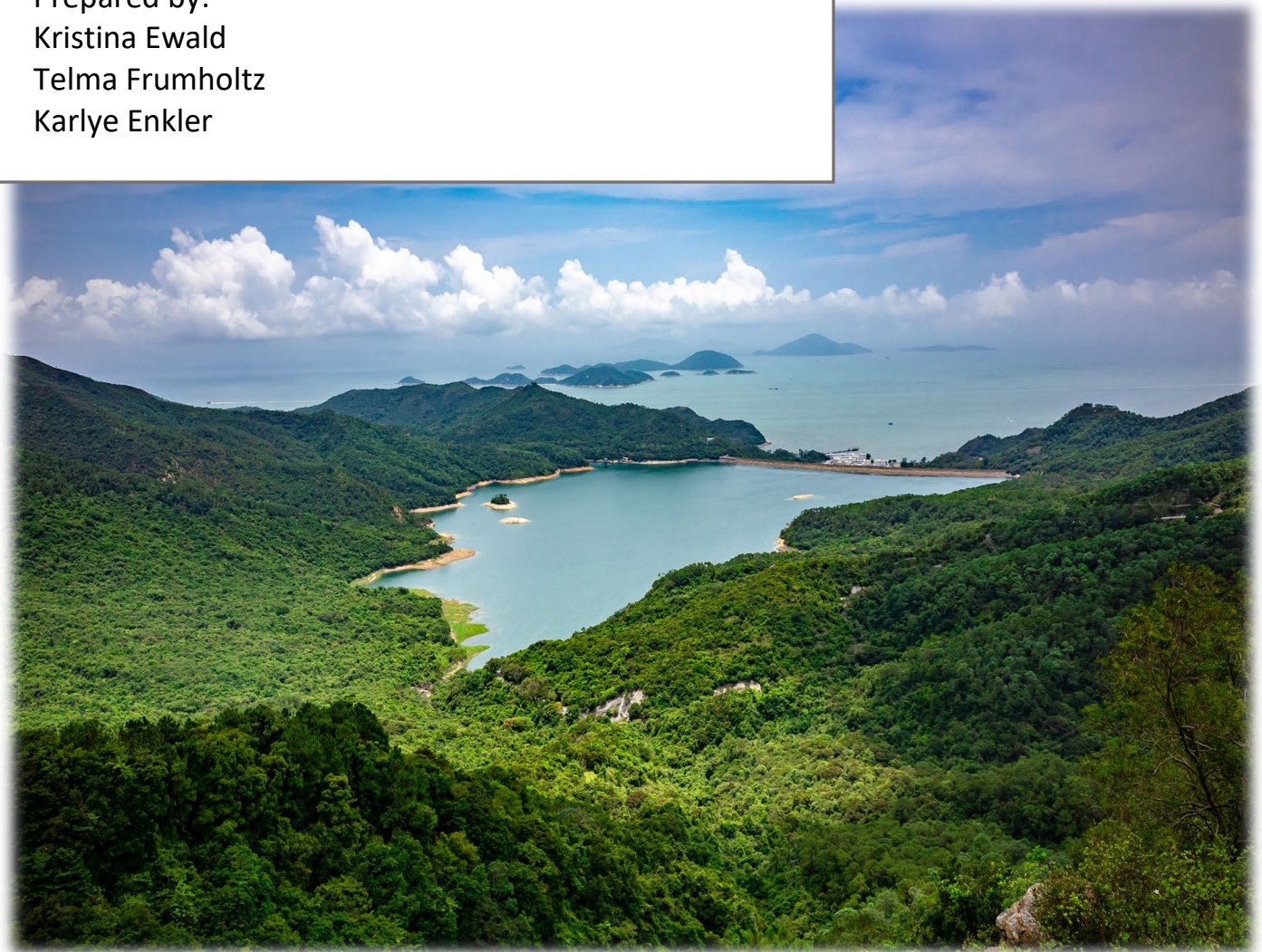


International Education Services 2025-2026 Annual Report

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Executive Summary

The 2025–2026 academic year was a year of significant achievement and organizational transition for international education at UCCS. Education Abroad (EA) reached record participation, International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) expanded student programming and engagement, and staff maintained critical federal immigration compliance and advising functions throughout the year. These accomplishments occurred alongside substantial organizational changes following the dissolution of the International Affairs (IA) Office and integration of EA and ISSS into MOSAIC.

Below is a summary of key 2025–2026 academic year highlights included in this report:

- UCCS hosted 21 international scholars from 15 countries and served 169 international students representing 44 countries.
- Engineering and Applied Sciences continued to represent the largest area of study among international students at UCCS.
- Education Abroad reached a record 209 participants across all terms and program types, continuing significant growth in education abroad participation at UCCS.
- ISSS offered 97 workshops and events with 967 participants, increasing from 79 programs and 736 participants during the previous academic year.
- EA and ISSS collectively offered 180 workshops and events with a cumulative attendance of 1,219 participants while continuing to provide both in-person and virtual advising, meetings, and programming.
- UCCS maintained federal compliance requirements for its international student and scholar programs, with ISSS continuing to provide immigration advising, federal reporting, and institutional compliance support.
- EA-related procedures and guidelines were further developed and implemented to align with CU System schools and established best practices, with support from senior leadership and international risk management.
- The dissolution of International Affairs and integration of EA and ISSS into MOSAIC significantly altered staffing, administrative support, organizational visibility, and staff responsibilities. Although staff maintained federal compliance and achieved significant programmatic successes throughout the transition, the restructuring reduced capacity for outreach and new program development and contributed to student confusion regarding the location and continuation of international education services.

Introduction

International education services at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) provide comprehensive support for international students, scholars, and education abroad participants. Education Abroad (EA) and International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) oversee federal immigration advising and compliance, education abroad advising, risk management, and a wide range of educational, cultural, and community-building programs that support student success and campus internationalization. Through these services, UCCS continues to provide students with individualized support while fostering global engagement across the university.

It is important to recognize that international education services at UCCS continue to operate within a relatively young international education framework compared to many peer institutions. Additionally, EA and ISSS operate with a small professional staff relative to comparable international education programs at higher education institutions throughout Colorado and the United States.

During the 2025–2026 academic year, the university completed a significant organizational restructuring that dissolved the International Affairs (IA) Office and integrated its functions into MOSAIC as Education Abroad and International Student and Scholar Services. This transition required substantial changes to operations, organizational identity, communication, and administrative processes while also reducing dedicated administrative support and expanding responsibilities for professional staff. Throughout this period of organizational change, EA and ISSS maintained federal compliance, sustained strong levels of programming and student engagement, and continued to expand partnerships and support services for the UCCS community.

International Affairs Office Historical Context

The history of international education at UCCS is marked by several key milestones that have shaped the development of the university's global engagement efforts.

In 2012, the International Affairs (IA) Office was officially established as a direct result of the UCCS 2020 Strategic Plan, which identified internationalization as a strategic priority for the institution. The office was created to provide centralized leadership and support for international education initiatives across campus.

Prior to 2018, the office operated under the name Global Engagement Office (GEO), reflecting the university's commitment to expanding international opportunities and fostering global competency across campus. In the summer of 2018, the office was renamed International Affairs to better reflect the breadth of its responsibilities and services.

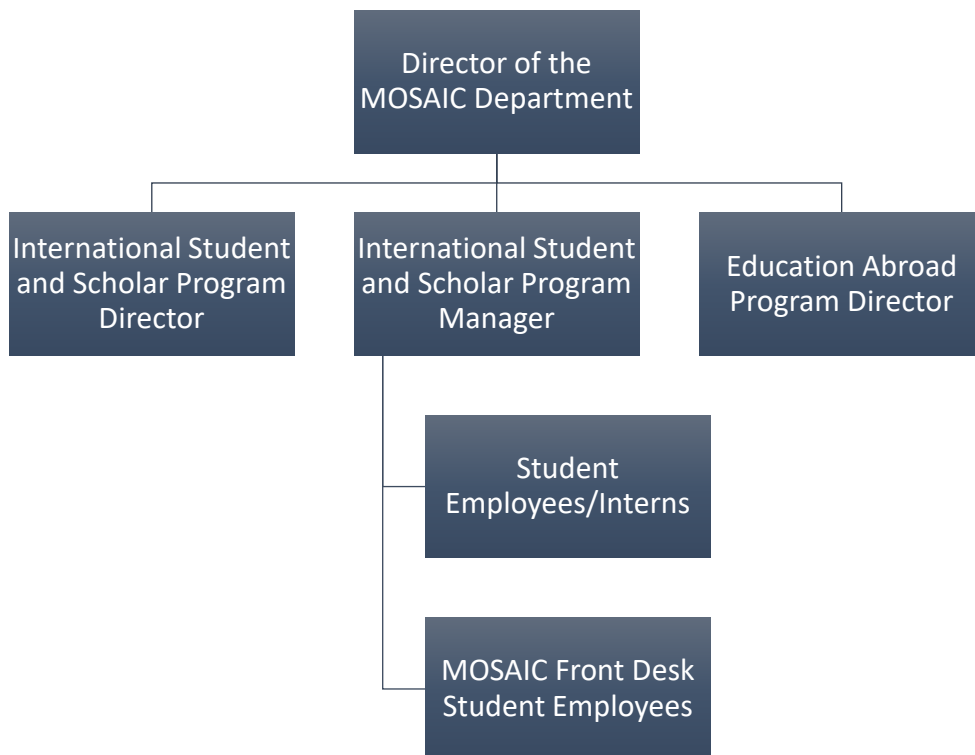
In July 2022, IA underwent an organizational realignment as part of broader efforts to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and internationalization at UCCS. As part of this transition, the office became part of the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI),

creating opportunities for collaboration and alignment with institutional belonging and inclusion initiatives.

In July 2025, the International Affairs Office was formally dissolved as a standalone department, and its functions were integrated into MOSAIC. As part of this transition, international education services were separated into two functional areas: Education Abroad (EA) and International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS). While the International Affairs name is no longer used as an official departmental designation, its core international education functions continue through these two areas.

Current Organizational Structure

Following the July 2025 reorganization, EA and ISSS became part of MOSAIC, which is housed within the Enrollment Management & Student Affairs (EMSA) Division. The organizational chart below displays the reporting structure for Education Abroad and International Student and Scholar Services within MOSAIC.



The International Student and Scholar Program Manager (ISSPM) supervises the student employees and interns supporting EA and ISSS, as well as the MOSAIC Front Desk student employees. Student employees and interns supporting EA and ISSS assist with advising support, programming, communications, event coordination, and office operations related to international education services based in Copper House. MOSAIC Front Desk student employees provide front-line customer service and administrative support for the broader MOSAIC department in the University Center.

While direct supervision is housed within the ISSPM position, staff members across EA and ISSS collaborate in the training, mentorship, and professional development of international education student employees and interns. This collaborative approach helps ensure continuity of services and provides student employees with experience across multiple areas of international education.

The July 2025 restructuring significantly changed the organizational and staffing structure supporting international education at UCCS. The dissolution of International Affairs eliminated the standalone departmental structure and dedicated administrative support previously available to EA and ISSS, while professional staff assumed additional responsibilities within MOSAIC. Despite these changes, EA and ISSS maintained federal compliance, continued substantial levels of student programming and engagement, and expanded partnerships and student support initiatives throughout the 2025–2026 academic year.

Office Visits and Event Attendance

ISSS and EA continued to operate in a hybrid format, allowing for in-person and remote functions and meetings to accommodate flexibility. From June 2025 through May 2026, EA and ISSS offered 180 workshops and events with a cumulative attendance of 1,219 participants.

During the 2024–2025 academic year, prior to the dissolution of International Affairs, event attendance had more than doubled from the previous year, increasing from 732 to a record 1,548 participants. During 2025–2026, following the organizational restructuring and integration of EA and ISSS into MOSAIC, attendance decreased by approximately 21% to 1,219 participants.

The 2025–2026 decline occurred during a year of significant organizational transition in which International Affairs was dissolved, dedicated administrative support was eliminated, and professional staff absorbed additional responsibilities associated with the integration into MOSAIC. These changes reduced staff capacity for outreach, new program development, and other engagement activities and created some confusion among students regarding international education services. Despite these challenges, staff continued to maintain core advising, compliance, programming, and student support functions throughout the transition.

Staff conducted 352 individual advising appointments and walk-in visits from June 2025 through May 2026, compared with 407 during 2024–2025 and 557 during 2023–2024. The decline in one-on-one advising also reflects an intentional shift toward expanding targeted workshops, informational sessions, and group programming designed to address common questions and provide students with timely information in a more efficient format. By proactively delivering information through workshops and events, students were able to access guidance without always requiring an individual appointment. This approach allowed EA and ISSS to serve students through multiple engagement formats while preserving individualized advising for students with more complex needs.

