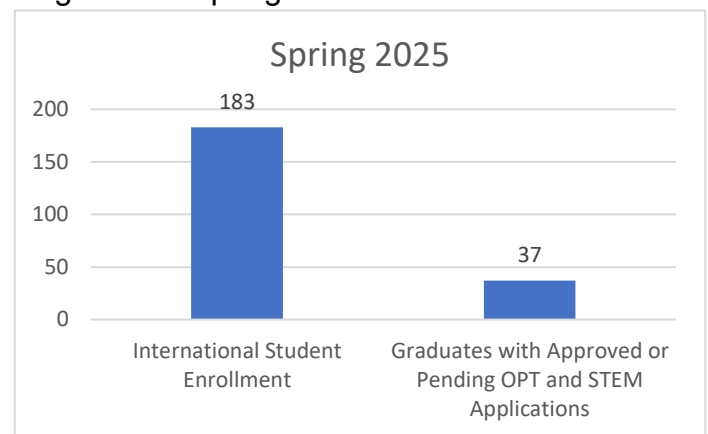
OPT can also be requested during a student's program before graduation, though this is rare. Initial OPT advising and STEM applications are time-intensive, requiring personalized appointments and significant case management.

### Spring 2025 Summary

Below is an outline of data points and associated figures for Spring 2025:

- International student enrollment – **183**
- Graduates with approved or pending OPT and STEM OPT applications, no longer UCCS students – **37**

The graph on the right is a visual representation of student enrollment and graduates with approved or pending OPT and STEM OPT applications:



### CPT Advising for Current Students

A second type of employment authorization is CPT, which stands for Curricular Practical Training. CPT is available to students whose degree program requires an internship or for whom an internship can be completed as a for-credit component of their degree. In either case, CPT can be authorized by the ISSPM or ISSPD, and the student can then complete the internship off-campus, paid or unpaid.

By regulation, CPT requires that an internship be an integral part of an established program. To comply with federal regulations, IA authorizes CPT only if the internship is a requirement of the degree program or if it is an optional for-credit component available to all students in the program.

In the Spring 2025 semester, one continuing UCCS international student had CPT authorization, while eight students were authorized for Summer 2025. IA maintains strict oversight of all CPT placements to ensure each one meets federal requirements and protects institutional compliance.

### Taxation

U.S. taxation is a difficult area in which advising for international students and scholars is needed. However, IA staff are not tax advisors and cannot advise students on their U.S. tax reporting obligations except in general terms to avoid institutional liability. International students do have tax reporting obligations and are responsible for fulfilling those obligations. As the immigration arena becomes increasingly strict in the U.S. political environment, helping students and scholars understand and fulfill their compliance requirements becomes even more important.



For the 2024 tax year (with tax returns due in April 2025), the CU International Tax Office, located in Denver, provided licenses to a tax software product called Sprintax to nonresident F and J visa students and employees. IA served as the communication bridge between UCCS students and the CU International Tax Office, sharing instructions, deadlines, and access information for Sprintax. While the software seems to be helpful, the licenses only offer free services for federal tax returns, leaving our students and scholars to pay out of pocket for state tax filing. Overall, the educational materials and customer support that are available through Sprintax prove to be extremely beneficial to our international students and scholars.

### [Advising on Immigration Updates and U.S. Executive Orders](#)

The number of immigration updates regarding events in the U.S. political arena remained relatively minimal at the beginning of the academic year and then increased substantially in January 2025 when the new administration took office. The ISSPD monitored Presidential Proclamations and Executive Orders that affected the international student and scholar population, notified students and scholars via email of the impact and updated the “Immigration Updates” section of the IA website. Some of the direct impacts included travel bans, suspension of visa issuance, and enforcement of existing regulations that were not previously enforced by prior administrations.

