

# International Affairs 2021-2022 Annual Report

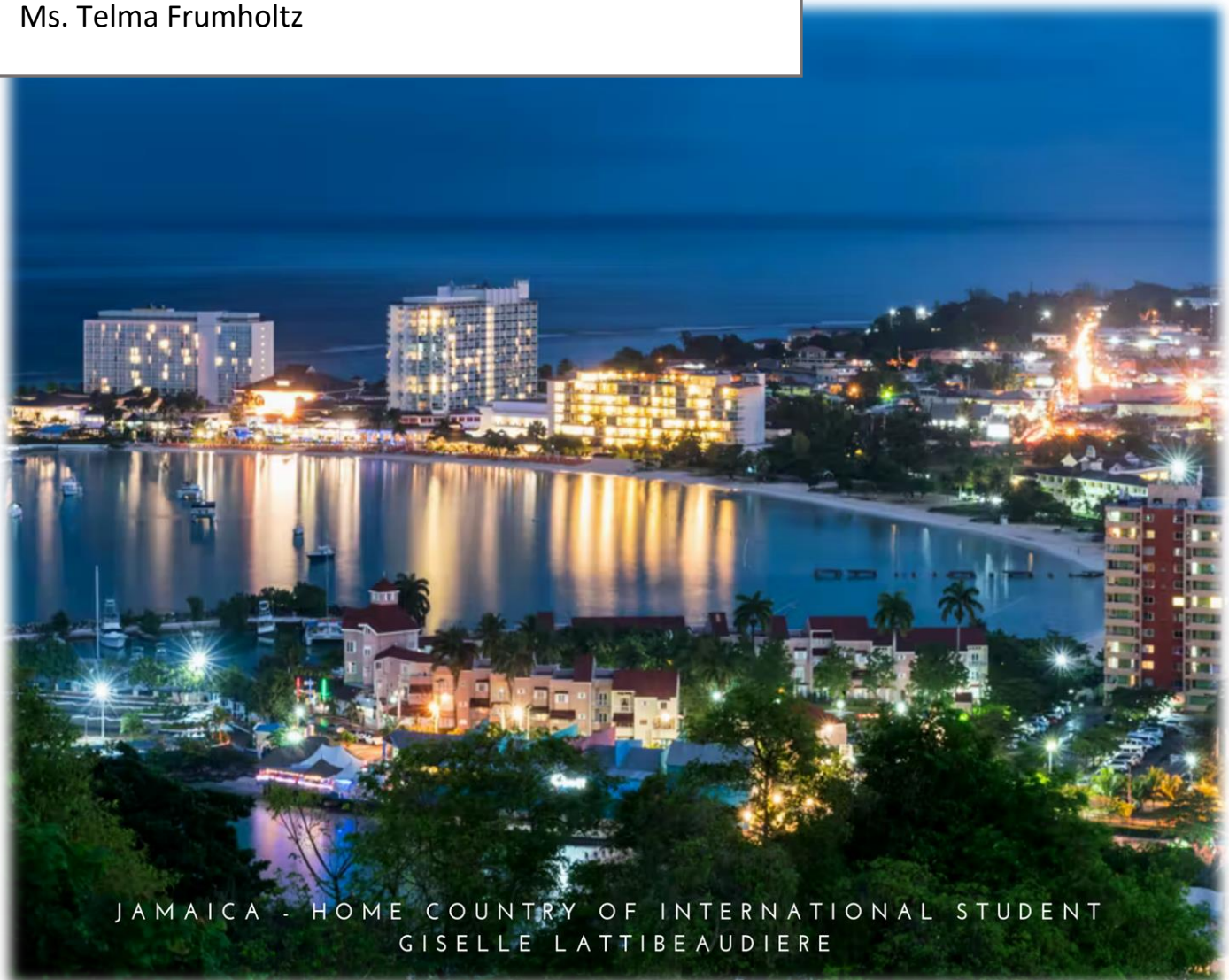
*A report on the Summer 2021, Fall 2021, Winter 2021-2022, and Spring 2022 terms*

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JAMAICA - HOME COUNTRY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT  
GISELLE LATTIBEAUDIERE

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## Executive Summary

The 2021-2022 academic year continued to have global impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the suspension of education abroad programming in summer and fall 2021 along with visa delays for incoming international students and scholars, significant advances continued to promote and support international education efforts at UCCS.

Below is a summary of some 2021-2022 Academic Year highlights included in this report:

- The office and the UCCS community hosted 21 international scholars from 13 countries.
- International Affairs provided programming, immigration support, and a friendly environment to 158 total international students from 54 countries.
- Engineering and computer science continue to serve as the number one-degree area international students pursue at UCCS.
- Due to health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, International Affairs was not able to send any students abroad Summer 2021 and Fall 2021. However, the first group did go abroad to Ghana over winter 2021-2022 and education abroad participation numbers are increasing with an anticipated return to pre-pandemic levels by 2024-2025.
- The office filed with the Federal government for UCCS recertification for the F international student program and received Federal-level approval on the Form I-17 recertification petition; therefore, able to continue to host F-1 international students and their dependents.
- Education Abroad-related procedures and guidelines that align with CU-system schools and best practices were further developed and implemented with support of senior leadership and international risk management.
- Staff positions were filled due to vacancies to support the continuation of international student and scholar advising and education abroad advising. A new part-time program manager for international student and scholar advising was created to support the growing compliance and reporting responsibilities as well as timely student support.
- A combination of in-person and virtual meetings and programming were implemented to support international education efforts.

# Introduction

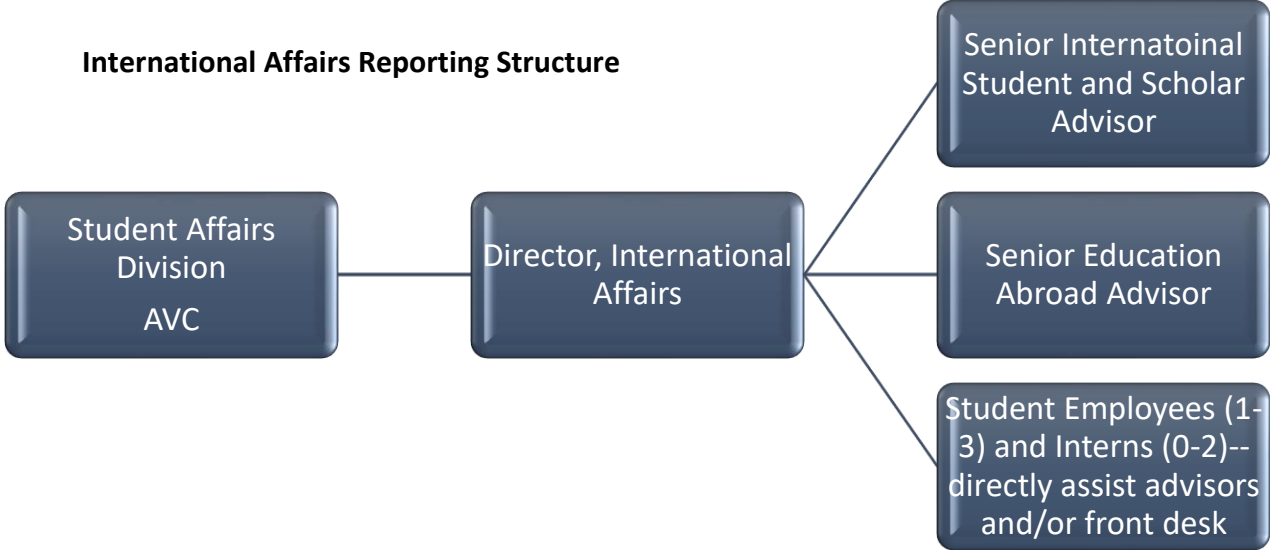
The 2021-2022 academic year was a continuum of unanticipated global events that required the suspension of education abroad programming in summer and fall 2021 and intense efforts devoted to supporting education abroad students as well as international students and scholars.

International Affairs provides all core international student and scholar advising functions and federal immigration reporting as well as education abroad advising inclusive of risk management abroad. UCCS students continue to be served with the utmost attention due to international education expertise and staffing. Annually, campus programming that bolsters internationalization is facilitated in addition to supporting students, along with the support of international delegations and sharing of partnership development opportunities with the colleges and schools.

It is important to recognize that International Affairs continues to be a young international center within a higher education context. In addition, the office has limited staff in comparison to similar higher education institutions throughout Colorado and the United States of America. The office was established in 2012 as a result of the UCCS 2020 strategic plan, in which Goal 4 focused on internationalization.

## International Affairs Office Structure

The chart below is an organizational chart for International Affairs in 2021-2022. The director formally supervises student employees and interns. However, the advising staff are paired with a student employee or intern for additional mentorship, training, and direct assistance within their respective areas.



It is important to note that effective July 1, 2022, International Affairs is reorganized to better advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and internationalization. The unit will report to the new Vice Chancellor of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

## Office Visits

The office offers centralized international education services for students and scholars with a focus on education abroad and international student and scholar services. Due to the pandemic operations, a hybrid format with in-person and remote functions ensued. There continued to be a steady rate for international student participation in the virtual workshops and virtual meetings. Further, in-person and remote participation increased in the area of education abroad as interest and applications continued, but at lower levels due to the pandemic. The office had a total of 227 individual in-person visits/meeting from August 2021-May 31, 2022.

## Internships and Training in International Education

The international education field is expansive. For example, the annual international education conference, NAFSA: Association for International Educators, welcomes more than 10,000 attendees from across the United States and around the world. There continues to be a growing interest in learning about international education efforts at UCCS. Inquiries, informational interviews, and internship requests are from students, community members, and international colleagues.

The director and IA team shared about the field of international education and the efforts of International Affairs at UCCS via one-on-one meetings with individuals. As a result of such efforts, the director met or held conference calls with three individuals interested in the field over the course of the past year. These were a combination of current students, recent graduates, employees, and individuals outside of UCCS.