Overall, participation trends over the past four academic years demonstrate substantial growth in international education programming and student engagement at UCCS. Cumulative event attendance increased from 257 participants in 2022–2023 to 732 in 2023–2024 before more than doubling to a record 1,548 participants in 2024–2025. Although attendance decreased to 1,219 participants during the organizational transition of 2025–2026, engagement remained substantially higher than levels recorded earlier in the office's development. These trends demonstrate both the significant growth achieved prior to the restructuring and the continued demand for international education programming at UCCS.

International Education Programming

International education programming at UCCS includes events and initiatives that bring students together in social, cultural, and educational settings. Programming for international students and scholars, as well as the broader UCCS community, is an important component of international education services and supports student success, engagement, belonging, and campus internationalization.

International education programming serves several important functions:

1. It introduces students to important information about the university and immigration and compliance requirements, particularly through orientation programming.
2. It connects students with campus and community networks that can provide academic, professional, and personal support.
3. It keeps students informed throughout their educational experience through workshops and informational programming.
4. It provides international students and scholars with opportunities to experience different facets of life in the United States.
5. It provides students and scholars with opportunities to share their cultures, experiences, and perspectives with the campus and broader community.
6. It contributes to the internationalization of the UCCS campus by increasing awareness of global perspectives, international education, and the experiences of international students and scholars.

Collaboration with campus and community partners is particularly important to the success of international education programming for several reasons:

- International education programming at UCCS has historically relied on collaboration with other university units. Prior to 2016, International Affairs did not independently offer international education events, making campus partnerships an important component of the subsequent development and expansion of programming.
- UCCS offers a wide range of events and activities throughout the academic year. Coordination and collaboration help minimize scheduling conflicts, reduce duplication of efforts, and strengthen participation across programs.

- Limited programming budgets make collaboration an effective way to maximize available resources and expand the reach and impact of programming.
- Campus offices and community partners contribute different areas of expertise, allowing collaborative programs to draw upon the strengths and resources of multiple units.
- Collaboration strengthens relationships with campus stakeholders and encourages shared investment in international student success, global engagement, and the internationalization of the UCCS community.

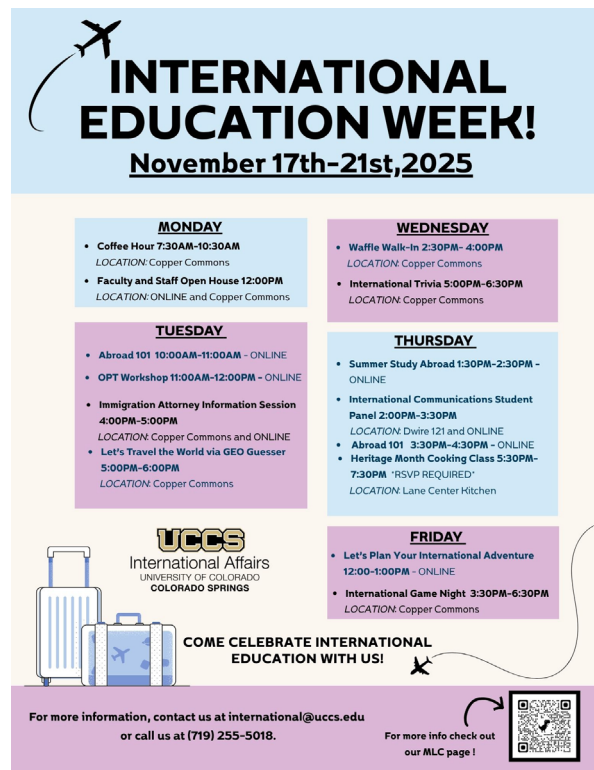
Collaboration also introduces students to the many individuals, offices, and resources across campus that contribute to their academic, professional, and personal success.

Across these functions, international education programming supports international student success, retention, engagement, and connection with the campus and broader community. EA and ISSS offered a variety of in-person and virtual programming throughout the 2025–2026 academic year.

International Education Week 2025

International Education Week (IEW) is an annual celebration of international education and global engagement. At UCCS, the week provides an opportunity to highlight international activities, resources, expertise, and experiences across campus. EA and ISSS provide daily programming during IEW and collaborate with campus partners to showcase international education throughout the university. Activities are promoted across campus and through external international education networks, including StudyColorado.

In 2025, International Education Week was held from Monday, November 17, through Friday, November 21. The schedule included Education Abroad advising events, a Faculty and Staff Open House, travel planning sessions, and a panel discussion featuring success stories from UCCS international student alumni. The complete schedule of events is displayed to the right.



INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK!
November 17th–21st, 2025

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY
- Coffee Hour 7:30AM-10:30AM LOCATION: Copper Commons - Faculty and Staff Open House 12:00PM LOCATION: ONLINE and Copper Commons	- Waffle Walk-In 2:30PM-4:00PM LOCATION: Copper Commons - International Trivia 5:00PM-6:30PM LOCATION: Copper Commons
TUESDAY	THURSDAY
- Abroad 101 10:00AM-11:00AM - ONLINE - OPT Workshop 11:00AM-12:00PM - ONLINE - Immigration Attorney Information Session 4:00PM-5:00PM LOCATION: Copper Commons and ONLINE - Let's Travel the World via GEO Guesser 5:00PM-6:00PM LOCATION: Copper Commons	- Summer Study Abroad 1:30PM-2:30PM - ONLINE - International Communications Student Panel 2:00PM-3:30PM LOCATION: Dwire 121 and ONLINE - Abroad 101 3:30PM-4:30PM - ONLINE - Heritage Month Cooking Class 5:30PM-7:30PM *RSVP REQUIRED* LOCATION: Lane Center Kitchen
FRIDAY - Let's Plan Your International Adventure 12:00-1:00PM - ONLINE - International Game Night 3:30PM-6:30PM LOCATION: Copper Commons	

UCCS International Affairs
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
COLORADO SPRINGS

COME CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WITH US!

For more information, contact us at international@uccs.edu or call us at (719) 255-5018.

For more info check out our MLC page!

Fulbright Student and Scholar Advising

EA and ISSS continue to uphold Fulbright advising liaison responsibilities that were assigned to International Affairs in 2016 and continue through the current international education structure. Fulbright advising responsibilities are shared with Dr. Fred Coolidge, who serves as an additional official Fulbright Advisor and Representative at UCCS with a focus on faculty advising. One-on-one Fulbright advising for students and scholars 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 continued to recognize UCCS Fulbright participants and promote Fulbright opportunities across campus.

Community and Campus Partnerships

Partnerships are essential to advancing UCCS's internationalization efforts and expanding opportunities for international students, scholars, faculty, staff, and the broader campus community. EA and ISSS collaborate extensively with university departments, community organizations, governmental agencies, and international partners to strengthen student support, promote global engagement, and ensure institutional compliance. Through these partnerships, EA and ISSS coordinated advising, orientation programming, educational workshops, wellness initiatives, and other services that promoted student success throughout the academic year.

Beyond the university, EA and ISSS continued to strengthen relationships with community organizations and professional partners, including Friendship Force, International Students Inc., StudyColorado, EducationUSA, local immigration attorneys, the Mayor's Office, and the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). Staff also participated in statewide meetings related to international education and engaged with international mobility providers and partner institutions to explore opportunities for future collaboration and program development.

During the 2025–2026 academic year, these partnerships directly supported orientation programming, mental health initiatives, career development, community engagement, and recognition of graduating international students through the display of national flags during commencement. These collaborative relationships also supported coordinated responses to changing federal immigration policies and global events.

During 2025–2026, ISSS worked with more than 15 campus units to support international students, coordinate institutional practices, provide training and consultation, and strengthen understanding of immigration and international student issues across UCCS. ISSS staff also contributed to the broader international education field through professional presentations, publications, conference leadership, and service. Contributions during 2025–2026 included presentations at regional and national professional development events, service as a proposal reviewer for the NAFSA Annual Conference, and authorship of a textbook chapter on the J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa.

These partnerships remain foundational to international education at UCCS, enabling EA and ISSS to provide comprehensive services, strengthen institutional compliance, and advance UCCS's internationalization goals.

Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding

EA and ISSS work with faculty, colleges, and academic units to support the establishment and maintenance of strategic and sustainable international partnerships. EA continues to

coordinate with the College of Business regarding the renewal of several business-focused student exchange agreements, with consideration given to maintaining balanced exchange participation within the college. Additionally, four new international service provider agreements were established to support short-term programming, while more than 15 Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Letters of Intent were maintained during the academic year.

International Risk Management and the Chancellor's Appointed 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 Chancellor in the spring of 2016, the committee includes the following members:

- Telma Frumholtz, Education Abroad, Interim Chair
- James Duval, CU Risk Management
- Michele Companion, Faculty
- Curtis Holder, Faculty
- Michael Sanderson, Export Control

The committee convenes monthly to review proposed student travel to high-risk locations and make recommendations for the Chancellor's review and final decision. Through this process, the committee supports institutional risk assessment and informed decision-making related to international student travel.

The EAPD and the CU Risk Manager at UCCS collaborate on international risk management efforts and participate in CU System International Risk Management meetings. Each semester, lists of students participating in education abroad programs, along with relevant emergency contact information, are provided to the CU Risk Manager. International travel protocols are maintained in accordance with CU System guidance, established procedures, and best practices informed by peer institutions.

International Affairs Strategic Planning and External Review

The 2019–2025 International Affairs Strategic Plan was finalized in 2019 following a collaborative planning process involving International Affairs staff, students, and university leadership. The plan was developed to align with divisional and institutional priorities while providing strategic direction for international education efforts at UCCS. Implementation began in fall 2019, with various initiatives and assessment measures completed throughout the planning cycle.

The 2019–2025 International Affairs Strategic Plan concluded during the 2025–2026 academic year. Throughout its implementation, the plan provided strategic direction for Education Abroad, International Student and Scholar Services, international partnerships, assessment efforts, and campus internationalization initiatives. Although the organizational structure for international education changed significantly during 2025–2026, many of the plan's priorities continue to inform the work of EA and ISSS.

The IA Strategic Plan included the following 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 partnerships and community relations

Goal 4: Implement an assessment plan that measures student and scholar success

Goal 5: Contribute to divisional and university strategic priorities

These goals shared a common purpose of strengthening the international experience for UCCS students and scholars. While some goals and strategies were designed as specific initiatives, others established ongoing priorities that continue to guide international education services beyond the conclusion of the formal strategic planning period.

External Review

An external review of International Affairs conducted in 2021 continues to provide important context for evaluating the growth, organizational development, and resource needs of international education at UCCS. Several recommendations identified through the review have been addressed or advanced over time, including changes to professional staff titles and continued development of faculty-led education abroad opportunities. Other recommendations remain relevant for future consideration, particularly those related to staffing, administrative support, organizational alignment, international education funding, and coordination of international efforts across the university.

The external review identified the following strengths:

- Well-respected and knowledgeable team with expertise in international education
- Effective support of internationalization efforts with minimal staffing, including the International Risk Management Committee, Crisis Management Plan, growth in education abroad, and strong support for visiting international scholars and students
- Strong collaboration across campus and within the community on international education efforts

The external review also identified the following 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 based on national data
- Establish a task force or advisory council with faculty and staff membership and appointment by senior leadership
- Provide administrative support for the office
- Fundraise for scholarships for international students and education abroad participants
- Ensure responsibility for risk management compliance is shared by the Provost, deans, and academic departments rather than residing solely within International Affairs
- Consider centralizing international efforts across campus within International Affairs

- Further develop and support faculty-led education abroad programs
- Introduce virtual exchange or Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) opportunities at UCCS

The 2021 external review remains particularly relevant as UCCS considers the future of international education following the 2025 organizational restructuring. While the structure of international education has changed since the review was completed, recommendations concerning adequate staffing, administrative support, organizational alignment, sustainable funding, and coordinated institutional responsibility continue to provide useful context for assessing the resources necessary to sustain international education services at UCCS.

Education Abroad

Education Abroad requires a combination of specialized advising, program management, data management, risk management, outreach, and cross-campus collaboration. The information presented in this report reflects both quantitative participation data and the broader operational factors that influence education abroad at UCCS.