In late March 2025 through early April 2025, the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) began mass-terminating SEVIS records of F-1 international students, which affected approximately 4,700 students nationwide, and cited that students were identified in a criminal records check or that they posed a threat to national security. The SEVIS record terminations included those with minor or dismissed offenses. Within days, countless lawsuits and restraining orders were filed in federal courts across the country. Federal judges criticized the actions as arbitrary, lacking due process, and legally questionable. In late April, ICE began restoring SEVIS records to active status but because the Department of State revoked many of the visas associated with the SEVIS record terminations, students who left the U.S. were unable to reenter. UCCS had four students impacted by the SEVIS record terminations. There continues to be on-going uncertainties because ICE has noted it reserves the right to terminate records for noncompliance, but only under a newly drafted and official policy.

Advising for the students impacted by the SEVIS record terminations was done in close collaboration with the Office of the Dean of Students and General Counsel. Advising and support continues for these students as they face uncertainties with their visa status.

In general, advising for all students was offered through virtual and in-person appointments, the bi-weekly electronic IA newsletter, as well as through direct email to all students. Advising students regarding political events and changes continues to be a priority going forward.

### [Full Service Advising](#)

As a full-service advising shop for students and scholars, continual tweaking of processes, schedules, and communication needs to be done to ensure students understand how best to utilize IA services. Information provided to new incoming students at the pre-arrival

stage and at orientation will continue to address this information as early as possible. The focus of the ISSPM and ISSPD is to implement clear, service-oriented, best-practice models for advising based upon standards in the field to ensure the most effective compliance practices for students and for the institution.

### Institutional Compliance and SEVP Certification

In 2022, the Principal Designated School Official position transferred from the prior Director of IA to the ISSPM. The ISSPM, in collaboration with the ISSPD, are responsible for UCCS compliance with the regulations relating to the F-1 program (international students on F-1 visas).

Compliance relates to several different aspects of the F-1 program:

- Ongoing university procedures and policies of working with international students regarding the requirements and benefits of their F-1 status and ensuring their compliance with the F-1 regulations.
- Working with university units to assist them in understanding the F-1 regulations that affect their students and their programs.
- Making sure that record-keeping and document management are handled in such a way as to be in compliance with the F-1 regulations.
- Submitting any needed updates in relation to UCCS information and programs to the U.S. government agency (SEVP) that oversees the F-1 program.
- Submitting a recertification application and supporting information and documentation every 2-3 years, as required by SEVP. Recertification was filed in February 2024, approved in April 2024, and is valid through 5/26/2026.
- Submitting re-designation materials for the exchange program with the Department of State every two years. Re-designation was approved in April 2025 and is valid through 4/21/2027.

### International Student Information Management System

The ISSS staff (along with Admissions) uses Sunapsis, which acts as a go-between for the CU-SIS system, and SEVIS, the federal database used to monitor F-1 and J-1 students, scholars, and dependents. This system has been in place since February 2019 for all CU campuses. Updates and configurations continue to be implemented over time and are the responsibility of the technology team at UIS in Denver, in coordination with the UCCS IA and Admissions staff. Testing and individual configurations for the UCCS campus (to reflect UCCS policies and practices) have been taken on by the ISSS staff in IA along with the school officials who use Sunapsis for Admissions to issue initial I-20s, with assistance from UIS.

### The IA Website

The IA website, which uses a system called Drupal, is updated by the staff within the IA Office. More complex edits still require the assistance of the website team at UCCS Office of Information Technology.

An area that continues to need updating to reflect changes is the Forms page containing request forms and information handouts. A significant challenge for the ISSS area of the web pages is to reflect the use of Sunapsis. Since this includes some substantial

variations to how students can submit requests and interact with the IA staff, these changes are still being considered. The use of Sunapsis in this way would require additional resources and technical knowledge.

### Document Management

Document management is a major part of compliance for the ISSS staff in that documentation for international students has to be rigorously and consistently acquired and retained to maintain compliance with federal regulations. Document management for international students is maintained in the systems used by Admissions (OnBase) and International Affairs (Sunapsis).