## Fulbright Student and Scholar Advising

International Affairs continues to uphold Fulbright advising liaison responsibilities that were transitioned to the office in 2016. Advising is shared with an additional official Fulbright Advisor and Representative at UCCS, Dr. Fred Coolidge. This year two UCCS faculty were awarded Fulbright Scholarships. Recipients are as follows and will complete their Fulbright Scholar program in 2022-2023:

- Dr. Scott Kupferman, Education, Japan
- Dr. Robert Camley, Physics, Australia

The director collaborated with the College of Education to bring a visiting Fulbright Scholar to campus under the Fulbright Outreach Lecturing Fund. The granting of funding and permission to come to UCCS was approved by Fulbright and additional support came from the College of Education, International Affairs, and the visiting scholar. Dr. Viacheslav Lipatov was hosted by Dr. Scott Kupferman for a variety of lectures on the topic(s) of special education and technology; one specific lecture was titled as follows: "The inclusion of disabled people (a case study of Russia, Uzbekistan,

and the USA)". The visit also included an introduction to key community cultural areas and attractions.



Top Picture: Dr. Lipatov with Dr. Kupferman at Pikes Peak



Bottom Picture: Dr. Lipatov with Dr. Hansen at Garden of the Gods

One-on-one student and scholar Fulbright advising is facilitated by the Director of International Affairs and the UCCS Faculty Advisor. The director also manages the Fulbright student nomination process. Email communication was developed and sent to students, faculty, and staff about Fulbright opportunities (faculty and student related). In addition, there was promotion of virtual Fulbright workshops, one-on-one meetings convened with students, faculty, and staff on such programs, and collaboration with the Communique to honor UCCS Fulbright participants, all of which support campus-wide promotion of Fulbright opportunities.

## Community and International Partnerships

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



- Student Exchange Visitor Program (Regional Representative), International Student and Scholar Overview
- Peace Corps representative virtual visit
- Meetings with international organizations, like EducationUSA, that explored virtual partnerships and interest
- Participation in state-wide meetings with an international focus as related to Education Abroad and International Student and Scholar Services
- Colorado Springs World Affairs Council, discussions on future project proposal for the International Visitor Program
- Several meetings with incoming higher education focused international mobility and internationalization contractors/providers focused on Saudi Arabia, India, and China

## Agreements and Memos of Understanding

The office works with faculty, colleges, and academic units to support the establishment of partnerships that are strategic and sustainable. The office deferred to the College of Business on the renewal of several business-focused student exchange agreements so that this college can continue to balance the exchanges that originated within the college. The office also worked to renew exchange agreements in France and South Korea. The office facilitated the completion of over 7 international service provider agreements for short-term programming support and maintains over 15 Memos of Understanding (MOUs) and Letters of Intent.

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

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

- Mandy Hansen, International Affairs, Chair
- Tia Grigg, Legal Counsel
- James Duval, CU Risk Management
- Debi O'Connor, Compliance
- Michele Companion, Faculty
- Curtis Holder, Faculty
- Michael Sanderson, Export Control

The Committee was integral to establishing student safety during the pandemic this year and was proactive with its recommendations for student travel abroad throughout the pandemic. The Committee convenes monthly to review student travel to at-risk countries and make recommendations to the Chancellor for review and a final decision on such travel. During fall semester 2021, the Committee decided to permit international student travel and the first group of students departed to Ghana over winter 2021-2022.

The Director of International Affairs and the CU Risk Manager at UCCS work together and attend CU International Risk Management meetings. Lists of students going abroad with relevant emergency contact details are sent each semester to the CU Risk Manager and AVC of Student Affairs and protocol is followed in accordance with direction and best practices from the CU system and peer schools.

## International Education Programming

Each area's report below details programming and activities within their specialized fields, however, below are some key International Affairs events. The office organizes events that bring students together in social, cultural, and educational settings. Key programming initiatives occurred as follows:

### International Student & Scholar Certificate Recognition

The International Farewell was initially conceived in Fall 2015 to honor departing international students and scholars and intensive English students advancing a level.

This event, held by IA at the end of each fall and spring term, celebrates students in the following categories:

- Graduate international students completing a degree in that semester
- Undergraduate international students completing a degree in that semester
- Departing exchange students
- Departing international scholars

Departing students were honored with certificates and a special feature in the IA newsletter. The picture below features two graduating international students, both of whom have employment offers after graduation: Dongliang from China, STEM Ph.D. and Tanghid from Bangladesh, STEM Ph.D.



## International Week 2021

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

In 2021, International Education Week events were held Monday, November 15– Friday, November 19. The schedule included Education Abroad advising events, a career workshop focused on international experiences for employment, Fulbright webinars, a workshop for International Student Options after Graduation, an OPT Workshop, and international virtual opportunities for the online learning environment.

 A poster for International Education Week 2021, November 15-19. The poster features a central QR code and a schedule of events for each day. The events include:
 

- Monday, 11/15:** 4:00-6:00 PM - ELC Table Games (International Activity) @ ELC Language Center
- Tuesday, 11/16:** 2:00-3:00 PM - Options After Graduation: HELL, Other Visas & Permanent Residency (Via Teams); 2:00-3:00 PM - Education Abroad Opportunities with Program Partner USAC (Via Zoom)
- Wednesday, 11/17:** 5:30-6:30 PM - International Student Panel: Success Stories from UCCS Graduates (Via Teams); 4:00-5:00 PM - Abroad 101 Live Sessions (Via Teams)
- Thursday, 11/18:** 2:00-3:00 PM - Harnessing Your International Experience for Career Success (Via Teams)
- Friday, 11/19:** 3:00-4:00 PM - Languages in the Commons: Copper Academic Commons (Via Teams); 4:00-5:00 PM - 1:1sk with Study (Copper House 9202)

 The poster also includes the UCCS International Affairs logo and contact information: @UCCSINTERNATIONAL, #UCCSINTERNATIONAL, 18-203-5848, and the UCCS logo (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs).

## Friends of Internationals Email List

'Friends of Internationals' is an email list used to communicate pertinent upcoming workshops and news to international students and scholars as well as community members both within and outside of UCCS that support International Affairs' efforts and the students and scholars the office serves. The list constitutes over 70 UCCS faculty, staff, and community members. Positive feedback from recipients is often received after they have had a chance to view the electronic newsletters that are sent to the international student and scholar population. Contributions for the newsletter from these friends are also welcome and included in the newsletter for international students. International Affairs' relationship with the campus and community is integral to the success of the office and international student/scholar support.

## Annual International Student Panel

This panel is coordinated in conjunction with Intercultural Communications within the Communication Department. The event was held virtually in Spring 2022 and was attended by over 70 students; panelists included international students. Panelists shared their experiences as international students studying at UCCS and living in the United States. The students that attended were well engaged and asked questions ranging from politics to social activities.

## International Affairs Strategic Planning and External Review

The 2019-2025 International Affairs strategic plan was finalized in 2019. During 2019, International Affairs staff met to identify strengths and opportunities to develop and define goals. Goals were identified and the plan was developed to align with the divisional plan. Feedback was received from students with experience in each area as well as the Vice Chancellor for Student Success. Implementation efforts commenced in Fall 2019, with completion of various elements occurring throughout the plan cycle.

The IA strategic plan has five goals:

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

These goals share a common purpose of ensuring a vibrant international experience for students. While some goals and strategies are one-time, many involve ongoing processes. A progress report is anticipated for the 2022-2023 academic year as the last one was completed in 2020-2021. To review the IA strategic plan, please visit [uccs.edu/international](https://uccs.edu/international) and click on "About Us."

To continue to highlight the external review conducted for International Affairs in 2021, the summary below highlights some core strengths as well as opportunities and recommendations as follows:

### Strengths

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

### Opportunities and Recommendations

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

## Moving Forward

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, IA continues to anticipate future challenges in the coming semesters due to the international nature of the office's work and the need to balance institutional, federal, and international impacts on programming and student mobility. Decreases in international student enrollments over the past years will hopefully rebound as will education abroad participation. The advances made prior to the pandemic will become baselines for future growth. However, the lessons learned about the importance of hybrid programming will continue to inform the office's outreach to meet students and other strategic partner needs.

Staff expertise will continue to be needed since there are still students that wish to go abroad, as evidenced by growing education abroad applications and outbound mobility programs. Overall, current, and future UCCS students still want to plan for future experiences and travel internationally, whether to pursue their degree here on campus as international students or to study abroad around the world.

The following pages provide a report for the past year and include sections on moving forward for the year to come for both Education Abroad and International Student and Scholar Services.

## Education Abroad

Education abroad professionals require people skills as well as data management skills. The education abroad advisor's (EAA) role involves nuanced advising for and outreach to students, staff, and faculty across a wide range of fields, with a need-to-know information about administrative processes on campus as well as the visa requirements of various countries and program details of the many partners. This expansive knowledgebase includes an in-depth understanding of world travel, education systems, and other countries visa requirements.

In addition, the Terra Dotta system used to manage and track education abroad participation and risk management data requires the education abroad advisor to have technological savvy, data maintenance knowledge, and report writing skills. Through Terra Dotta, the EAA creates and maintains lists of students going abroad and relevant emergency contact details for each term, thereby contributing to risk management abroad. Among other duties, the EAA also creates and updates program information pages, assists students with the application process, and oversees program offerings to ensure a diversity of excellent options for students.

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

Through all the above, as well as close partnerships with other departments and offices across campus, the education abroad advisor works to incorporate meaningful experiences abroad into each student's degree and learning outcomes and to grow interest and participation in education abroad here at UCCS.

Below is an application and summary report for education abroad. While the last 3 years have included significant level of COVID impact, it's clear that interest in Education Abroad continues to exist as programs return. This summary report will be used to set future application and enrolled student goals and staff anticipate a return to pre-pandemic levels by 2024-2025.

Year-on-Year	Applications	Pending	Accepted	Committed (Went Abroad)	Withdrawn	% Applicants Abroad	% Accepts Abroad
2021-2022	163	0	55	51	108	31.3	33.7
2020-2021	256	0	0	0	256	0	0
2019-2020	344	0	178	178	166	51.7	51.7
2018-2019	416	0	190	190	226	45.7	45.7
2017-2018	262	0	178	178	84	67.9	67.9
2016-2017	165	0	123	123	42	74.5	74.5
Total	1606	0	724	720	882	44.8	45.1

## COVID-19 Response & Impact

This report references the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on UCCS education abroad with the steady increased return of programs during the second half of 2021-22 keeping the health and safety concerns at the forefront of the reopening.