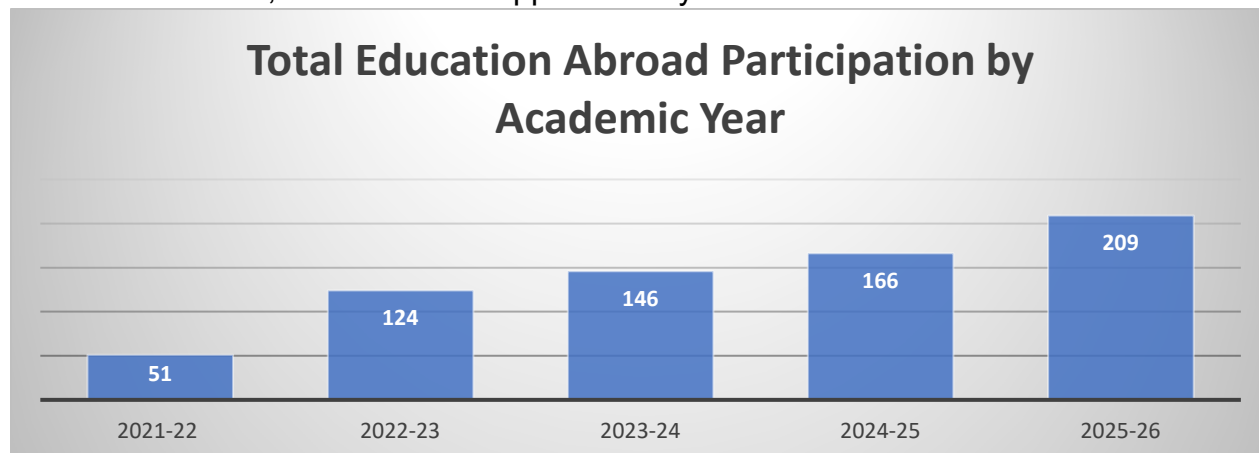
During the 2025–2026 academic year, the Education Abroad Program Director (EAPD) continued to serve as the sole professional staff position dedicated to Education Abroad at UCCS. The role requires specialized advising and outreach to students, faculty, and staff across a wide range of academic disciplines, as well as knowledge of university administrative processes, international travel and visa requirements, partner programs, and education systems abroad. The EAPD is responsible for maintaining this broad and evolving knowledge base while supporting students throughout the education abroad process.

TerraDotta is used to manage Education Abroad participation, program information, and risk management data. Through TerraDotta, the EAPD maintains student travel records and relevant emergency contact information for each term, supporting institutional international risk management efforts. Following the transition to TerraDotta's modernized interface, the EAPD implemented new standard operating procedures (SOPs) to improve existing processes, including the creation and updating of program information pages. In addition to managing TerraDotta and related administrative processes, the EAPD assists students throughout the application process and oversees program offerings to ensure students have access to a diverse range of education abroad opportunities.

Through orientations, information sessions, social media, tabling, and targeted programming, the EAPD works to increase awareness of and participation in the range of education abroad opportunities available at UCCS. Through these efforts, along with partnerships with external organizations and departments across campus, the EAPD works to integrate meaningful education abroad experiences into students' academic pathways and broader learning experiences.

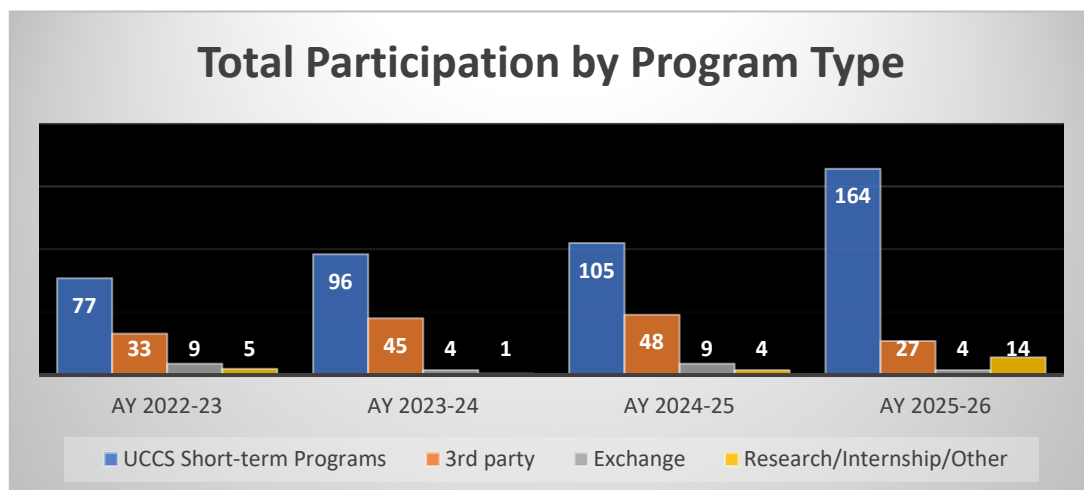
Annual Overview

During the 2025–2026 academic year, Education Abroad at UCCS reached a record level of participation. Students participated in education abroad opportunities during every academic term, with overall participation increasing from 166 students in 2024–2025 to 209 in 2025–2026, an increase of approximately 26%.



Short-term programming continued to be the most popular form of education abroad participation at UCCS. Student interest in shorter programs reflects a broader trend toward opportunities that allow students to incorporate an international experience into their academic pathway while balancing responsibilities related to work, school, finances, and other commitments.

The chart below details EA participation by program type, showing a slight decline in third-party programming alongside significant growth in research/internship opportunities and UCCS short-term programs. Third-party or provider programs are education abroad experiences administered by external organizations that partner with universities to provide structured international opportunities. These partners expand the range of countries and academic areas available to UCCS students while providing support before, during, and after students' time abroad. Provider programs can also contribute to institutional risk management through established on-site support and emergency response structures. Some providers offer scholarship funding, and program fees typically include expenses such as tuition and fees, accommodations, insurance, excursions, and on-site support.



Participation in UCCS short-term programming increased from 105 students in 2024–2025 to 164 in 2025–2026, an increase of approximately 56%. This growth followed continued efforts to promote and develop UCCS short-term programming through a cyclical planning schedule. Calls for faculty and staff program development occur during the winter and early spring, with proposals and required documentation due by April 1. This timeline allows for the development of promotional materials before the end of the spring semester and provides program leaders additional time to promote upcoming opportunities. The planning cycle also gives students more time to consider and prepare for participation in the following academic year's short-term programs. This approach will continue to inform Education Abroad planning for the 2026–2027 academic year.

Education Abroad Participation - Term Overviews

The summaries below provide an overview of education abroad student participation by academic term. Each section includes current participation data and, where available, historical comparisons that illustrate changes in student mobility over time.

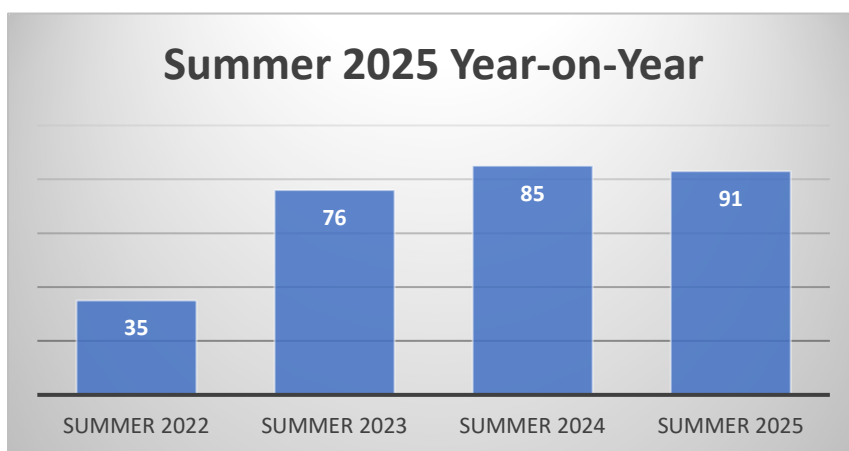
Summer 2025 Overview

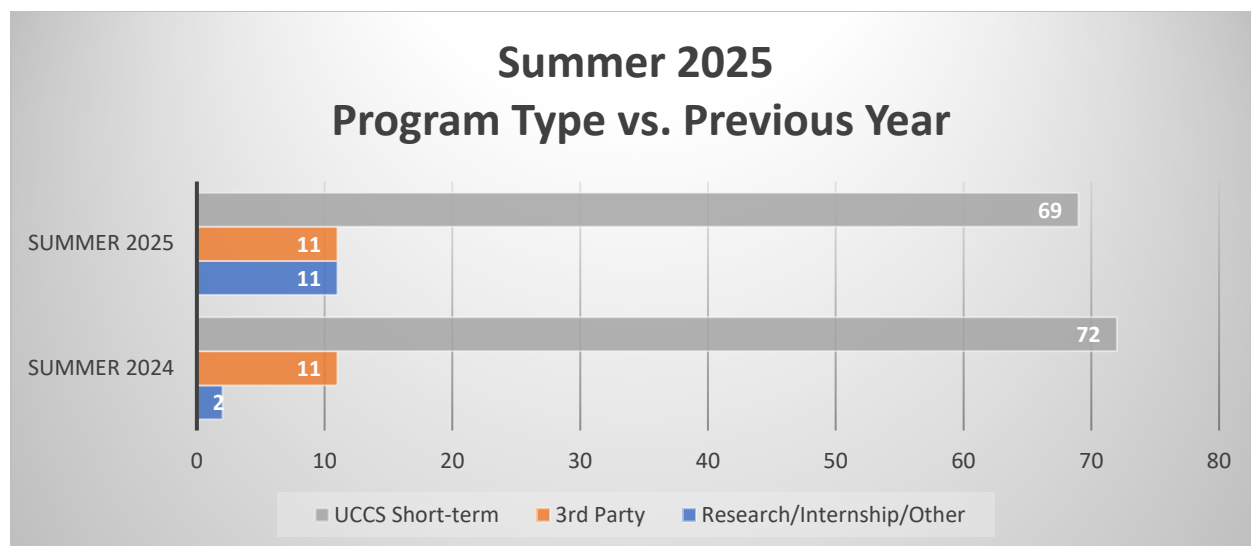
Total: 91 Participants

Summer continued to be one of the strongest terms for Education Abroad participation, reflecting sustained student interest in shorter and more flexible international experiences.

Short-term programming continues to play an important role in summer participation. In addition to supporting faculty- and staff-led UCCS programs,

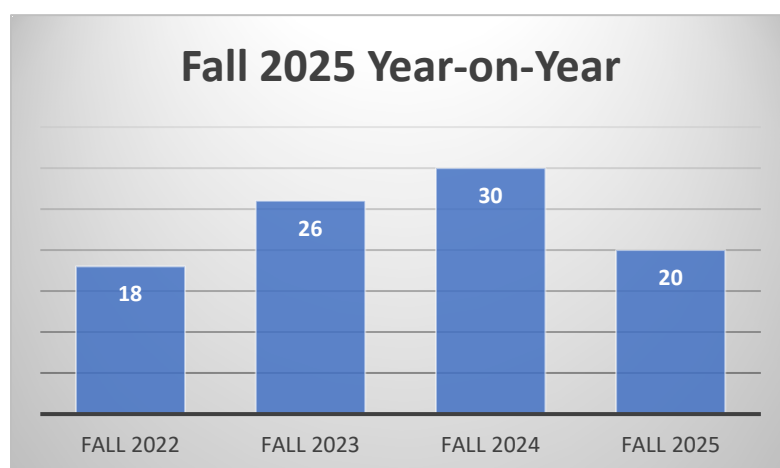
Education Abroad continues to encourage a diverse range of summer opportunities, including research, internships, third-party programs, and other international experiences. Summer programs can be particularly accessible for students because shorter program lengths may be easier to incorporate into academic schedules, employment responsibilities, and financial planning. Continued development of diverse summer opportunities has the potential to further expand participation.





Fall 2025 Overview

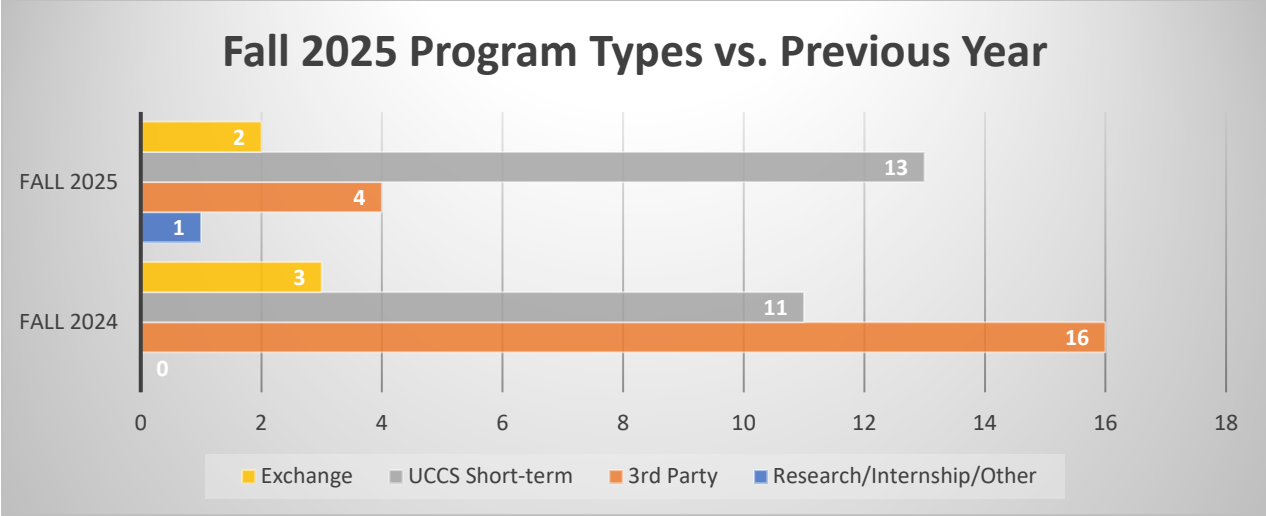
Total: 20 Participants



Fall 2025 saw 20 students participate in Education Abroad programs, representing a slight decrease from participation levels in the previous two years. The decline coincided with significant changes to the organizational structure and visibility of Education Abroad at UCCS.