On a daily basis, the ISSPM and ISSPD work with the following systems in order to fulfill the basic functions of the position:

- SEVIS – The U.S. government database to monitor international student and scholar information
- PeopleSoft (CU-SIS) – the CU student information system where enrollment and academic information, address and contact information, and financial information are all stored
- MS Office products
- Adobe products

In addition, the positions more irregularly use Drupal to update the webpages and OnBase to access needed documentation (usually from the admissions process) for current UCCS international students.

Having a good technology setup and the ability to work with all the software packages required for the ISSS functions is critical due to the following needs:

- To efficiently manage student advising.
- To systematize documentation (including advising notes) and documentation retention to meet institutional and government requirements.
- To keep students and the campus informed in a timely manner of changes to IA or UCCS policies, USCIS updates, and forms with website updates.
- To be able to add outside sources of information to the IA webpages, as well as orientation session materials, workshops, etc., to keep our students and the campus informed.

### ISSS Programming

Fall 2024 workshop and events attendance increased when compared to Fall 2023, with increased attendance compared to prior years, due largely to the hybrid (remote and in-person simultaneously) options for students to attend many events. IA continued to host informational workshops with students and scholars to provide timely immigration updates and answer any student questions on specific topics in addition to community building and more fun events.

From Fall 2024 to Spring 2025, the main initiatives included International Orientation, the Mayor's Reception, IA Annual Cook-Off, and the F.A.M (First-generation and Multicultural) Graduation Celebration (see a full description of these events below).

### International Student Orientation (Fall and Spring)

The Director of Orientation and New Student Outreach coordinates International Orientation in collaboration with IA and other university departments. This collaboration is effective and continually being evaluated and tweaked. Though IA is not the main office responsible for this programming, it is an important element because it is mission-critical by serving as the 'SEVIS Reporting' session.

The main orientation programming consists of mini sessions such as Welcome to UCCS, SEVIS Reporting, Scholarship and Tuition Payments, Campus and Resource Tour, and discussion panel events. The SEVIS Reporting session required of all new international students. The ISSA leads the SEVIS Reporting session in person during International Orientation because it is essential in the compliance of our university hosting international students. Federal laws and regulations require the Designated School Official (DSO) to update and maintain the SEVIS records of nonimmigrant students in F visa categories. The check-in process also includes collecting, scanning, and storing immigration documents for all newly enrolled international students, which was done via email. Attendance to International Orientation includes new incoming degree-seeking students (both graduate and undergraduate), returning students beginning new degree programs, new exchange students, and other international students in statuses other than F-1/J-1.

Every fall, orientation programming begins the Wednesday preceding the start of classes. Over 40 students attended the Fall 2024 International Orientation. Thursday and Friday following the main orientation date, there are many UCCS events for students to attend. The events offered by IA included a ride the city bus to downtown lunch and shopping trip, a game night with iBuddy, and a transition support event for all new students.

Orientation in spring semesters is held on the Friday before classes begin. 12 students attended International Orientation in Spring 2025. This semester, after orientation, IA hosted a game night for all new international students. The Saturday following the Spring 2025 orientation, IA hosted 'Ride the City Bus and Downtown Shopping Trip' for the incoming students. Finally, on Sunday before classes, IA hosted a brunch for all international students to get to know each other and start to build connections with the new students.

### Workshops

This year, workshops continued to be focused on the areas of greatest interest and need, primarily OPT and work authorization. Sessions on other areas, such as health insurance, Social Security Numbers, Curricular Practical Training/Academic Training, and driver's licenses, and car buying, were also held this academic year. Advising on all these topics also occurs in direct advising in response to student inquiries and through email and website updates to the entire student population. Students are welcome to submit ideas for new workshops as well. Overall, hybrid workshops continue to offer a preferred and flexible option for the international student and scholar population at UCCS.

The following table lists the workshops and events offered in the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters, which offered in a variety of formats, including virtual, in-person or hybrid.