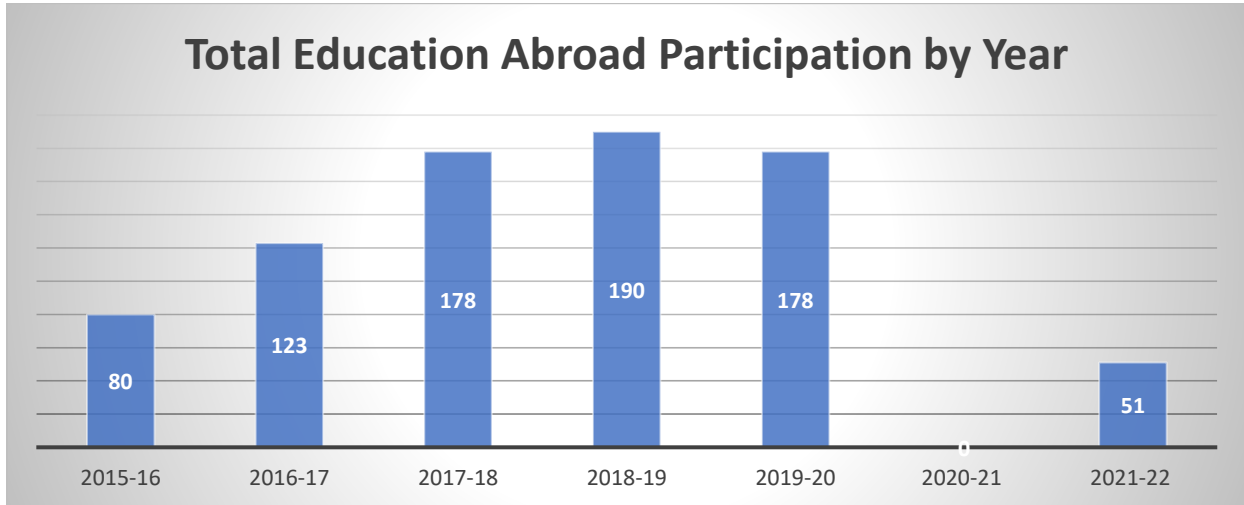
Over the previous year, the Chancellor-appointed International Risk Management Committee comprised of faculty and staff across the campus, including legal counsel, compliance, the campus risk management office, and others, has met monthly to determine if student travel abroad would be safe. A rolling report of applicants, their intended destinations, U.S. Department of State and Centers for Disease Control travel alerts, International SOS reports, and country-specific entry/exit requirements was generated monthly for each meeting and was assessed alongside several other factors. In the end, for the safety of our students, Summer 2021 remained cancelled, Fall 2021 remained cancelled, Winter 2021-22 was approved and one student group went abroad, Spring 2022 was approved with several semester-long programs and two Spring Break programs. In the end, a total of 54 students were approved to go abroad, 51 of which went abroad on their programs.

Interest has remained high and as marketing for the next academic year's full return has grown, so has attendance at promotional events. We ended the academic year with a total of 163 submitted applications, including those of the students who were able to study abroad.

## Annual Overview

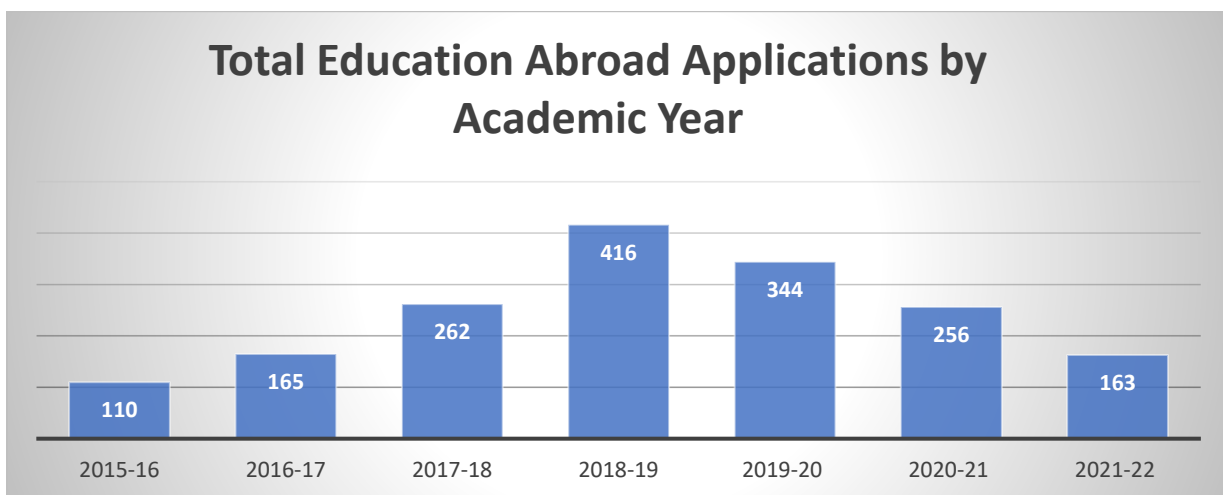
During the 2021-22 academic year – from Summer 2021 to Spring 2022 – Education Abroad at UCCS saw a steady level of interest in participation in education abroad opportunities despite the pandemic. Due to health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, International Affairs was only able to send students during the second half of the cycle but still compiled a total of 163 applications—an understandable 32.6% decrease in applications from the previous year, but as this was the first-year programs were reintroduced, 51 participants were a positive increase. According to the Institute of International Education Open Doors report for 2021, national education abroad participation decreased by 53% from the prior academic year, crediting the pandemic with the high rate of decline. UCCS International Affairs

education abroad applications declined less than the national average and represents both International Affairs' efforts to promote and support education abroad as well as strong UCCS student interest in education abroad opportunities despite the realities of the pandemic.



## Education Abroad Applications

The chart below shows the total education abroad applications. International Affairs works with applicants with the goal that each application materializes in an enrolled student or education abroad participant. Robust communication efforts as well as in-person and virtual meeting formats aid in applications advancing into actual participants. As a reminder the academic year is summer, fall, winter, and spring. For 2021-2022 this includes Summer 2021, Fall 2021, Winter 2021-2022 and Spring 2022. The chart below details the total education abroad applications by academic year.



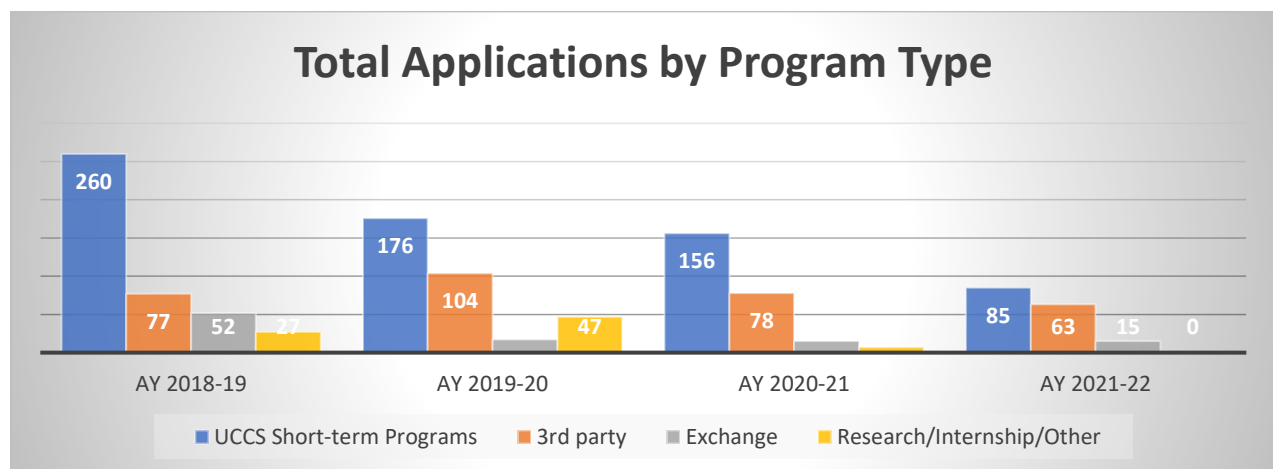
The popularity of summer programming, especially short-term programming abroad, continues to be the spotlight in education abroad. Student interest in shorter programs



is a growing trend at UCCS as well as nationally as it is a way for students to have an abroad experience while still being able to fulfill responsibilities at home, work, and study.

The chart below details education abroad applications by program type (UCCS Short-term, 3<sup>rd</sup> party providers, Exchanges, Research/Internship/Other). The data continues to show significant growth in third-party programming, as well as continued strength in UCCS short-term programs. Third-party programming or provider programs are education abroad experiences organized by companies or non-profits that partner with universities to provide avenues abroad. These partners are key to UCCS helping to ensure student support for participants while abroad and helping to mitigate risk management and emergency issues.

Program Providers offer a great variety of countries and areas of study to choose from and offer a high level of student support prior, during, and after the student’s time abroad; some even have scholarship funding available. Students will pay a "program fee" directly to the provider which usually includes tuition and fees, accommodation for the duration of the program, insurance, some excursions, and on-site support.

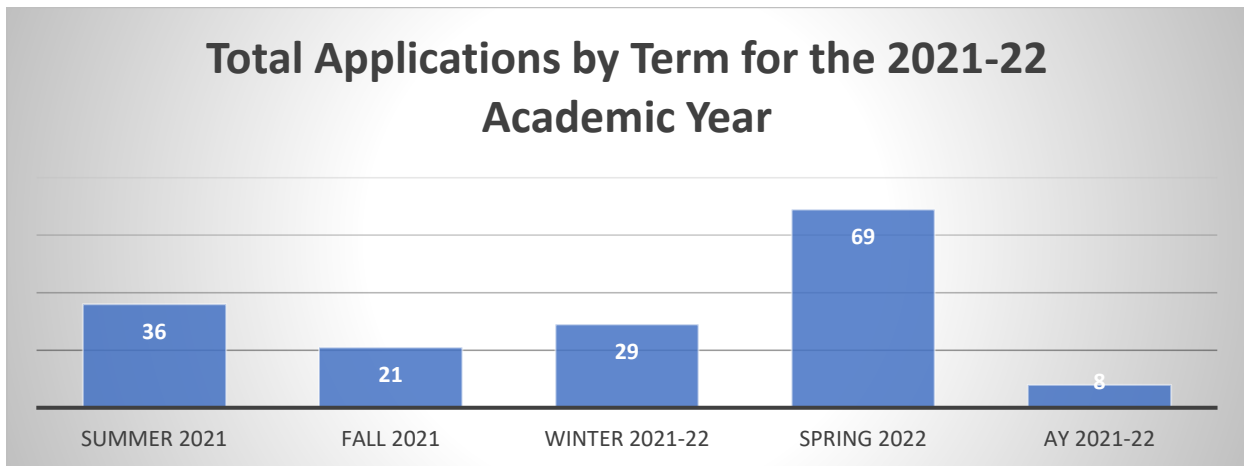


As shown above, applications for UCCS short-term programs went down from the previous year from 156 to 85, in main part due to the limited program offerings and program cancellations due to the pandemic.