Following the dissolution of International Affairs and

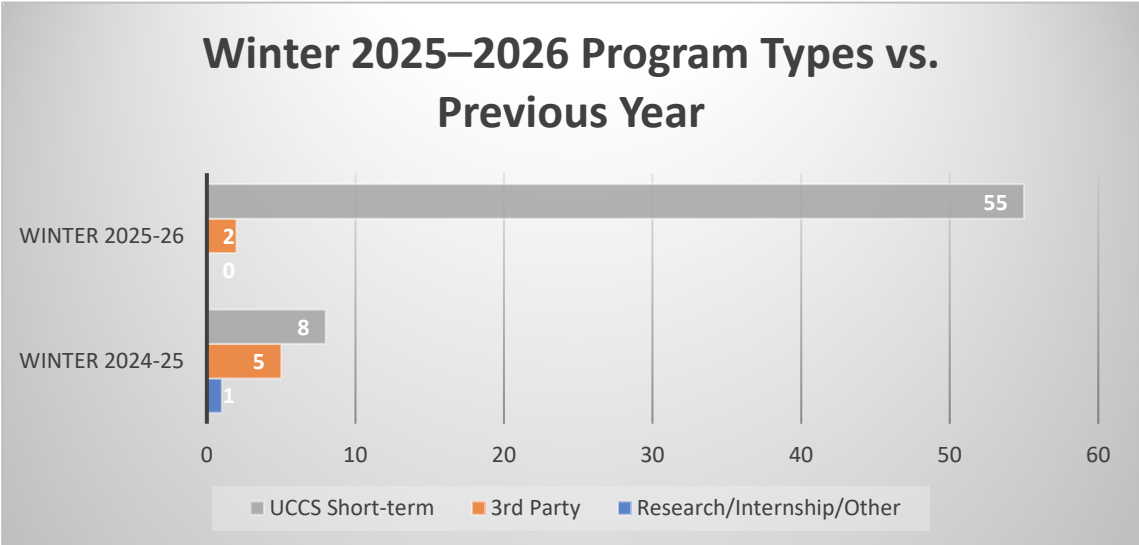
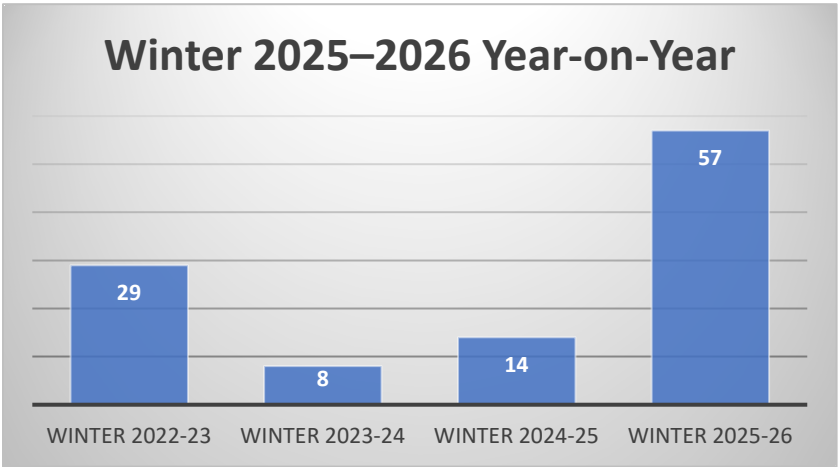
integration of EA into MOSAIC at the beginning of the academic year, student feedback indicated confusion regarding where education abroad services were housed and how students would access support. Staff also received questions about whether study abroad opportunities would continue to be available at UCCS. As the new organizational structure becomes more established, Education Abroad will continue efforts to strengthen the visibility of services and rebuild participation toward levels observed in previous fall terms.



Winter 2025–2026 Overview

Total: 57 Participants

As is clear in the data above, the Winter term tends to be the most volatile and varied in participation numbers. Winter 2025–2026 saw several successful short term programs offered, significantly increasing the number of participants for the term. Providers are also trending towards offering more options for the Winter term, significantly increasing the opportunities students have to go abroad in the Winter regardless of the faculty/staff offerings. Looking ahead to 2026–2027, the term participation will still likely depend greatly on how many short-term faculty/staff-led programs are available.

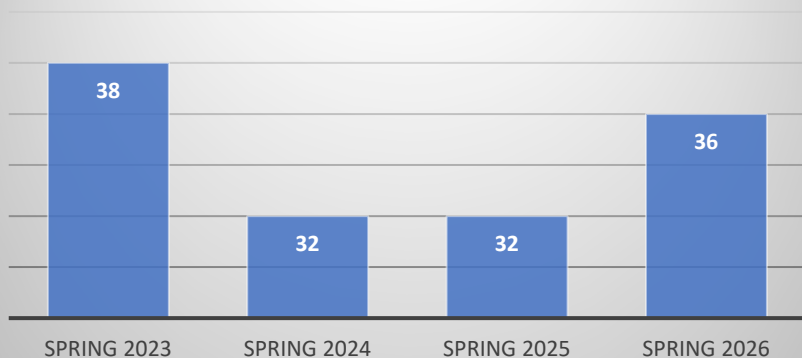


Spring 2026 Overview

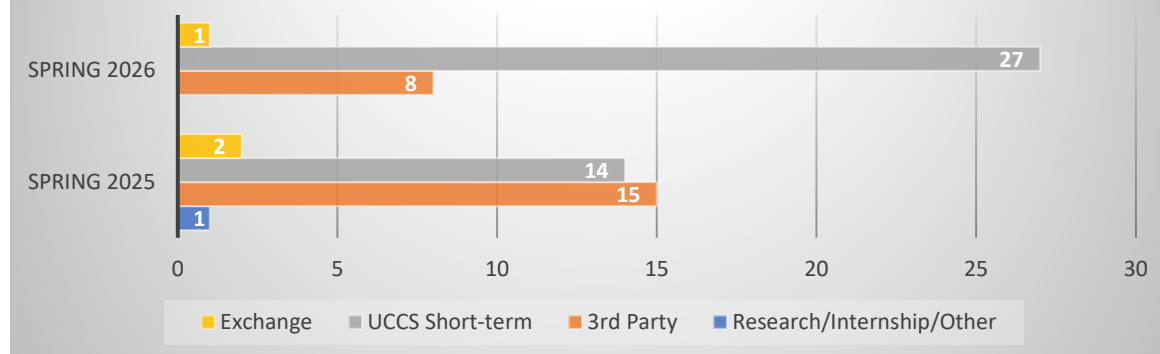
Total: 36 Participants

Spring 2026 maintained participation in semester-long and other education abroad opportunities. While short-term summer and winter programs account for an increasing share of overall Education Abroad participation at UCCS, spring continues to provide an important option for students seeking longer-term international academic experiences.

Spring 2026 Year-on-Year



Spring 2026 Program Types vs. Previous Year



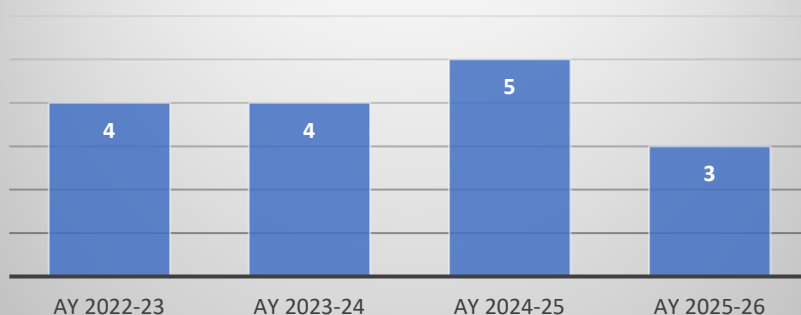
Academic Year 2025–2026

Overview

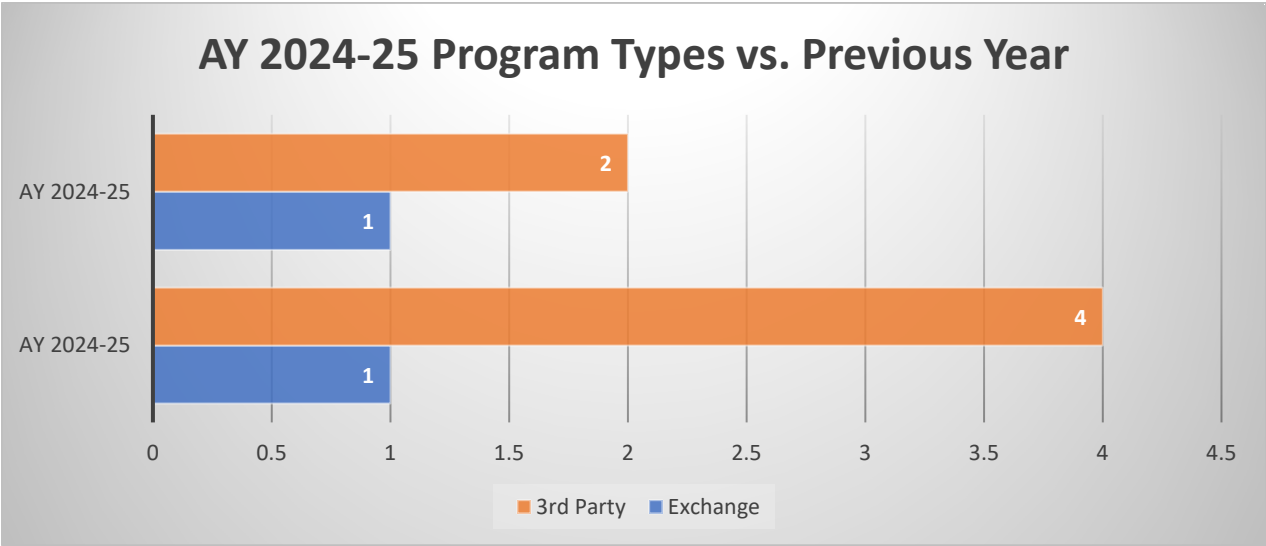
Total: 3 Participants

Participation in full academic year programs remains relatively low compared with shorter education abroad options. Academic year programs require students to plan for approximately nine to ten months abroad, including the financial commitment associated with an extended international experience and the academic planning necessary to identify courses that will apply toward degree requirements across two semesters. Given the importance of affordability and flexibility for many UCCS students, shorter-term options may be more accessible for a larger portion of the student population.

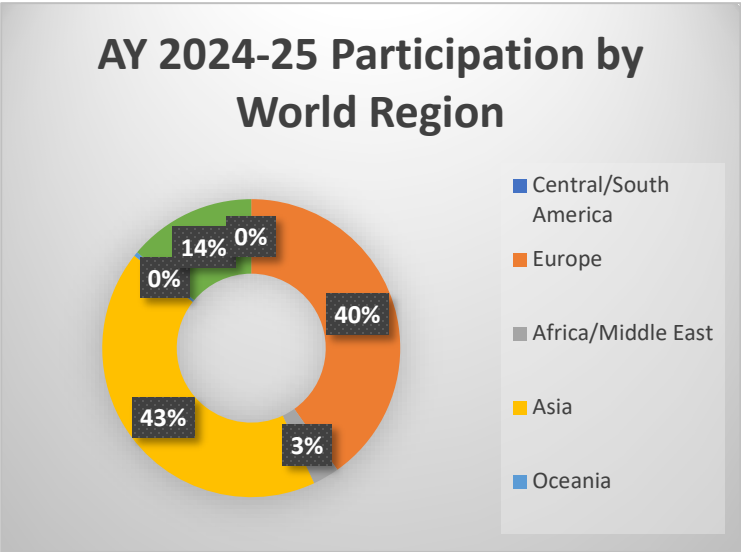
Academic Year 2025–2026 Year-on-Year



Interest in exchange opportunities remains particularly important for students seeking full academic year experiences. However, exchange placements are limited by the number of spaces available through partner institutions. Third-party provider programs therefore offer an additional pathway for students committed to spending a full academic year abroad.