- **June 2024**
  - 6/12: Summer Hike

- 6/26: World of Games Night
- **July 2024**
  - 7/24: Game Night
- **August 2024**
  - 8/14: Bangladesh Healing Circle
  - 8/21: Ride the City Bus Event
  - 8/23: Game Night
  - 8/24: Flavors Without Borders Event
  - 8/30: iBuddy Movie Night
- **September 2024**
  - 9/5: Driver's License & Car Buying Workshop
  - 9/12: Health Insurance in the US Workshop
  - 9/18: CPT Workshop
  - 9/27: iBuddy Hike
- **October 2024**
  - 10/12: Mayor's Reception
  - 10/17: Dating & Sex Culture Event (with MOSAIC)
  - 10/18: iBuddy Chocolate Cupcake Celebration
- **November 2024**
  - ○ 11/19: Virtual OPT Workshop
  - ○ 11/19: Mock Interviews
  - ○ 11/19: Internship Info Session
  - ○ 11/19: International Alumni Panel
  - ○ 11/19: Immigration Attorney
  - ○ 11/19: International Leverage
  - ○ 11/21: Around the Globe Panel
  - ○ 11/22: iBuddy Game Night
  - Letter writing session with MOSAIC
- **December 2024**
  - 12/5: Acclimating to US Culture Series Finale
  - 12/13: iBuddy Craft & Study Session
  - 12/22: FAM Graduation Celebration
- **January 2025**
  - 1/17: International Student Orientation
  - 1/19: International Orientation Brunch
  - 1/21–2/5: Freecycle Giveaway
  - 1/24: Game Night & Pizza
  - 1/25: City Bus to Downtown Excursion
  - 1/28: Health Insurance in the US Workshop
  - 1/29: Wellness in the US Workshop
- **February 2025**
  - 2/4: Internship Information Session
  - 2/5: Driver's License & Car Buying Workshop
  - 2/7: OPT Workshop #1
  - 2/10: Current Trends in US Dating Life (Live Streamed)
  - 2/11: ISSS Book Club Meeting #1

- 2/12: OPT Workshop #2
- 2/13: OPT Workshop #3
- 2/14: iBuddy Movie Night
- 2/25: ISSS Book Club Meeting #2
- **March 2025**
  - 3/4: Periods and Period Products Event with MOSAIC
  - 3/11: ISSS Book Club Meeting #3
  - 3/21: Annual (Soup) Cook-Off
  - 3/26: Garden of the Gods Hike
- **April 2025**
  - 4/4: EID After Party
  - 4/18: iBuddy Movie Night
  - 4/22: ISSS Book Club Meeting #4
  - 4/29: Healing Circle #1
- **May 2025**
  - 5/1: Healing Circle #2
  - 5/2: Hike to Tava Trail
  - 5/6: Book Club Movie Night Finale
  - 5/7: FAM Graduation

### Mayor's Reception

On October 12, 2024, the ISSPM, along with 6 international students and scholars from UCCS, attended the Mayor's Reception to honor international students. Mayor Yemi Mobolade (pictured on the right) and members of the community were present to welcome international students from all of Colorado Springs's institutions.

### iBuddy Meetings

The ISSPM serves as the Staff Advisor for the International Buddy (iBuddy) student club. Due to iBuddy club president turnover, there has not been a constant interest in the club.







### Annual Cook-Off

IA hosted the third Annual Cook-Off event on March 21, 2025, with over 45 people in attendance. This year's competition featured soup, a beloved dish found in cuisines across the globe, with entries representing Vietnam, India, Bangladesh, and Poland. Soups are a versatile and culturally significant food, with each country and region offering its own unique variations. UCCS students entered the cooking competition with recipes from their home countries, and attendees sampled each dish before voting for their favorite.

### Waffle Walk-In Wednesdays

In Fall 2024, ISSS transitioned from monthly Coffee Hours to hosting Waffle Walk-In Wednesdays in collaboration with Education Abroad, creating a weekly open-door event for the entire International

Affairs Office. These sessions offered students a chance to drop in, enjoy fresh waffles, and receive “sweet solutions” to their questions and concerns. This format fostered casual, approachable conversations while connecting students to IA resources. The events were held every Wednesday throughout each fall and spring semester, making them a consistent touchpoint for international students and scholars.