The 2021-22 academic year represented the third year of a major push to promote UCCS short-term programming on a cyclical schedule, with calls to faculty and staff for program development in the winter and early spring semester, requests for proposals and paperwork in late spring semester (due April 1), and the development of promotional materials prior to the end of spring semester. This cycle allows program leaders to share their upcoming program with students and helps students prepare and save over the summer for participation in the next academic year short-term programs. This method continues to be effective as the office turns its attention to the 2022-23 academic year, garnering 6 anticipated programs for next year. It is important to note this this past year proposal cycle did result in some delays from providers and their

proposals. Many had layoffs and confronted staffing issues due to the pandemic and that resulted in some longer timeframes for proposal development.

As shown in the chart below, education abroad application growth continued across terms, indicating a continued interest in education abroad programs. It is anticipated that the office will be at pre-pandemic application levels by 2024.



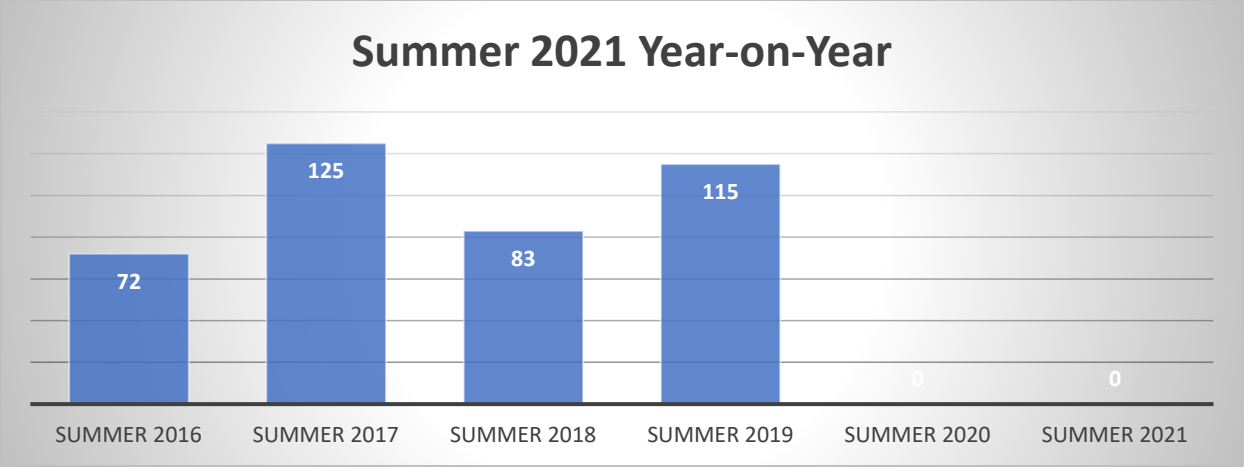
Winter participation decreased primarily due to only having one program, Global Brigades, due to pandemic-related travel. Short-term program options will continue to represent the growth of education abroad and are good options for UCCS students as they are more likely to be non-traditional students and/or students with responsibilities that make longer term program participation difficult. The term with the heaviest intended and completed participation over the 2021-22 academic year, spring, was dominated by UCCS short-term programs.

## Education Abroad Participation - Term Overviews

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

### Summer 2021 Overview

Total: 0 Participants (due to pandemic cancellations), 36 Applications and Intended Participants



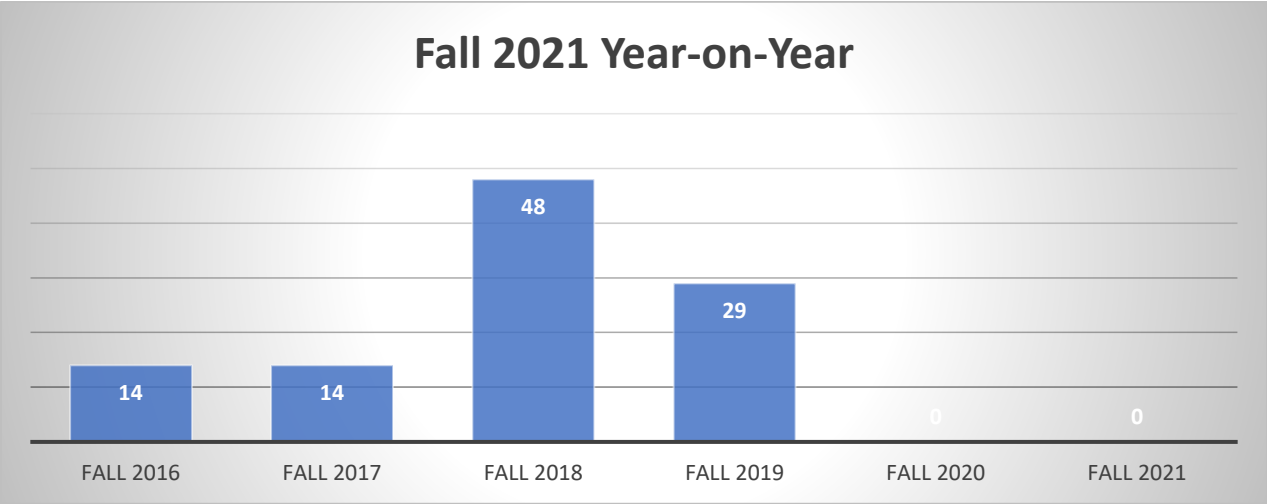
As the chart above demonstrates, a sustained trend had been emerging, which lost momentum in Summer 2020 and 2021 due to cancelled program offerings because of the pandemic.

A continued focus for summer programming should be on short-term programs as this continues to be the most popular option for education abroad programming. Along with supporting UCCS faculty and staff with short-term programming, a diversity of other summer programs as well as student group programming should also continue to be encouraged. As more student groups become interested in education abroad programs, there may be still larger growth in summer participation, since this can more readily accommodate school schedules and cost considerations (that tend to be less due to the shorter period of study).

**Intended Countries of Destination Summer 2021:** United Kingdom, Japan, Italy, Uganda, Philippines, South Korea, France, Mexico, Spain, France, Tanzania, Ireland

[Fall 2021 Overview](#)

Total: 0 Participants (due to pandemic cancellations), 21 Applications and Intended Participants

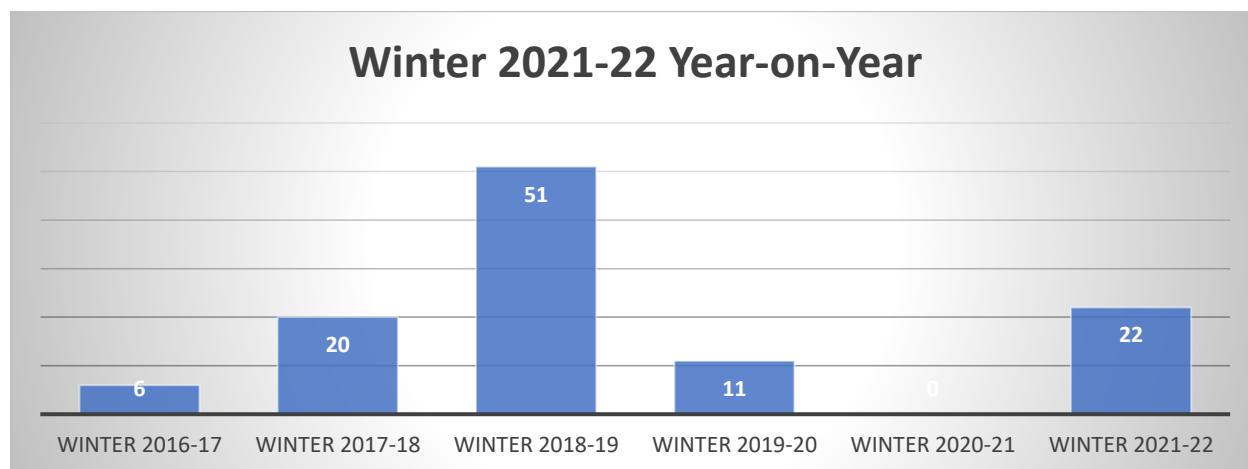


Fall 2021 saw 21 students interested in participating in the education abroad programs. The spike in Fall 2018 itself enjoyed the highest participation rates due to a rapidly growing interest in 3<sup>rd</sup> party providers, with participation increasing 128% over the previous year. The overall increase in program provider participation suggests that interest in more traditional education abroad programming is on the rise for UCCS students.

### Winter 2021-22 Overview

Total: 22 Participants, 29 Applications and Intended Participants

One program was offered over the winter term due to the global pandemic. The unprecedented nature of the ongoing crisis fully impacted participation. As it was through the Global Brigades Student Group, all participants were from this student group.



While third party programs continue to provide the greatest appeal, winter may be a good fit for students pursuing Short-term programming.