Regional Participation



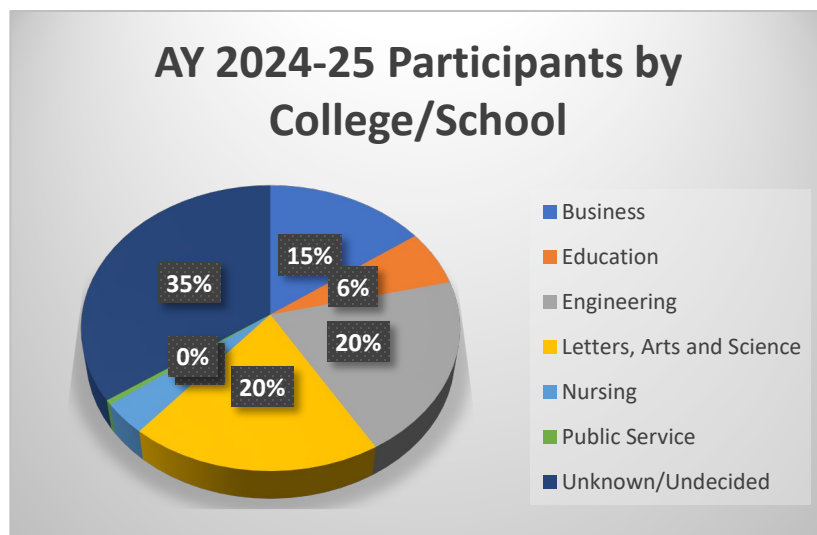
While Europe continues to be a leading destination region for education abroad nationally, Asia became the leading destination region for UCCS participants for the first time during the 2025–2026 academic year. This shift reflects the evolving geographic diversity of Education Abroad participation and program offerings at UCCS.

Multiregional program participation also decreased during 2025–2026. Changes in program availability, cost, and the flexibility of shorter single-region programs may contribute to this shift.

Participation by UCCS College/School

The chart below presents Education Abroad participation by students' self-identified school or college for the 2025–2026 academic year. Education Abroad recorded 209 total participants across all terms and program types; however, not all participants identified a major or academic program when registering.

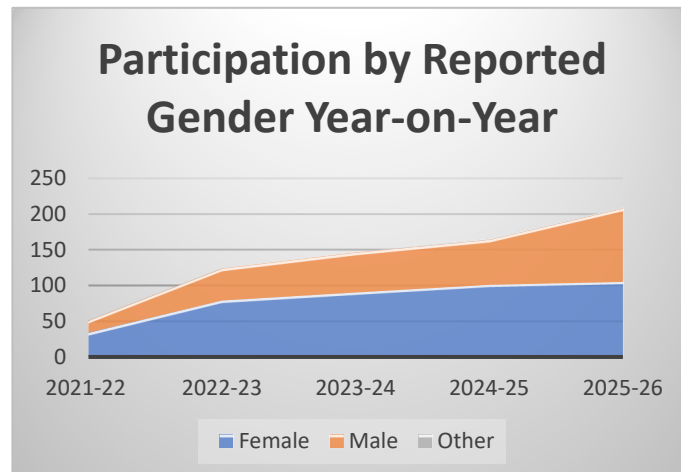
The **College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences** continues to account for the largest share of education abroad participants, which is not surprising given that it is the university's largest college and includes disciplines, such as foreign languages, that naturally align with study abroad opportunities. Approximately one-fifth of participants came from this college during the 2025–2026 academic year. The **College of Business** also continues to be well represented, supported by its longstanding exchange partnerships



and international marketing program. Although reporting a major is optional, informal scholarship application data from the College of Business further suggests strong participation in EA programs. The **College of Nursing and Health Sciences** continues to have lower participation rates, largely due to the structure of its academic programs and the challenges of incorporating longer-term study abroad experiences into degree requirements. Participation from the **College of Education** remained relatively consistent with previous years. Students from the **College of Engineering and Applied Sciences** primarily participated in summer and winter STEM-focused programs, and participation is expected to remain stable or increase with the addition of a new engineering-specific exchange opportunity. The **School of Public Affairs** has historically maintained strong participation in short-term programming, although no faculty-led program was offered during the 2025–2026 academic year. It is also important to note that not all students report a major or degree program when registering for EA, and more than half of participants this year did not identify a major.

Education Abroad by Reported Gender

Education Abroad participation by reported gender became substantially more balanced during the 2025–2026 academic year. Of the 209 participants, 105 reported female, 103 reported male, and one reported another gender category. This represents a notable shift from previous years, when female participants consistently outnumbered male participants.



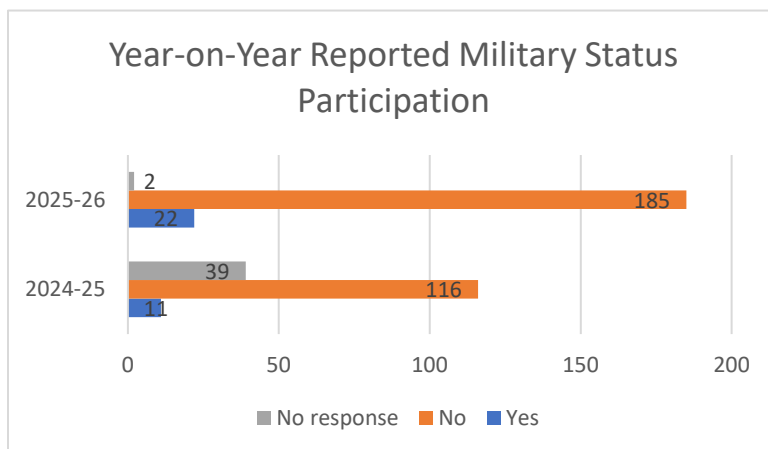
Male participation has increased substantially over the past several years, contributing to the nearly even distribution observed in 2025–2026.

Continued assessment of participation by reported gender may help EA better understand whether this shift continues as overall participation and short-term programming expand.

Education Abroad and Reported Military Status

As a military-affiliated institution, UCCS serves a substantial population of veteran and military-affiliated students. However, these students may face additional challenges when pursuing education abroad opportunities, particularly when seeking to apply Department of Veterans Affairs education benefits to international programs. Eligibility requirements and limitations associated with the use of VA education benefits can restrict the types of education abroad opportunities available to some students.

These challenges are not unique to UCCS, and institutions throughout Colorado continue to navigate requirements related to the use of veteran education benefits for programs abroad. Continued coordination among Education Abroad, campus veteran and military services, partner institutions, and appropriate federal resources remains important in identifying viable international opportunities for military-affiliated students.

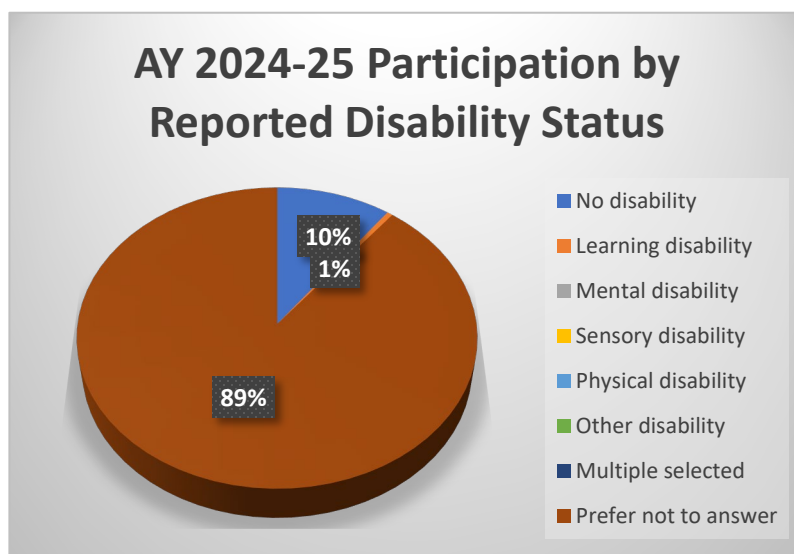


One area for continued exploration is the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs' WEAMS database of approved institutions to identify potential overseas partners and programs that may meet applicable eligibility requirements. Partnerships with approved institutions could expand options for military-affiliated students, although available student support services and program infrastructure should also be considered when evaluating potential partnerships.

Reported Disability Status

Understanding the experiences and needs of students with disabilities remains an important area of development for Education Abroad. Relatively few participants self-reported a disability during the 2025–2026 academic year; however, self-reported data may not capture the full range of disabilities or accommodations relevant to education abroad participation.

Students may choose not to disclose a disability, may report only one disability when multiple conditions are present, or may interpret available reporting



categories differently. Mental health-related conditions can be particularly difficult to capture through broad disability categories. As a result, disability participation data should be interpreted with caution and will continue to be refined as Education Abroad improves its assessment processes.

Continued training for Education Abroad staff and faculty and staff who lead programs abroad will remain important in supporting accessible international experiences, understanding accommodation needs, and preparing for the different accessibility considerations students may encounter abroad.

Marketing and Outreach

Education Abroad continued a variety of marketing and outreach efforts during the 2025–2026 academic year, including digital communications, Abroad 101 information sessions, the Study Abroad Fair, tabling, classroom and student organization presentations, and other campus outreach.

The restructuring substantially reduced Education Abroad's capacity to develop new programming during 2025–2026. Professional staff absorbed additional MOSAIC responsibilities at the same time that dedicated administrative support was eliminated, limiting the time available for event development, marketing, and outreach. Core programs such as Abroad 101 and Waffle Walk-In Wednesdays continued, but expansion into new programming was necessarily deprioritized.

Abroad 101. Abroad 101 sessions help students understand how to begin the education abroad process and introduce the range of opportunities available at UCCS. More than 50 students participated during the 2025–2026 academic year. Sessions continued to be offered virtually multiple times each week, providing students with flexible access to introductory education abroad advising.

Study Abroad Fair. The Study Abroad Fair remained a signature Education Abroad event, providing students with an opportunity to connect directly with program providers and members of the UCCS international education community. More than 150 students attended the fair during the 2025–2026 academic year.

Campus Outreach and Presentations. Education Abroad continued to provide presentations in classrooms and at student organization meetings while increasing tabling and other in-person outreach across campus. External partners also participated in tabling activities, expanding students' exposure to available education abroad opportunities.

Social Media. Social media activity was reduced during the 2025–2026 academic year following the elimination of the administrative assistant position approximately nine months after the position was established. Without dedicated administrative support, professional staff prioritized advising, compliance, program administration, and other core responsibilities, reducing the capacity available for consistent social media outreach.

Additional support for Education Abroad is anticipated through a Graduate Assistant position during the 2026–2027 academic year.

Education Abroad Advising

EA advising is available on both an appointment and walk-in basis. Students are encouraged to attend an Abroad 101 information session and meet individually with an advisor to explore program options and discuss questions specific to their academic, financial, and personal circumstances. Individual advising appointments generally last between 30 and 45 minutes, depending on the complexity of the student's questions and program interests. One-on-one advising remains an important component of the Education Abroad process, allowing students to receive individualized guidance as they evaluate and prepare for international opportunities. Virtual advising continued to supplement in-person appointments throughout the academic year.

Pre-Departure Orientations

Pre-departure orientations continued to be offered through an asynchronous online format, providing students with comprehensive information to prepare for their international experiences. Orientation content addresses health and safety, financial considerations, communication, cultural adjustment, academic expectations, travel preparation, and other international travel best practices. The asynchronous orientation was supplemented by optional virtual sessions for participants and their emergency contacts. These interactive sessions provided opportunities for students and their families or designated contacts to ask questions directly of Education Abroad staff and discuss preparation, safety, and other concerns prior to departure.

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

Individual meetings were held with faculty and staff interested in developing or leading short-term education abroad programs. Topics included:

- Overview of the program development and approval process
- Compensation and budgeting
- Program planning and timelines
- Responsibilities of program leaders
- Program provider options
- Proposal requirements and forms

Resources and forms for faculty and staff were also updated during the academic year to better align with established procedures, best practices, and guidelines used across the CU System.

International Partnerships

UCCS maintains bilateral exchange agreements with institutions around the world, providing students with opportunities to study abroad through reciprocal institutional partnerships. Maintaining balanced participation within exchange agreements remains an

ongoing challenge, as interest from students seeking to study at UCCS frequently exceeds the number of UCCS students participating in outbound exchanges.

Exchange programs also typically require a higher level of student independence than some provider-supported programs because the level of on-site support available through partner institutions can vary. Education Abroad therefore works with students to identify opportunities appropriate to their academic goals, travel experience, and level of independence.