Waffle Walk-In Wednesdays replaced the traditional Coffee Hours due to higher engagement and better alignment with student schedules. Instead of focusing on one topic per month, these weekly sessions addressed a wide range of questions in real time, making it easier for students to get timely support without waiting for specific workshops or individual advising appointments.

### First-Generation and Multicultural Graduation Celebration

This event is co-hosted by IA, the Multicultural Office for Student Access, Inclusiveness, and Community and LGBTQ+ Resource Center, Pre-Collegiate Support and Success Center and Student and Family Connections each May and December. IA specifically celebrates students in the following categories:

- Graduate and undergraduate students completing a degree that semester
- Departing exchange students
- Departing scholars
- Education Abroad students who completed their study abroad program

The program for this event includes welcome remarks, a special guest speaker, recognition of the honorees, special recognitions, and thank-you's, along with an informal reception. Students in the above categories are honored with a special 'Global Learners' cord to wear at graduation. The ISSPM implemented these cords for the first time in December 2022 and will continue to give out these cords each semester in the future. These cords are for those who choose to be global learners. They are green and blue to represent the colors of the earth, with a small world pin to remind each student of their



great accomplishments at UCCS. For the 2024-2025 academic year, 28 global learner cords were awarded.

### Summer Programming

Starting in the Summer of 2023, the ISSPM began hosting summer events to build connections and community for international students throughout the summer. Events and programming are crucial throughout the summer for international students because they often remain in Colorado Springs while many domestic students leave, leading to increased isolation and a lack of community engagement opportunities. These programs provide vital social connections, cultural integration, and support systems during a period when they might otherwise feel particularly isolated and disconnected. The following events occurred in the Summer of 2024:

- Summer Hike 1 - June 12, 2024
- World of Games Night - June 26, 2024
- Summer Hike 2 - July 17, 2024
- Movie Night - July 31, 2024

### ISSS Communications

ISSS follows a strict communication plan each semester to ensure students and scholars are receiving information and updates in a timely manner. This plan includes weekly emails and bi-weekly newsletters to all international students and scholars. Weekly emails include immigration-focused updates, reminders for travel signatures, and UCCS-related information that is important for international students and scholars. At the same time, the newsletters contain important immigration updates as well as IA events and events from around the UCCS campus and the community.

### Friends of Internationals Email List

The 'Friends of Internationals' list consists of about 95 community members, UCCS faculty and staff, domestic students, and international scholars. Community members both within and outside of UCCS that support International Affairs' efforts and the students and scholars the office serves can be added to this list.

Electronic newsletters are sent bi-weekly to everyone on the Friends of Internationals list, in addition to international students. Contributions to the newsletter from these friends and community members are welcomed and included in the newsletter.

The Friends of Internationals list continues to be the core resource for IA to share communication with about international student issues. Positive feedback from recipients is often received after they have had a chance to view the electronic newsletters that are sent to the international student and scholar population. Contributions to the newsletter from these friends are also welcome and included in the newsletter for international students. International Affairs' relationship with the campus and community is integral to the success of the office and international student/scholar support.

### Liaising with Other University Units

By virtue of the responsibilities of the ISSS staff, IA interacts with various other university units in the course of fulfilling our responsibilities: Graduate School, Registrar, Admissions, Compliance, Academic Advising, Bursar, and a few academic units are the units we deal

with most often. It has become apparent that the campus community recognizes the ISSA and ISPM roles to be ‘the points of contact’ to communicate and collaborate on questions and issues relating to international students’ unique needs and responsibilities at UCCS. The relationship of the ISSA and ISPM to these various individuals and units continues to be excellent. More outreaches could continue to build and improve these relationships.

The importance of IA’s relationship with other university units cannot be overstated. It is critical that the advisor and program manager positions maintain a great working relationship with so many parties on campus. Without that, many of the essential functions of the ISSS unit become extremely difficult.