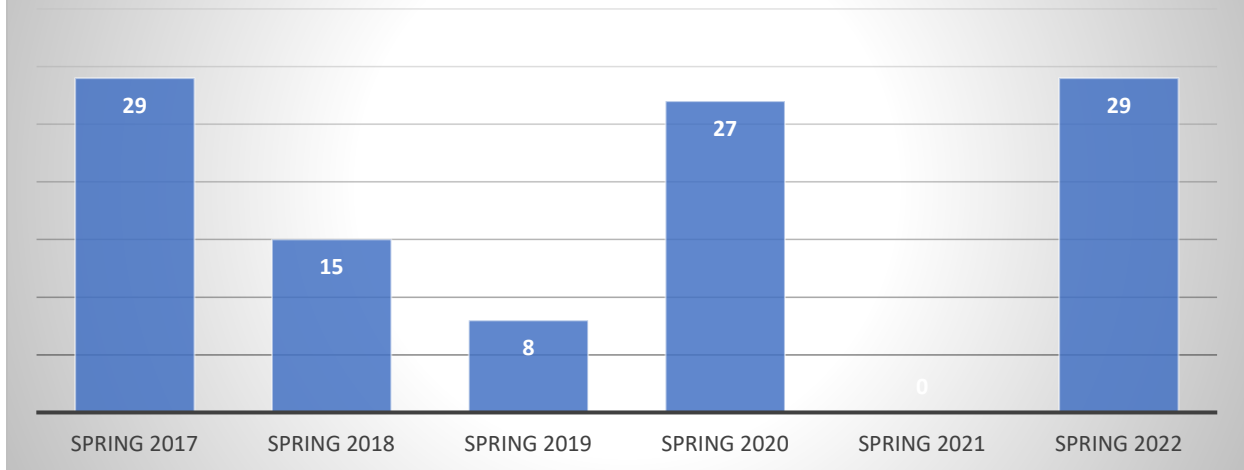
**Countries of Destination Winter 2021-22:** Ghana

### Spring 2022 Overview

Total: 29 Participants, 69 Applications and Intended Participants

Spring 2022 shows a gradual emergence from the impact of the global pandemic. This trend has continued as countries worldwide return to a “new normal” of operations and begin to allow travel even as the United States itself is opening up.

## Spring 2022 Year-on-Year



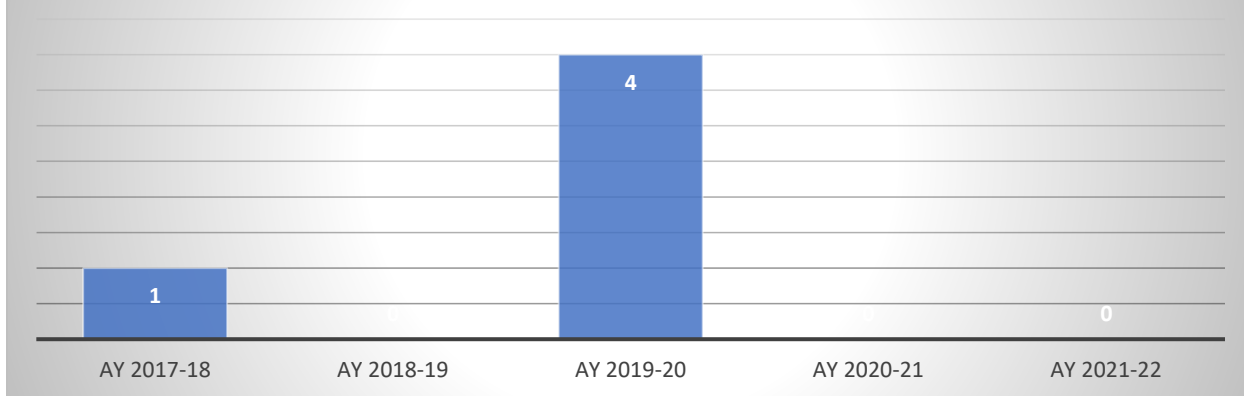
It is important to continue to highlight that this was the first semester students were able to go abroad on a small number of programs. Interest in 3<sup>rd</sup> party programming is growing, as well as interest in UCCS' own short-term offerings. It will remain important to support these areas moving thoughtfully and effectively forward.

**Countries of Destination Spring 2022** Costa Rica, Uganda, France, Italy, Scotland, Thailand, Colombia, Norway

### [Academic Year 2021-22 Overview](#)

Total: 0 Participants (due to pandemic cancellations), 8 Intended Participants

## Academic Year 2021-22 Year-on-Year



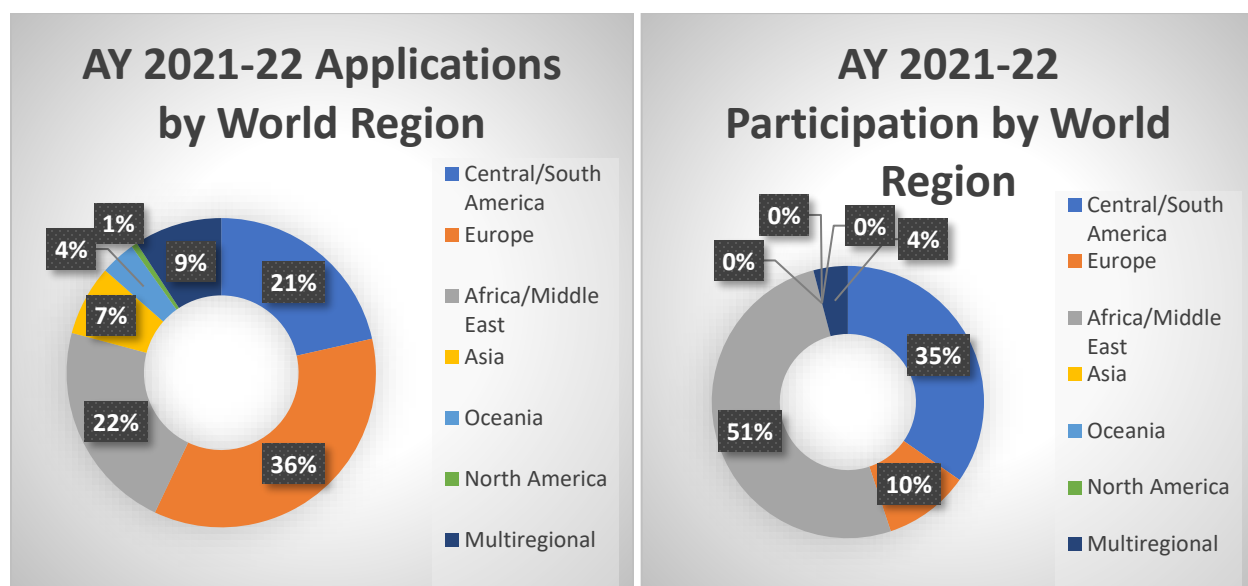
The generally low participation in Academic Year programs is likely due to the significant monetary and time commitments involved in going abroad for a full nine-to-ten months, especially since UCCS students so strongly value affordability and flexibility as demonstrated by the popularity of short-term programming.

There is significant interest in 3<sup>rd</sup> party programming over exchanges, much like the fall term, perhaps because there is often greater flexibility and more support from program providers when it comes to going abroad for a year. It is likely that this trend will continue into the future as well.

## Regional Participation

As with national trends, Europe remains a popular destination for education abroad experiences in all categories from faculty-led to exchange and 3rd party partners. As the number of programs available in 2021-22 was limited, there is a substantial increase in popularity in Africa. This can be attributed to the fact that out of the few UCCS sponsored short-term programs, 2 were to Africa, accounting for the majority of students abroad.

Overall, the Office of International Affairs sent 51 UCCS students to 7 countries on 4 continents over the 2021-22 academic year.

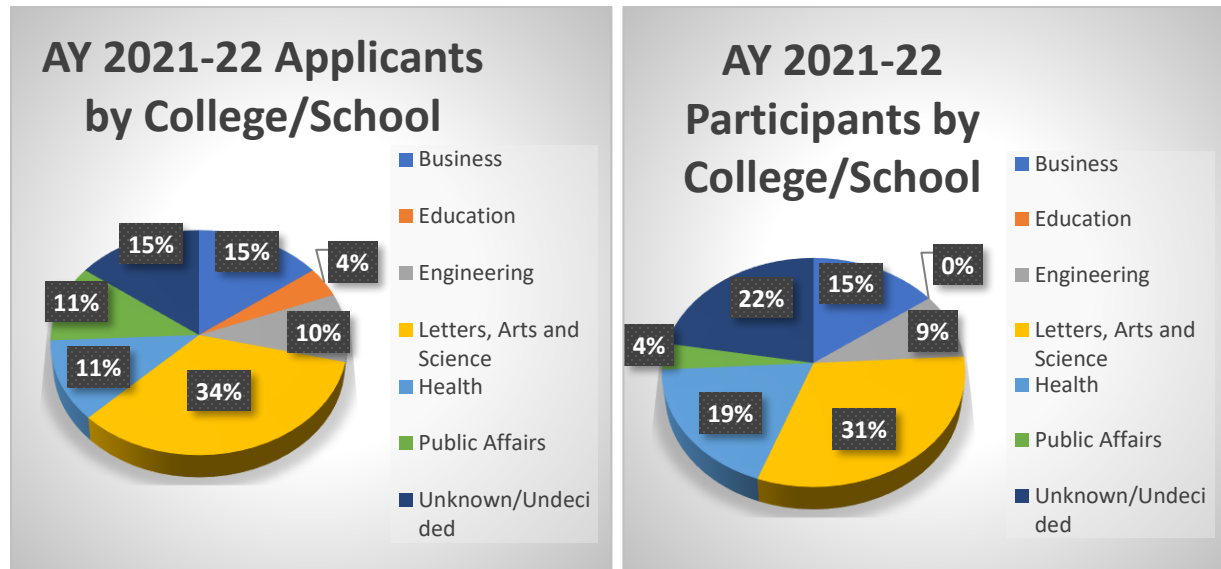


Looking at the world region chart above, we do see some shifts in numbers. While Europe remains the most popular with applications, the programs that were available favored Africa/Middle East. Multiregional programs continue to represent a small percentage of total students abroad, while Asia and Central/South America are slightly on the rise. Looking strictly at application numbers, Europe continues to be the most popular region of interest. The lack of Oceania and Asia representation in actual participation is likely due to well-known stringent COVID-19 regulations in those regions, significantly impacting student interest in the area as practical places to apply in the hopes of traveling during the pandemic.

## Participation by UCCS College/School

The charts below are pie graphs that detail applications and participation rates by self-identified school or college. The percentages include a total of 163 applicants and the

51 actual participants by their self-identified school or college. It shows overall participation rates by college/school and highlights the continued overall dominance of the College of Letters, Arts and Science in education abroad but also reveals a lack of actual participants from the College of Education. The Colleges of Business and Health Sciences and Nursing continue to be fairly popular Colleges for education abroad.