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)
- Engineering Specific Exchange Linköping University – Linköping, Sweden
- NEW Kanazawa University – Kanazawa, Japan

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

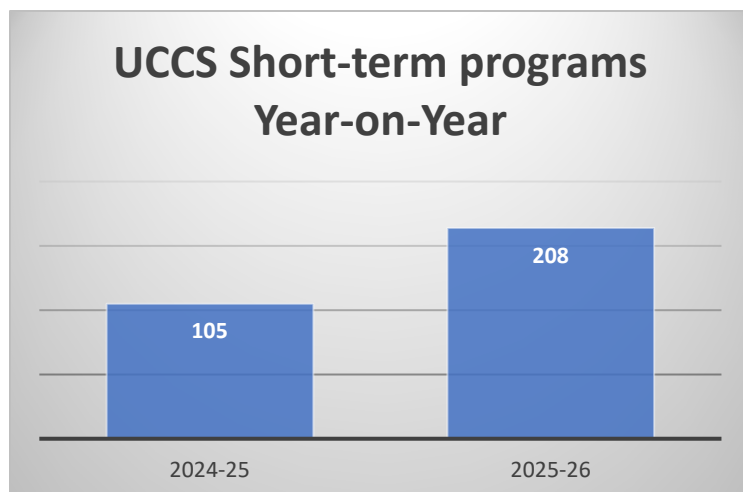
EA continues to identify and promote opportunities for external scholarship funding. At this time, UCCS does not have a dedicated university-wide scholarship fund specifically supporting education abroad participation. Individual colleges, departments, and other funding sources have provided scholarships to students on an ad hoc basis, but a consistent institutional funding source has not been established. The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, administered by the U.S. Department of State, provides funding to eligible undergraduate students with demonstrated financial need, including students who receive Federal Pell Grants. Education Abroad promotes the Gilman Scholarship to eligible UCCS students and provides support throughout the application process. UCCS typically has one to two students receive Gilman Scholarships each year.

UCCS Short-term Programs Abroad

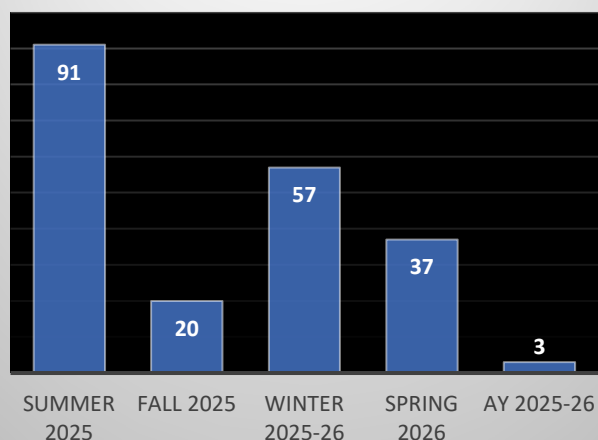
The 2025–2026 academic year reflected continued efforts to strengthen UCCS short-term education abroad programs through greater alignment with established guidelines,

procedures, policies, and risk management practices. These efforts support both faculty- and staff-directed programs and student group travel abroad.

Short-term programming continues to represent a significant area of student interest and growth at UCCS. During 2025–2026, participation in short-term programs increased from 105 to 164 students, making these programs the largest component of overall Education Abroad participation. A centralized approach to program development and the proposal and approval process supports consistent administrative practices, strengthens institutional risk management, and provides faculty and staff with clearer guidance throughout program development.



Total Participants by Term



Continued opportunities to strengthen and expand short-term programming include:

- Exploring options to incorporate eligible program costs and fees into student accounts to simplify payment processes.
- Exploring opportunities to improve access to financial aid and other funding resources for students participating in faculty- and staff-directed programs.
- Expanding outreach to student organizations interested in international travel and providing Education Abroad support related to program logistics, enrollment, and institutional requirements.
- Continuing to support faculty and staff in the development of academically meaningful and sustainable short-term programs.

Moving Forward in Education Abroad

Education Abroad enters the 2026–2027 academic year following a year of record participation and significant organizational transition. The growth in overall participation, particularly in short-term programming, demonstrates continued student interest in international experiences and provides a strong foundation for future Education Abroad efforts. Introducing abroad opportunities earlier in a student's academic experience and continuing to develop diverse short-term and nontraditional opportunities will remain important areas of focus. Strengthening communication with prospective and first-year students, along with continued coordination with Admissions and other campus partners, can help students become aware of international opportunities early enough to

incorporate education abroad into their academic and financial planning. Priorities for the 2026–2027 academic year include:

- Maintaining both digital and in-person outreach strategies to increase student awareness of Education Abroad opportunities.
- Strengthening partnerships with academic departments and other campus units and identifying opportunities for collaborative outreach and marketing.
- Expanding and refining data collection and assessment of Education Abroad participation.
- Continuing to monitor and assess international travel risks and maintain appropriate risk management procedures.
- Expanding sustainable short-term programming in response to demonstrated student interest.
- Developing additional exchange opportunities with established and prospective international partners.
- Strengthening early outreach to prospective and first-year students to encourage education abroad planning earlier in students' academic pathways.

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) experienced significant reorganization in July 2025 when the International Affairs (IA) Office was dissolved and ISSS and Education Abroad (EA) transitioned from functions of a standalone international education office to separate programs housed within MOSAIC. As part of the restructuring, ISSS and EA staff assumed additional responsibilities within MOSAIC while continuing to manage their existing international education workloads.

The primary responsibilities of the International Student and Scholar Program Manager (ISSPM) include immigration advising, international student programming, and coordination of campus-wide immigration compliance and support efforts for international students and scholars. The International Student and Scholar Program Director (ISSPD) interfaces with relevant government agencies, monitors federal regulatory developments, and provides leadership related to immigration compliance and international student and scholar services. Together, the ISSPM and ISSPD provide advanced immigration advising and maintain institutional compliance with federal requirements governing UCCS's ability to host international students and scholars in F and J status. These functions are essential to both student success and the university's continued authorization to enroll and sponsor international students and exchange visitors.

In addition to directly supporting international students and scholars, ISSS contributes to campus internationalization by helping faculty and staff better understand the international student population, student needs, and the federal regulations affecting international students and scholars.

The ISSPM and ISSPD are also responsible for administration of the UCCS J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. The program allows UCCS to sponsor eligible exchange visitors,

including students, researchers, instructors, and professors, for academic and collaborative activities at the university.

International Student Numbers and Profile

The international student population at UCCS includes students in F-1 and J-1 student status, as well as students in other nonimmigrant statuses that permit study in the United States, including L-2, H-4, and other eligible classifications.

International student enrollment decreased during the 2025–2026 academic year. UCCS enrolled 169 international students in Fall 2025, compared with 196 in Fall 2024, representing a decrease of approximately 14%. International student enrollment remains below levels observed in earlier years and continues to be influenced by a combination of institutional, national, and global factors. UCCS Admissions no longer actively recruits international students, limiting dedicated institutional recruitment efforts for this population. International students also continue to navigate changing U.S. immigration policies, financial considerations, visa processes, and increasing competition among institutions and countries for globally mobile students.

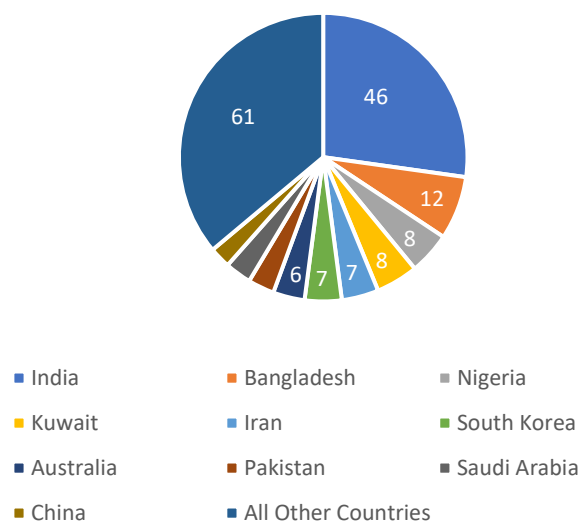
Changes to foreign government scholarship programs have also affected UCCS international enrollment in previous years. During 2025–2026, however, UCCS experienced an increase in the number of government-sponsored students from Kuwait.

The diversity of the UCCS international student population remained substantial, with 44 countries represented in Fall 2025. The countries with the largest student populations were India (46), Bangladesh (12), Nigeria (8), Kuwait (8), South Korea (7), Iran (7), Australia (6), Pakistan (5), Saudi Arabia (5), and China (4).

The visual to the right displays the countries with the largest international student populations at UCCS in Fall 2025.

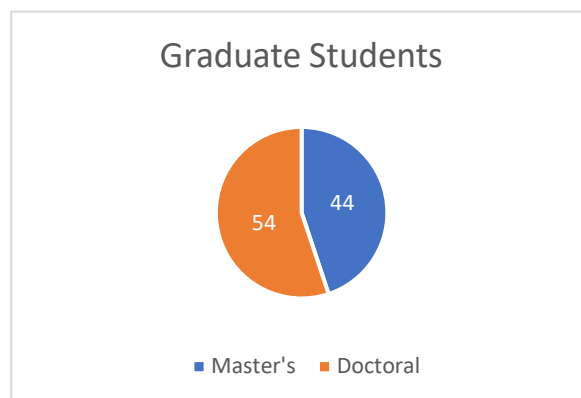
The majority of international students at UCCS are degree-seeking and hold F-1 status, meaning they are typically here for a longer timeframe to complete their UCCS degrees. The Fall 2025 count shows that 42% of all international students are studying in undergraduate programs, while 58% are studying in graduate programs.

International Students by Country
(Fall 2025) Top 10

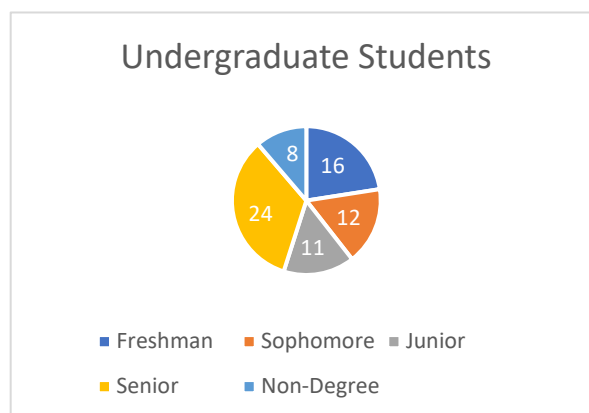


The graphs below show the breakdown of international students in Fall 2025 by degree level and students' year of study:

Total Graduate:	98
Master's	44
Doctoral	54



Total Undergraduate:	63
Freshman	16
Sophomore	12
Junior	11
Senior	24



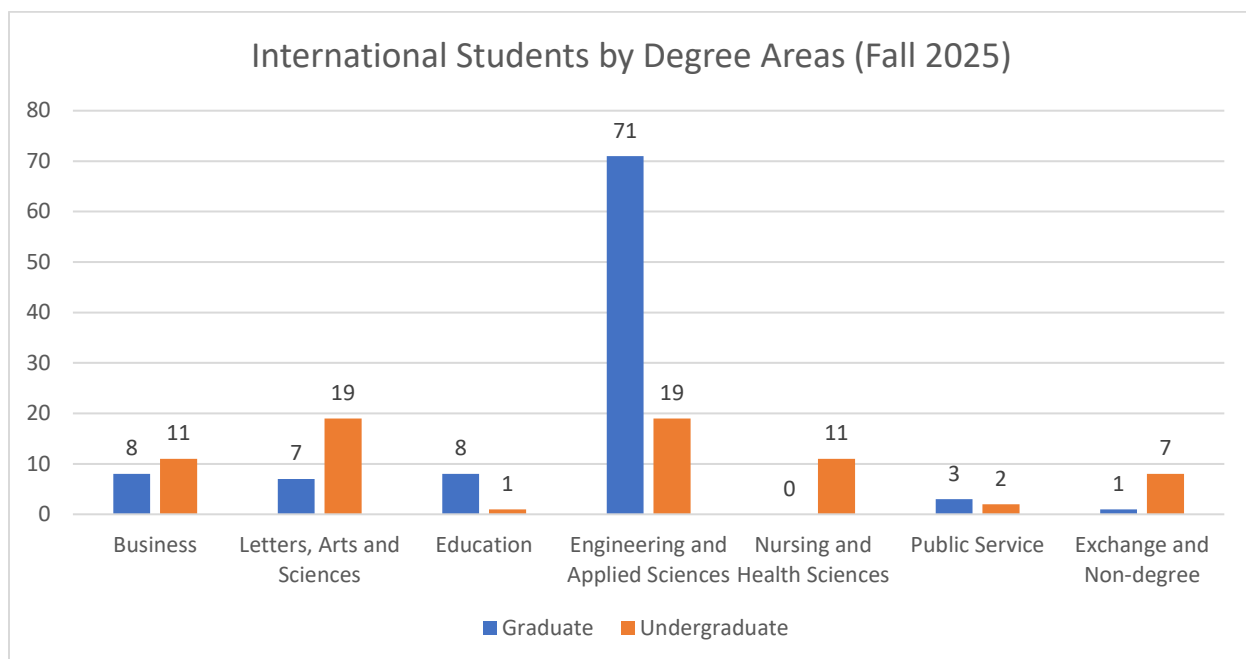
Non-Degree:	8
Exchange	1
Undergraduate non-degree	7

Note: Fall 2025 international student enrollment data are based on the Open Doors reporting methodology and were reported to the Institute of International Education (IIE).

International student enrollment remained concentrated in several academic areas during Fall 2025. The College of Engineering and Applied Sciences enrolled 90 international students, representing more than half of the total international student population at UCCS. The College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences had the next-largest international student population with 26 students, followed by the College of Business with 19 students.