## Moving Forward in International Student and Scholar Services

### Challenges

Continuing to build up the international student population will pose a challenge since many of the factors impacting students’ ability to attend are external to the IA office. The international recruiter position within Admissions was eliminated so UCCS has not had a designated recruiter for international students since May 2023. Currently, Admissions does minimal recruiting of international students and focuses their efforts on international students who are already in the U.S. Although IA is not responsible for recruiting international students, the office provides support to the International Admissions team and prospective students’ questions and concerns. Retention of international students is generally high, and most students who transfer to other universities do so because of location or a change in major or program. The IA Office prioritizes programming for international students and scholars as well as promoting various campus and local resources to ensure the international population feels connected and welcome.

The elimination of the administrative assistant position in May 2025 has created significant strain on IA’s ability to operate at the level required to serve students and maintain federal compliance. The loss of this role has resulted in the redistribution of essential administrative, communication, and event support tasks onto professional staff already managing full compliance and advising workload. Without dedicated administrative support, sustaining the current volume and quality of services will be increasingly challenging and places critical programming and federal reporting timelines at risk.

While the IA office celebrates record growth in participation and impact, it is important to acknowledge that this level of service was achieved with limited staffing and stretched resources. Continuing at this pace without additional support risks staff burnout and reduced capacity for future innovation. IA remains committed to excellence, but also advocates for sustainable growth models that protect the quality of student and scholar support.

It is expected that the next year will see lots of changes as a result of the new administration. Additional travel bans, visa restrictions and a higher level of scrutiny towards international students are likely. Navigating this uncertainty and reassuring international students will continue to pose some challenges for the office.

### Opportunities Going Forward

Further collaboration with other departments for events and programming will continue to be essential. IA was able to sponsor and co-sponsor several exceptional events that were especially enriching, engaging, and beneficial for the international students. IA staff are excited to continue collaborating with these departments and hopefully form new partnerships as well.

Another major opportunity is rebuilding operational capacity with the restoration of the administrative assistant position. The current workload placed on IA's professional staff to maintain compliance, advising, and programming is not sustainable long-term without dedicated administrative support. Reinstating this role would allow IA to continue meeting federal reporting requirements while expanding impactful programming for students.

Expanding professional development for faculty and staff also presents a key opportunity. Building on the success of the Teaching the Teachers: Enhancing Faculty and Staff Support for International Students workshop, IA plans to create ongoing training sessions and resources to strengthen institutional understanding of international student needs.

We look forward to another positive year of contributing to international student support, success, and retention at UCCS, as well as improving the internationalization of the campus. By strengthening cross-campus partnerships, advocating for necessary staffing, and leveraging strategic programming, IA is well-positioned to build on the record growth achieved in 2024–2025.

### Moving Forward as a Unit in International Education

IA continues to anticipate future challenges in the coming semesters due to the international nature of the office's work and the need to balance institutional, federal, and international impacts on programming and student mobility. International student enrollment and education abroad participation have already seen a resurgence as we continue to strive for pre-pandemic numbers. The advances made prior to the pandemic have become the baseline for future growth.

Building on the record participation levels achieved in 2024–2025, IA's priority will be sustaining this momentum while adapting to changing global, political, and institutional landscapes. The office will continue to strengthen partnerships across campus, advocate for critical staffing needs, and invest in innovative programming to meet the evolving needs of students and scholars.

With international recruitment resources reduced, IA will also focus on retention as a key strategy for maintaining and growing the international student population. Efforts to create a more seamless transition for incoming students and to foster belonging throughout their time at UCCS will be central to this work.

On the education abroad side, IA plans to expand faculty-led short-term programs and increase access to opportunities for underrepresented student groups. Leveraging the 12 anticipated programs for 2025–2026, the office is positioned to make UCCS a leader in short-term, high-impact education abroad experiences.

As a unit, IA will also continue to engage in professional contributions to the field of international education through conference presentations, workshops, and campus-wide training initiatives, ensuring UCCS is recognized as a leader in supporting international student success.