## College and School Data Summaries

The **College of Letters, Arts and Sciences** continues to be the most represented among those apply and study abroad. While this college contains the most majors on campus, the areas of study it contains, such as the foreign language majors/minors, also lend themselves most easily to education abroad. Thirty-four percent (34%) of the intended participants, and 31% of the actual participants are housed in this College.

The historical relationship that the **College of Business** has with exchange partners, as well as having an international marketing major, also makes sure it is represented well. While there was a small increase in applications, the increase was slight and likely due to the limited availability of programs and the inability to bring back any of the exchanges throughout the 2021-22 academic year.

**Health Sciences and Nursing** has benefitted from an annual student group program, Global Brigades, and an increased number of programs offered abroad for health sciences in previous years. As this trip was one of the few going abroad during 2021-22 academic year, they saw a participation rate of 19%.

The **College of Education** still lacks study abroad numbers outside of the UCCS short-term graduate program. Again, early access to students to inform them of their options will help to grow numbers in this school. While there was a small interest in the application pool, none of the interested parties were able to go on their chosen program.

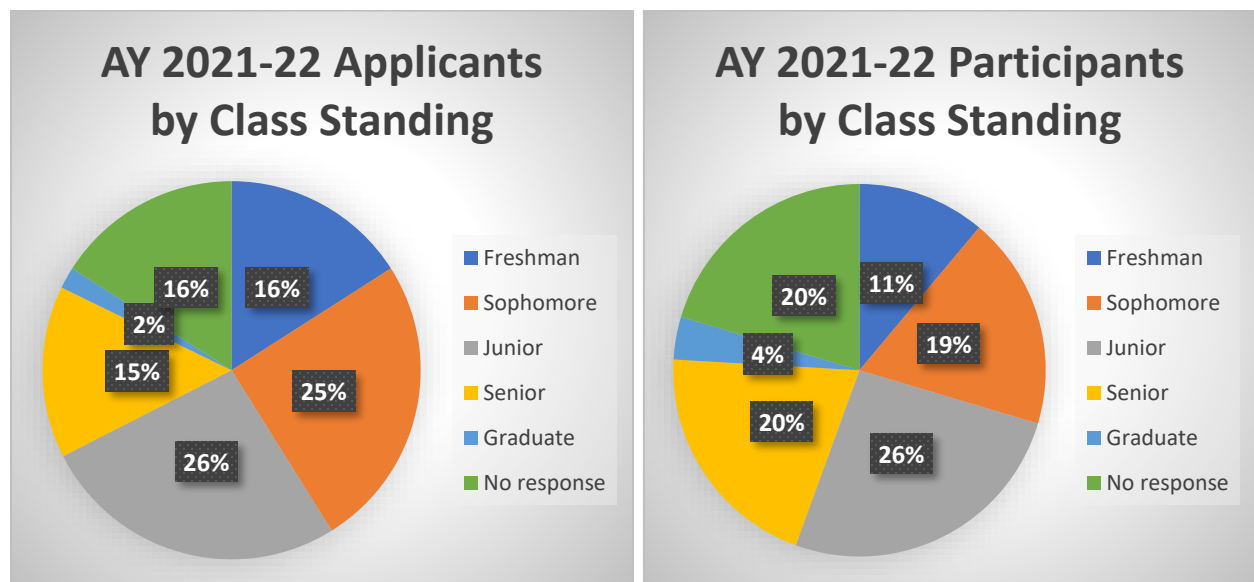
The **College of Engineering and Applied Sciences** students are seen to have the desire to go abroad, and mostly go on summer or winter STEM programs abroad. With one of the small Faculty-led trips being Engineering geared, this college's numbers can be expected to continue fairly consistently and/or grow at a slight incline based on the popularity and growth of STEM programs.

The **School of Public Affairs** has significant presence with short-term programs abroad, specifically Criminal Justice in London. While a small number of students were able to show interest in the Criminal Justice short term program, it was cancelled before ever taking off, showing a significant decrease in the presence of the school. As short-term programming resumes, a new rising pattern will hopefully be found.

It is important to note that not all students going abroad identify a major or degree as part of the registration to go abroad. For example, 24 applicants versus 19 last year indicated no major.

### Participation by UCCS Class Standing

As the below chart shows, juniors participated in education abroad the most out of any class, followed closely by sophomores in 2021-22. Twenty-six percent (26%) of education abroad students were juniors and 19% sophomores, a slight decrease in participation for both in comparison to the prior year. On the other hand, the 11% freshman, 20% senior, and 4% graduate are all fairly on trend with previous years, except for a slight surge in senior participation. This can likely be attributed to many students taking advantage of the few short-term programs prior to graduation as limited options opened.



Given the complexities of upper division coursework and schedules, it's interesting to note how many juniors and seniors are participating in education abroad. This suggests that upper-level coursework may not be quite as big a barrier as previously thought. Further research on the intersection between class standing and college/school should



be considered to determine if there are certain programs or areas of study in which travelling later in the undergraduate career is more manageable for students.

## Education Abroad by Reported Gender

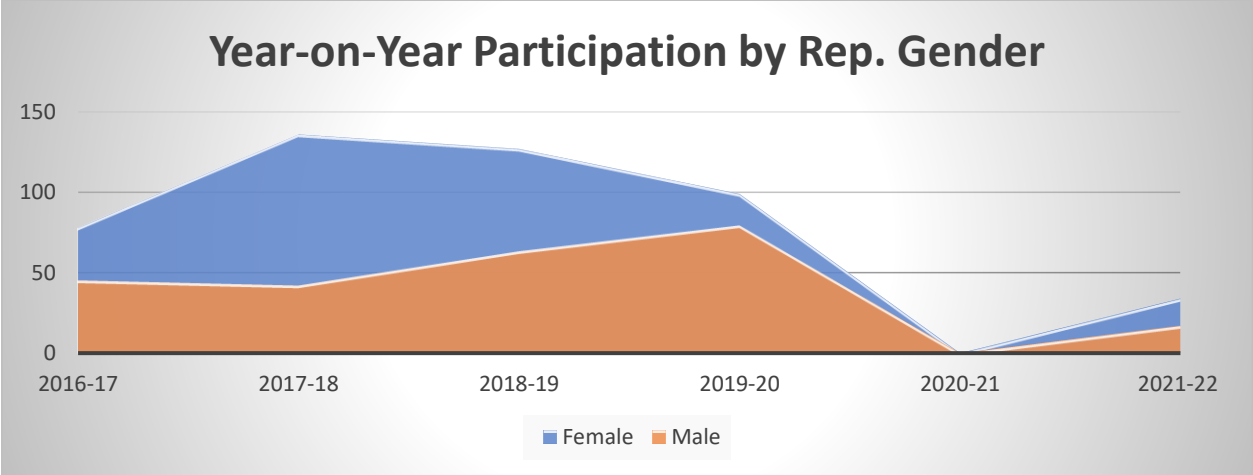
This year's report highlights a smaller gender gap than last year, more akin to the distributions seen in 2016 and 2018. Women appear to consistently participate more than their male counterparts. It will be interesting to track whether the continued emergence from the global pandemic represents a return to a more even gender distribution, or whether women again lead the embrace of international education. The creation of personas for targeting through marketing programs may strengthen UCCS' voice in reaching both men and women according to their potentially disparate motivators.

Now that programming is slowly returning to normal, it will be important to note if the steady rise in participation will continue thanks to the outreach efforts and on campus marketing.

Female: 34 Actual Participants, 117 Applications and Intended Participants

Male: 17 Actual Participants, 46 Applications and Intended Participants

	Female	Male
2016-17 Total	78	45
2017-18 Total	136	42
2018-19 Total	127	63
2019-20 Total	99	79
2020-21 Total	0	0
2021-22 Total	34	17
2016-17 Percentage	63.40%	36.60%
2017-18 Percentage	76.40%	23.60%
2018-19 Percentage	66.80%	33.20%
2019-20 Percentage	55.62%	44.38%
2020-21 Percentage	0%	0%
2021-22 Percentage	66.67%	33.33%



### Education Abroad by Reported Ethnicity

Overall, the trends in reported ethnicity by education abroad participants remain relatively level in recent years. These percentage levels are on par with the national averages for participation by these groups and indicate strong growing diversity in education abroad at UCCS.

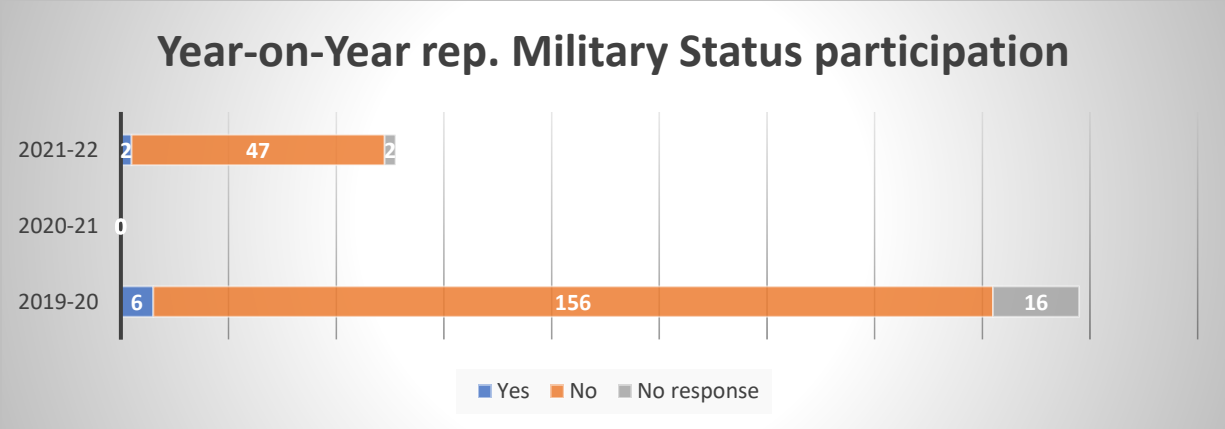
<i>Rep. Race/Ethnicity</i>	<i>2021-22</i>	<i>2020-21</i>	<i>2019-20</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2016-17</i>
<i>African (American)</i>	5.5% (9)	0%	6.2% (11)	3.1% (6)	1.7% (3)	<1% (1)
<i>American Indian/Alaska Native</i>	<1% (1)	0%	1.1% (2)	<1% (1)	<1% (1)	<1% (1)
<i>Asian (American)</i>	6.1% (10)	0%	2.8% (5)	3.6% (7)	2.4% (4)	2.5% (3)
<i>Caucasian</i>	49.7% (81)	0%	58.4% (104)	55.2% (105)	60% (106)	67.5% (83)
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	11.1% (18)	0%	9.6% (17)	11% (21)	11.8% (21)	12.2% (15)
<i>Multiple Selected</i>	2.5% (4)	0%	2.2% (4)	1.5% (3)	1.1% (2)	-
<i>Did not respond</i>	17.8% (29)	0%	14% (25)	18.9% (36)	18.5% (33)	6.5% (8)
<i>Other</i>	6.1% (10)	0%	3.4% (6)	4.7% (9)	2.8% (3)	4.9% (6)
<i>Did not wish to report</i>	<1% (1)	0%	2.2% (4)	1% (2)	1.7% (3)	4.9% (6)

As the data also shows, we remain fairly steady in terms of students classifying themselves as Other or who did not respond or report.