The table and graph below provide the distribution of international students by UCCS college or school:

International Students by College Fall 2025			
	Graduate	Undergraduate	Total
Business	8	11	19
Letters, Arts and Sciences	7	19	26
Education	8	1	9
Engineering and Applied Sciences	71	19	90
Nursing and Health Sciences	0	11	11
Public Service	3	2	5
Exchange and Non-degree	1	8	9
Total	98	71	169



Advising Services for International Students

ISSS places a strong emphasis on international student retention, success, and both student and institutional compliance. International students receive specialized advising and support throughout their time at UCCS, beginning before arrival and continuing through enrollment and, for many students, into post-completion employment authorization.

International student advising and federal immigration compliance require dedicated professional staffing even at institutions with relatively small international student populations. Comparable public institutions with international enrollments similar to UCCS typically dedicate at least one full-time professional position to international student advising and compliance. At UCCS, these responsibilities are currently managed through one full-time professional position with additional limited support from a part-time professional position, while staff also carry programming, institutional compliance, scholar services, campus training and support, and additional responsibilities within MOSAIC.

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, Teams message, or phone are provided within the same business day in most cases. A proactive communication plan includes a biweekly e-newsletter, regular direct emails on mission-critical ISSS 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.

One of the most critical functions of ISSS is immigration advising and compliance. ISSS assists students in maintaining their immigration status while completing the federal reporting responsibilities required for UCCS to enroll and sponsor international students and exchange visitors. Because many aspects of an international student's academic and professional experience are affected by immigration regulations, remaining current on federal regulations, policy guidance, and regulatory developments is essential.

The International Student and Scholar Program Manager and Program Director liaise with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Department of State as needed. As federally designated school and exchange visitor program officials, ISSS staff use the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to maintain required records, complete federal reporting, and monitor the immigration status of UCCS-sponsored students and exchange visitors. Continuing education and professional training are essential to maintaining the specialized regulatory knowledge required for this work. UCCS maintained its SEVP certification with no identified violations or compliance errors during the 2025–2026 academic year.

For purposes of this report, international student advising encompasses two primary functions:

- Proactively educating students about immigration regulations, compliance responsibilities, and regulatory changes through presentations, workshops, direct communications, and newsletters.
- Providing individualized and group advising to address immigration, academic, employment, travel, and other questions affecting students' ability to maintain status and successfully navigate their experience at UCCS.

Advising begins prior to students' arrival in the United States and continues throughout their time at UCCS, often extending beyond graduation through periods of authorized practical training. Institutional procedures and interpretations related to F-1 and J-1 requirements are incorporated into ISSS forms, informational materials, and web resources to support consistent advising and compliance practices.

OPT Advising for Former Students

ISSS continues to dedicate significant time to advising and monitoring former UCCS students who remain in F-1 status while participating in Optional Practical Training (OPT). At the time of this report in June 2026, ISSS was actively monitoring 46 students on OPT in addition to approximately 143 enrolled international students. These students remain part of UCCS's federal immigration reporting responsibilities even though they are no longer actively enrolled, demonstrating that the ISSS compliance workload extends substantially beyond the university's enrolled international student population.

Post-completion OPT advising typically begins during a student's final semester. Students are required to attend an OPT workshop introducing the application process, eligibility requirements, timelines, and ongoing responsibilities associated with OPT. Eligible students then request an OPT recommendation from ISSS, after which they submit an application for employment authorization to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). If approved, eligible F-1 students may receive up to 12 months of post-completion OPT employment authorization related to their field of study.

Eligible graduates with qualifying science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degrees may apply for a 24-month STEM OPT extension. STEM OPT carries additional student, employer, and institutional reporting and monitoring requirements, creating an extended compliance responsibility for ISSS that may continue for several years after a student completes a UCCS degree.

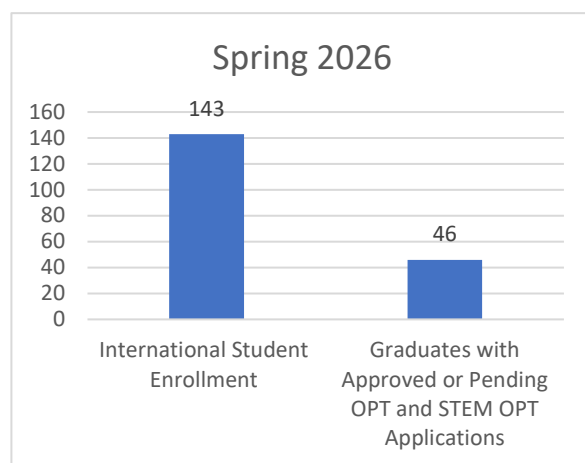
F-1 students may also be eligible for pre-completion OPT during their academic program, although this is less common. Both initial OPT and STEM OPT extension cases require individualized review, advising, document processing, and ongoing case management, making practical training advising a significant component of the ISSS workload.

Spring 2026 Summary

ISSS is responsible for advising, monitoring, and maintaining immigration records for both currently enrolled international students and former students participating in post-completion practical training:

- International student enrollment – **143**
- Graduates with approved or pending OPT and STEM OPT applications – **46**

The graph to the right provides a visual representation of currently enrolled international students and graduates with ongoing OPT or STEM OPT reporting and compliance responsibilities.



CPT Advising for Current Students

Curricular Practical Training (CPT) is a form of employment authorization available to eligible F-1 students for training experiences that are an integral part of an established curriculum. CPT may include internships, cooperative education, or other practical training experiences that are required by a student's academic program or offered as an integral, for-credit component of the curriculum.

Unlike OPT, CPT is authorized directly by a Designated School Official (DSO) in SEVIS and does not require a separate application to USCIS. Students must receive CPT authorization before beginning the training experience.

To support institutional compliance with federal requirements, ISSS reviews each CPT request to confirm that the proposed experience meets applicable curricular and eligibility requirements before authorization is issued.

During Spring 2026, two continuing UCCS international students received CPT authorization, while seven students were authorized for Summer 2026. ISSS maintains oversight of CPT authorizations to ensure that each experience meets federal requirements and that appropriate documentation is maintained.

Taxation

U.S. taxation is a complex area in which international students and scholars frequently require information and support. ISSS staff are not tax professionals and therefore cannot provide individualized tax advice; however, ISSS provides general information and connects students and scholars with appropriate resources to help them understand and fulfill their U.S. tax reporting responsibilities.

For the 2025 tax year, with tax returns generally due in April 2026, the CU International Tax Office provided eligible nonresident F and J students and employees with access to Sprintax tax preparation software. ISSS served as the communication link between UCCS students and the CU International Tax Office by distributing instructions, deadlines, and information about accessing Sprintax. The provided Sprintax licenses supported federal tax return preparation; students and scholars were responsible for costs associated with state tax return preparation when applicable. Sprintax also provided educational materials and customer support that served as additional resources for UCCS 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 increased substantially over the past year with the current administration in office. ISSS monitored Presidential Proclamations, Executive Orders, agency guidance, regulatory developments, and other federal actions affecting the international student and scholar population. Staff evaluated potential impacts, communicated relevant developments directly to students and scholars, and maintained an Immigration Updates section on the ISSS website.

Developments monitored during the year included changes affecting international travel and visa issuance, proposed changes to duration of status, and federal actions affecting immigration benefit processing and employment authorization. Monitoring these developments required ongoing review and interpretation by ISSS staff to determine potential impacts on UCCS students and scholars and provide timely and accurate information to the campus community.

Information and advising were provided through individual virtual and in-person appointments, the biweekly ISSS newsletter, direct email communications, and website updates. Monitoring and communicating federal immigration developments will continue to be an important component of ISSS advising and institutional compliance.

During the year, UCCS also submitted a formal public comment to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security regarding the proposed Duration of Status rule, providing institutional perspective on the potential impacts of the proposed regulation on international students and higher education institutions.

Full Service Advising

ISSS provides comprehensive advising and support throughout the international student and scholar experience. Processes, advising schedules, communication strategies, and informational resources are regularly assessed and refined to ensure students understand how to access and effectively utilize ISSS services.

Information about ISSS services begins during the pre-arrival stage and continues through International Student Orientation and ongoing communications throughout students' academic programs. The ISSPM and ISSPD work to maintain clear, service-oriented advising practices based on professional standards in the international education field while supporting both student success and institutional compliance.

Institutional Compliance and SEVP Certification

The ISSPM and ISSPD are responsible for coordinating UCCS's institutional compliance with federal regulations governing the F-1 student program. Maintaining SEVP certification allows UCCS to enroll and support F-1 international students and requires ongoing institutional reporting, recordkeeping, monitoring, and adherence to federal requirements.

Compliance responsibilities include:

- Maintaining university procedures and practices that support international students in understanding and complying with the requirements of F-1 status.
- Working with university departments and campus partners to ensure institutional practices affecting international students align with applicable federal requirements.
- Maintaining required immigration records and documentation in accordance with federal recordkeeping requirements.
- Reporting required institutional, academic program, and student information to the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) through SEVIS.
- Completing the SEVP recertification process and responding to institutional updates, requests for evidence, and other federal reporting requirements.
- Maintaining UCCS's J-1 Exchange Visitor Program designation through the U.S. Department of State and completing required redesignation and reporting processes.

UCCS's most recent recertification was filed in February 2024 and approved in April 2024, with a Certification Expiration Date (CED) of May 26, 2026. Because institutional updates submitted in January 2025 remained pending with SEVP, UCCS was notified that its CED had been extended through September 2026 while those updates remained under federal review.

UCCS's J-1 Exchange Visitor Program redesignation was approved in April 2025 and is valid through April 21, 2027.

Beginning in July 2025, the PDSO also reinstated regular DSO meetings every six weeks to provide regulatory updates, coordinate institutional compliance practices, and promote consistent implementation of federal requirements across UCCS Designated School Officials.

ISSS Systems, Technology, and Records Management

ISSS Technology and records management are critical components of ISSS operations and institutional immigration compliance. ISSS relies on several interconnected university and federal systems to maintain immigration records, process student requests, complete required federal reporting, communicate with students, and retain documentation in accordance with federal and institutional requirements.

ISSS and Admissions use Sunapsis as UCCS's international student and scholar information management system. Sunapsis interfaces with CU-SIS and supports processes involving the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), the federal system used to maintain required records for F-1 and J-1 students, scholars, and dependents. System updates and configurations are implemented in coordination with University Information Services (UIS), while UCCS ISSS staff conduct substantial campus-level testing and configuration to ensure that workflows reflect UCCS policies, procedures, and immigration advising practices. Accurate data exchange among these systems is essential to federal reporting and institutional compliance.

Document management is also a significant compliance responsibility. International student and scholar documentation must be consistently collected, maintained, and retained in accordance with applicable federal requirements. To support advising, reporting, communication, and records management, the ISSPM and ISSPD regularly use:

- **SEVIS** – The federal system used to maintain and report required information related to international students and exchange visitors.
- **PeopleSoft (CU-SIS)** – The university student information system containing enrollment, academic, contact, financial, and other student information.
- **Sunapsis** – The international student and scholar information management system used to manage immigration records, student requests, and workflows and to support data exchange between university systems and SEVIS.
- **OnBase** – Used to access student documentation associated with admissions and other university records.
- **Drupal** – Used by ISSS staff to maintain and update student-facing web content.
- **Microsoft 365 and Adobe products** – Used for communication, document preparation and processing, data management, accessibility, and other administrative functions.

The ISSS website is also maintained by ISSS staff using Drupal, with more complex changes requiring assistance from the UCCS Office of Information Technology. During

the 2025–2026 organizational transition, website content and branding required substantial updates to reflect the dissolution of International Affairs and the transition to International Student and Scholar Services. Forms, informational materials, and student request processes also require ongoing updates as immigration requirements and institutional procedures change.

Additional opportunities exist to expand the use of Sunapsis for electronic student requests and workflows. Implementing these functions requires staff time, technical expertise, system configuration, testing, and coordination with university technology partners.

Reliable technology infrastructure and staff expertise across these systems are essential to efficiently manage advising and case processing, maintain federally required records, complete immigration reporting, communicate regulatory and institutional changes, and provide students and campus partners with accurate and timely information.

ISSS Programming

During the 2025–2026 academic year, International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), operating within MOSAIC, offered 97 workshops and events, an increase from 79 the previous year. Attendance also continued to grow, with 967 participants attending ISSS programs compared with 736 in 2024–2025. This represents an approximately 31% increase in participation and reflects continued growth in student engagement across educational, cultural, wellness, and community-building initiatives.



ROCK PAINTING EVENT 2026

ISSS programming focused on four primary goals: supporting students' transition to UCCS, providing timely immigration education, fostering community and belonging, and promoting student well-being and academic success. Programming was designed to support students throughout different stages of their UCCS experience while reducing barriers to engagement and creating opportunities for meaningful connection.