### Education Abroad and Reported Military Status

UCCS prides itself on being a nationally ranked military-friendly institution, and nearly 20% of students have a military affiliation. However, there continues to be challenges to their participation in education abroad experiences that are not faced by other students.

Tightening of interpretations of VA benefit eligibility for education abroad continue to impact intended participation. Students continue to be able to use their benefits only for direct exchanges, not 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider or short-term programs.

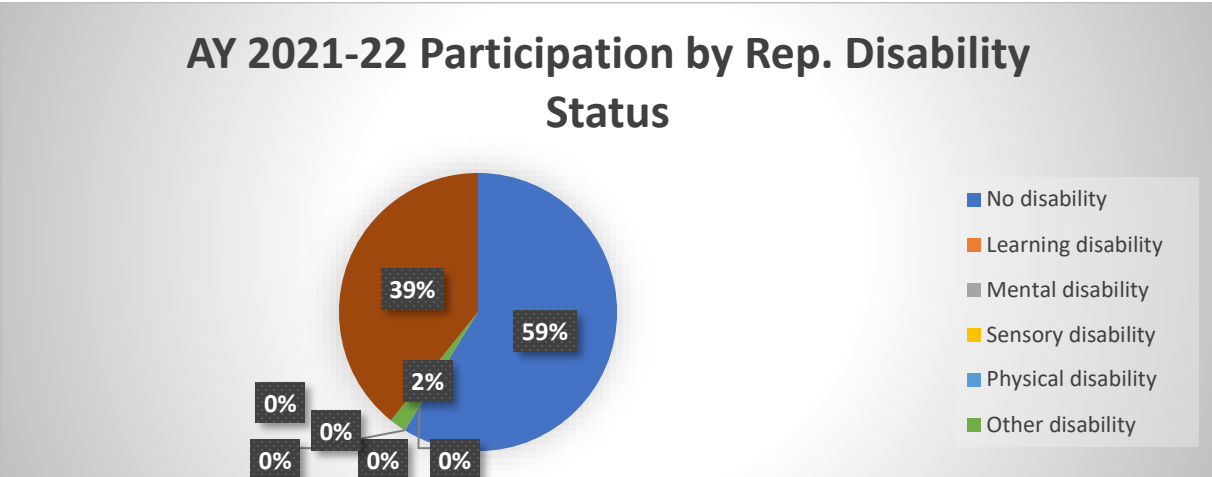


Nevertheless, as the above chart indicates, of the 51 students in this year’s data, 2 listed an affiliation with the military on their education abroad application. An overall decrease from the previous years, likely due to the limited programming resurgence.

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

### Education Abroad and Reported Disability Status

One of the growth areas in education abroad is the reporting and tailoring of approaches for disabled students.



As the data above shows, there was 1 student who self-reported a disability in 2021-22, significantly less than the previous year. The major area of concern overall regarding education abroad and disabled students is those who do not report their disability or those with multiple disabilities who report only one. Additionally, there may be some concern about the mental disability label being used – or not used – to reflect nuanced mental health issues students may experience. Data collection in this regard is not perfect and will continue to be a work in progress. Greater training of faculty and staff who lead trips overseas as well as the Education Abroad and International Affairs staff will also continue to be important moving forward.

## Marketing and Outreach

Marketing and outreach for this reporting cycle can continue to be classified as more tailored overall and more effective as a result. Programs this year were focused on remote communications, promotions, education through Abroad 101, and cultural participation sessions that students could participate in from their own location.

### Abroad 101

The main objective of the Abroad 101 session is to take the confusion out of how to start the study abroad process. The popularity of these sessions has faltered somewhat due to their virtual status and limited programming, with 31 students having participated in a session this year. Marketing efforts to promote Abroad 101 continue to include connecting with academic advisers and departments as well as campus-wide flyer distribution via email and social media posts. These events will continue to be held virtually multiple times a week with some additional program spotlights in hopes of increasing their popularity.

### Student Group Presentations

This area of focus is based on the increased interest in overseas travel by UCCS student groups. With the impact of the pandemic, however, the focus shifted elsewhere, and we therefore plan to roll out a full communication and presentation schedule with student groups in the next year.

### Social Media

Social media has been an area of needed attention and growth to help promote the efforts of Education Aboard and International Affairs. To this end, a social media communication plan was developed, and new areas of promotion will continue to be explored.

### General Campus Outreach

Tabling events returned in limited numbers for the Spring semester of 2021-22, allowing Education Abroad to begin to reach incoming students and passersby again. As these

continue to return and be fully present on campus, it is likely to have several more of these moving forward in order to target all campus students.

#### Co-hosting events with other Departments

As the new Education Abroad Advisor was trained in and programming returned for the Spring, Education Abroad also worked in conjunction with MOSAIC and the Excel Language Centers to host additional events with their own respective themes. This kind of cross-departmental event brought in some additional interest and will be explored further for future terms.

#### Education Abroad Advising

Education Abroad advising is done on a walk-in as well as an appointment basis. Students are encouraged to attend an information session as well as meet with an advisor to explore programs and individual questions. Individual advising sessions last between 30-45 minutes depending upon the questions with the average student spending 35 minutes in one-on-one advising meetings. One-on-one meetings are an important method of connecting with interested students this year, and virtual offerings should continue to be made going forward to supplement in-office appointments.

#### Pre-Departure Orientations

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

#### Faculty- and Staff-Directed Programming: Short-term Program Leader Information Sessions

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

- an overview of the process
- compensation and budget
- the planning processes
- responsibilities of the program leader and IA
- program providers
- the proposal forms

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

## Education Abroad International Partnerships

Below is a summary of UCCS bilateral exchanges. The balancing of these exchange agreements remains a challenge as there is increased interest in sending students to UCCS than UCCS students going abroad on these programs. In addition, the support offered abroad is minimal and requires a very independent and internationally savvy student to participate and navigate at the exchange partner institution. Therefore, the importance of 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider programs is crucial in moving forward and a growing interest for semester students.

### **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, UK
- University of Hertfordshire – Hatfield, UK
- Hankuk University of Foreign Studies – Seoul, South Korea
- Southern Institute of Technology – Invercargill, New Zealand (fee-paying exchange)

### **College of Business Exchanges**

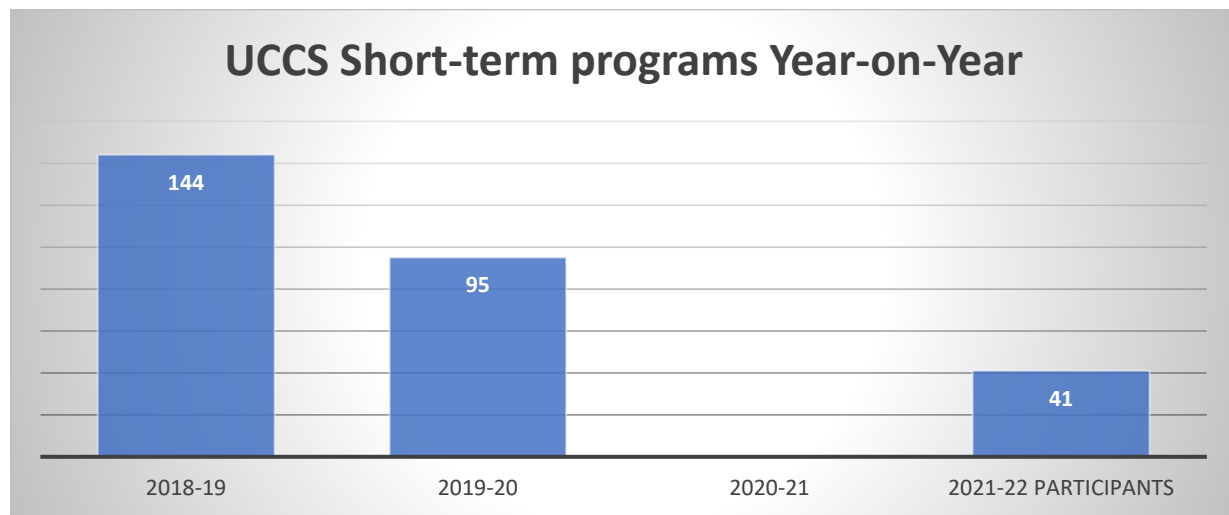
- Frankfurt School of Finance and Management – Frankfurt, Germany
- Cologne Business School – Cologne, Germany
- MCI Management Center Innsbruck – Innsbruck, Austria
- Munich Business School – Munich, Germany