Signature transition programs—including International Orientation, Game Night, Ride the City Bus, and the Welcome Brunch—helped new students build connections and become familiar with UCCS and the Colorado Springs community. Throughout the remainder of the academic year, educational workshops addressed topics including Optional Practical Training (OPT), employment authorization, health insurance, transportation, immigration compliance, and career development. Recurring social, cultural, and wellness programming provided additional opportunities for students to build friendships, reduce isolation, and engage with the campus community outside the classroom.

International Student Orientation (Fall and Spring)

The Director of Orientation and New Student Outreach coordinates International Orientation in collaboration with ISSS and numerous campus partners. While ISSS is not the primary office responsible for coordinating the overall orientation program, it plays a critical role by leading the federally required SEVIS Reporting session and ensuring all incoming international students complete mandatory immigration check-in requirements.

The orientation program includes sessions such as Welcome to UCCS, SEVIS Reporting, Scholarship and Tuition Payments, Campus and Resource Tours, and student discussion panels. During the SEVIS Reporting session, ISSS staff verify each student's arrival, review immigration documentation, and update the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) in compliance with federal regulations. Attendance includes new undergraduate and graduate students, exchange students, visiting scholars, and other newly arriving international students.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION

In addition to International Orientation, ISSS offers three signature transition programs each semester: Game Night, Ride the City Bus, and the Welcome Brunch. These events provide students with opportunities to build friendships, become familiar with Colorado Springs, learn to navigate public transportation, and develop a sense of belonging before classes begin. By offering the same transition programming each semester, ISSS ensures all new international students receive consistent support regardless of when they begin their studies.

In preparation for Fall 2025 International Orientation, ISSS partnered with the Director of Orientation and New Student Outreach to further enhance the international student orientation experience. Improvements included the addition of an Orientation Social Hour connecting students with campus departments and student organizations, the continued inclusion of a faculty presentation on classroom expectations and academic integrity in the United States, and expanded make-up SEVIS reporting sessions to ensure every incoming international student completed mandatory federal reporting and check-in requirements.

Workshops

Throughout the academic year, ISSS workshops focused on the topics most relevant to international student success, including Optional Practical Training (OPT), internships, employment authorization, health insurance, driver's licenses, transportation, immigration compliance, wellness, and career development. These workshops complement individual advising by providing timely information to larger groups of students while ensuring consistent guidance regarding federal immigration regulations and university processes.

The four-part OPT Workshop Series continued to be one of ISSS's signature educational programs each semester, helping graduating students understand the employment authorization process and prepare complete and timely applications. Additional workshops are updated annually to reflect changing immigration policies, student feedback, and emerging student needs.

As ISSS has expanded its educational programming, workshops have increasingly served as a proactive advising strategy, allowing staff to address common immigration questions in group settings while reserving individual advising appointments for students with more complex situations. This approach contributed to the reduction in individual advising appointments while maintaining high levels of student engagement.

Community and Belonging Programs

ISSS continued to provide social and community-building opportunities throughout the academic year, recognizing the importance of connection and belonging for students who may be geographically separated from established family and support networks. Programs included the Boba and Ice Cream Social, Mayor's International Reception, Global Learners Book Club, movie and game nights, hikes, creative activities, and other cultural and social events.



**ISSPM AND MOSAIC DIRECTOR AT THE 2025
MAYOR'S RECEPTION WITH INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS**

One of the year's most successful new community-building programs was the Boba and Ice Cream Social, which welcomed approximately 150 students, scholars, faculty, and staff at the beginning of the fall semester. The event provided an opportunity for new students to build friendships, returning students to reconnect, and members of the broader UCCS community to engage with international students and scholars. As seen in the photo to the left, ISSS also participated in the annual Mayor's International Reception, connecting UCCS international students with community leaders and international students from other colleges and universities throughout the Colorado Springs area.

Recurring opportunities for connection continued throughout the academic year. The Global Learners Book Club, which launched in Spring 2025, provided international students and scholars with opportunities to discuss literature, explore cultural perspectives, and build friendships in a relaxed environment. Positive feedback and participation supported its continuation as a recurring ISSS program.

ISSS also continued to support the International Buddy (iBuddy) student organization, with the ISSPM serving as Staff Advisor. Participation and activity were inconsistent during the year due to turnover in student leadership, creating an opportunity to reassess strategies for strengthening the organization and increasing student participation in the future.

Waffle Walk-In Wednesdays

Waffle Walk-In Wednesdays continued throughout the academic year as one of ISSS's highest-impact recurring programs. Held each Wednesday during the fall and spring semesters in collaboration with Education Abroad, these weekly open-door events invited students to enjoy fresh waffles while receiving "sweet solutions" to their questions and concerns.

The program replaced the traditional monthly Coffee Hours beginning in Fall 2024 due to stronger participation and better alignment with student schedules. Rather than focusing on a single topic each month, Waffle Walk-In Wednesdays allow students to receive timely advising, ask questions in a casual environment, and build relationships with ISSS and Education Abroad staff. The weekly format has reduced barriers to seeking assistance while strengthening students' connections with ISSS and Education Abroad staff and increasing the accessibility of informal advising.

Summer Programming

Summer programming continued during 2025 to provide opportunities for international students who remained in Colorado Springs while many domestic students returned home. These programs helped reduce social isolation, encouraged community engagement, and ensured students continued to have meaningful opportunities to connect with ISSS staff and one another throughout the summer months.

Summer programming included community hikes, game nights, and participation in the UCCS First Year Conference, where ISSS facilitated a roundtable discussion on supporting first-year international students. These programs helped sustain community and student engagement during a period when fewer traditional campus activities were available.



SUMMER 2026 HIKE

Mental Health and Well-being

ISSS continued to expand its collaboration with the UCCS Counseling Center to increase awareness of mental health and well-being resources available to international students. Programming included Healing Circles, a Mental Health Panel, wellness workshops, and the development of orientation resources addressing transition stress and available campus support services. ISSS also developed orientation handouts focused on transition stress, stress awareness, and campus mental health resources to encourage students to seek support early in their UCCS experience.

First-Generation and Multicultural (F.A.M.) Graduation Celebration

The First-Generation and Multicultural Graduation Celebration is co-hosted by EA, ISSS, MOSAIC, the LGBTQ+ Resource Center, and the Pre-Collegiate Support and Success Center each May and December. EA and ISSS recognize graduating international

undergraduate and graduate students, departing exchange students and scholars, and students who have completed Education Abroad programs.

The celebration includes recognition of honorees, guest speakers, special recognitions, and a reception. Eligible international education participants receive a green and blue Global Learner Cord with a world pin recognizing their international and global engagement at UCCS. Global Learner Cords were introduced in December 2022 and continue to be awarded each semester. During the 2025–2026 academic year, 38 Global Learner Cords were awarded.

Overall, ISSS programming expanded substantially during the 2025–2026 academic year, with both the number of programs offered and total participation reaching their highest levels in recent years. The growth from 79 to 97 programs and from 736 to 967 participants demonstrates continued demand for opportunities that combine immigration education, student support, community building, and engagement. These outcomes were achieved while ISSS staff simultaneously maintained federal compliance responsibilities and adapted to significant organizational changes during the academic year.

ISSS Communications

ISSS continued to follow a comprehensive communication plan each semester to ensure international students and scholars received timely, accurate, and relevant information throughout the academic year. The communication plan included weekly emails, biweekly newsletters, targeted reminders, holiday greetings, and other communications aligned with the international student lifecycle and academic calendar. Weekly emails focused on immigration updates, travel guidance, employment authorization, important deadlines, and UCCS-related information relevant to international students and scholars. Biweekly newsletters highlighted ISSS and Education Abroad programming, campus events, community opportunities, and student success resources.

During the 2025–2026 academic year, ISSS completed more than 50 planned communications. Beginning in Spring 2026, ISSS also partnered with the CU Boulder International Tax Office to distribute monthly tax-related communications and resources to international students and scholars. Communication templates and messaging were regularly reviewed and updated throughout the year to improve clarity, support proactive advising, and respond to changing student and institutional needs.

In addition to planned communications, ISSS issued numerous time-sensitive updates in response to rapidly changing federal immigration policies and developments affecting international students and scholars, including changes related to international travel, visa processing, and other federal immigration actions. These communications helped students and scholars understand potential impacts, make informed decisions, maintain immigration compliance, and seek individualized advising when necessary.

Friends of Internationals Email List

The Friends of Internationals email list consists of approximately 111 community members, UCCS faculty and staff, domestic students, alumni, international scholars, and others who support the success of UCCS international students and scholars.

Biweekly newsletters are distributed to the Friends of Internationals list in addition to international students and scholars. Contributions from community partners are also welcomed and included, helping promote campus events, volunteer opportunities, and opportunities for community engagement.

The Friends of Internationals list remains an important communication resource for connecting the UCCS campus with the broader Colorado Springs community. Through regular newsletters and shared programming opportunities, the network helps strengthen partnerships that support international students and encourage intercultural engagement throughout the community.

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 ISSS. The international recruiter position within Admissions was eliminated, and Admissions no longer actively recruits international students. Although ISSS is not responsible for recruiting international students, staff provide support to the International Admissions team and assist with prospective students' questions and concerns. International student enrollment alone does not fully reflect ISSS workload, as federal regulatory monitoring, institutional reporting, immigration case complexity, scholar services, campus consultation, and post-completion OPT monitoring continue regardless of changes in enrolled student headcount. Retention of international students is generally high, and students who transfer to other universities do so for a variety of reasons, including academic considerations, changes in major or program, location, and financial factors. ISSS 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.

Recent UCCS retention analyses provide additional insight into factors affecting international student persistence. Institutional data from 2020 through 2025 identified financial challenges, academic fit and program alignment, and changes in immigration status as significant factors associated with international student departures. Additional research examining the experiences of international students who transferred from UCCS identified belonging, campus connection, financial and structural barriers, and access to effective support systems as important factors shaping students' experiences and transfer decisions. These findings reinforce the importance of continued advising, programming, campus partnerships, and other institutional efforts that support international student connection, belonging, and retention.

The elimination of the ISSS administrative assistant position in May 2025 created significant strain on the ability to operate at the level required to serve students and maintain federal compliance. The loss of this role resulted in the redistribution of essential administrative, communication, and event support tasks onto professional staff already managing full compliance and advising workloads. Without dedicated administrative support, sustaining the current volume and quality of services will be increasingly challenging and may reduce capacity for programming, outreach, and other student support initiatives.

While ISSS 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. ISSS remains committed to excellence, but also advocates for sustainable growth models that protect the quality of student and scholar support.

The changing federal immigration environment is also expected to continue creating challenges for international students and scholars and for ISSS operations. Changes to federal regulations, agency guidance, visa and travel policies, and immigration processes may require adjustments to advising, communications, university procedures, and student support. Navigating these changes, communicating timely and accurate information, and supporting students through periods of uncertainty will continue to require significant attention from ISSS.

Opportunities Going Forward

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

Recent UCCS retention analyses also provide opportunities to further strengthen international student support. Exploring strategies with campus partners to address identified barriers, including financial challenges, academic fit, early student engagement, and access to support resources, may help strengthen international student retention. Opportunities may include exploring emergency financial support, strengthening pre-arrival academic connections, and continuing to develop programs that promote belonging and connection to the UCCS community.

We look forward to another positive year of contributing to international student support, success, and retention at UCCS, as well as advancing the internationalization of the campus. By strengthening cross-campus partnerships, advocating for necessary staffing, and leveraging strategic programming, ISSS is well-positioned to build on the growth achieved in 2025–2026.

Moving Forward as a Unit in International Education

ISSS and EA continue to anticipate future challenges in the coming semesters due to the international nature of the work and the need to balance institutional, federal, and international factors affecting programming and student mobility. Education Abroad reached record participation during 2025–2026, while ISSS continued to maintain critical federal compliance functions and expand student programming and engagement.

Building on the participation and engagement achieved in 2025–2026, the priority will be sustaining this momentum while adapting to changing global, political, and institutional landscapes. EA and ISSS 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, ISSS 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 foster belonging throughout their time at UCCS will be central to this work.

Education Abroad plans to continue expanding faculty- and staff-directed short-term programs and increasing access to opportunities for underrepresented student groups. With 12 programs anticipated for 2026–2027, Education Abroad is positioned to continue strengthening short-term, high-impact international experiences for UCCS students.

EA and ISSS will also continue to contribute to the field of international education through conference presentations, reporting, workshops, and campus-wide training initiatives while strengthening UCCS's role in supporting international student success and global engagement.

The 2025–2026 results demonstrate both the resilience of international education staff and the limitations of the current organizational structure. Staff preserved federal compliance and achieved significant programmatic successes despite reduced administrative support and expanded responsibilities. At the same time, declines in overall engagement, reduced marketing and outreach capacity, student confusion following the dissolution of International Affairs, and limitations on new program development illustrate the operational costs of the restructuring. Sustaining or expanding current levels of service will require an organizational model, staffing structure, and resource allocation that recognize the specialized and highly regulated nature of international education.