## Funding and Scholarships

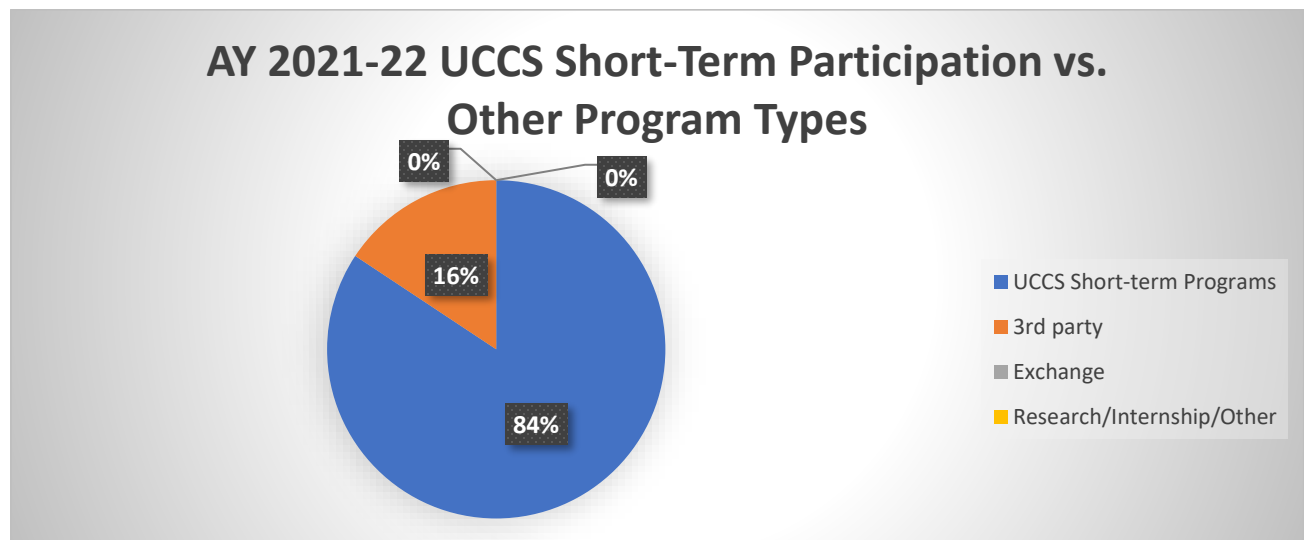
International Affairs continues to pursue and consider opportunities for external scholarship funding. To date there has been no internal, university-wide scholarship funding source identified to help fund study abroad scholarships. Ad-hoc scholarships have been given to students by individual departments and funds, but no consistency has been established. One student was awarded the Gilman Scholarship for a program in France in Spring 2022 via USAC: Isabella H., a Geography major. The Gilman Scholarship program is administered by the US Department of State to support undergraduate students with high financial need, specifically those receiving a Federal Pell Grant. Receiving a Gilman Scholarship is prestigious, and Gilman scholars are eligible for noncompetitive eligibility hiring status with the federal government.

## UCCS Short-Term Programs Abroad

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



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



This year, short-term programming accounts for 84% of education abroad participation at UCCS. It is clearly an area in which we should continue to invest. Future efforts to accelerate this momentum should include considerations such as:

- Incorporating costs/fees into students' accounts for ease of use

- Providing access to financial aid and assistance for non-traditional education abroad programs, such as faculty-directed programs.
- Outreach to student groups, where success of programs like Global Brigades demonstrate that this is an area in which students have strong interest: the support of International Affairs regarding logistics and enrollment may help to boost participation by additional groups that could further the success of UCCS education abroad programs overall.

## 2021-22 Short-Term Programs

### S.O.L.E. Abroad in Costa Rica

Leader(s): Chris Ertman and Telma Frumholtz

Credits: NA

Cost: \$1,650 (*includes hotel, ground transportation, some meals, entrance fees*)

Enrollment: 16

### UCCS Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Senior Design Program in East Africa

Leader(s): Peter Gorder

Credits: NA

Cost: Determined by program (*includes airfare, hotel, all meals, medical insurance*)

Enrollment: 3

### Global Brigades at UCCS: Student-Led Medical/Dental Volunteer Brigade to Ghana

Leader(s): Benjamin Zook and Anabel Rodriguez (advised by Sabine Allenspach & Cheryl Dougherty)

Credits: None

Cost: Determined by program (*includes airfare, hotel, all meals, medical insurance*)

Enrollment: 22

## Future UCCS Short-Term Programs

### **Fall 2022-Summer 2023 Anticipated Programs**

Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering Senior Design Program in Sweden – Fall 2022

Global Brigades at UCCS: Student-led Volunteer Brigade – Summer 2023

S.O.L.E. Abroad in Belize – Spring 2023

UCCS Service Learning in Guatemala – Winter 2022-23

Criminal Justice in London – Summer 2023

Gender in International Politics in Italy – Summer 2023

Practicum in Language and Literacy in France – Summer 2023

Student Affairs in Higher Education in Ireland – Winter 2022-23

Human Services and Counseling in Ireland – Summer 2023

Business in Germany – Spring 2023



## Moving Forward

The future for Education Abroad at UCCS is promising despite the impacts COVID-19 had on programming in 2021-22. Education Abroad is rebuilding and moving forward as the groundwork established to increase education abroad participation rates at UCCS. The world is vast, and cultural understanding and the need to learn and be united globally is never more evident. International Affairs continues to believe the future will be bright and learning opportunities abroad for UCCS students will continue to be a priority and interest.

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

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

- Maintaining online versions of important outreach tools to continue to connect w/ students in this unprecedented time in addition to returning to in-person methods.
- Continuing to strengthen interdepartmental partnerships and continuing to offer cross-departmental marketing opportunities.
- Furthering reporting efforts and data collection on education abroad participants.
- Monitoring and evaluating safety of programming abroad for students as more and more countries become accessible.
- Reinstating the pre-first year global leadership course

## International Student Services

The primary functions of the International Student Advisor (ISA) position are immigration advising, programming, and coordinating campus immigration compliance and support efforts to international students and scholars. The primary functions of the International Student Program Manager (ISPM) involve managing the training and compliance to better support the campus on F and J immigration regulations, interfacing with all relevant governmental agencies, keeping up to date on developments in international education, and managing the planning and implementation of activities and workshops. Such efforts within both positions are essential as they not only provide for student success but also for institutional compliance to federal regulations that permit the institution to host international students and scholars.

In addition to serving international students effectively, the ISSS section of the office contributes to campus internationalization by helping campus staff and faculty be better

informed and more knowledgeable about our international student population, student needs, and the rules and regulations pertaining to international students.

The ISPM and ISA roles continue to be responsible for most of the administrative tasks within the J-1 Exchange Visitor Scholar program for UCCS in assuming the 'Alternate Responsible Officer' (ARO) positions, while the Director of International Affairs continues to hold the 'Responsible Officer' (RO) role. The J-1 scholar program makes it possible for exchange students to attend as well as temporary researchers, instructors, and professors to be on site at UCCS for collaborative activities under the sponsorship of a UCCS department.

## COVID-19 Response & Impact

This report references the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on UCCS international student enrollment and programming due to health and safety concerns.

International student enrollment decreased slightly over the last year due to newly admitted students' inability to obtain visas because of continued embassy and consulate backlogs and closures around the world. Additionally, several travel restrictions remained in place that hindered students' ability to enter the U.S. to return to school.

Due to the pandemic, IA offered a fully remote set of programming for the Fall 2021 semester with some in-person activities scheduled in the Spring 2022 semester. Fall 2021 virtual workshop attendance was similar to fall 2020 with increased attendance compared to prior years, due largely to the remote options for students to attend. IA continued to host virtual coffee hours on a monthly basis with students and scholars in an effort to provide time to address immigration updates and answer any student questions. Overall, remote workshops continue to offer a preferred and flexible option for the international student and scholar population at UCCS.

Interest in UCCS remains high as admissions is receiving an increased number of applications from international students and current students are able to safely return to campus as a result of some relaxed travel restrictions. This bodes well for the recovery of international student enrollment post-pandemic.

## International Student Numbers and Profile

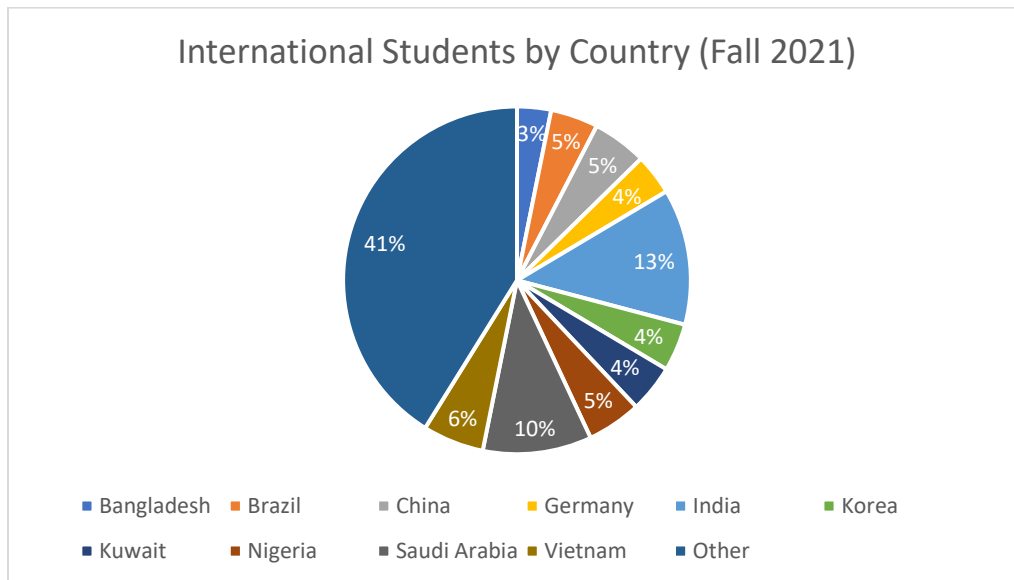
The international student population at UCCS includes students in F-1 and J-1 student status, as well as other non-immigrant visa types that allow study in the U.S., including L-2, H-4, and other statuses. It does not include students who do not have a legal status in the U.S. allowing study (i.e., undocumented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

Enrollment among international students at UCCS is decreasing slightly, and for the Fall 2021 semester the count was 158 students, compared to 169 in the Fall 2020 semester. The population decline is due in large part to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as factors external to the university, such as improved educational quality in students' home

countries, increasing competition among other countries to attract international students, and home/host country politics that influence student mobility.

The diversity of the international student population is shown in the fact that 54 different countries were represented on campus in Fall 2021. The top countries represented at UCCS in Fall 2021 by population count were India (20), Saudi Arabia (16), Vietnam (9), China (8), Nigeria (8), Brazil (7), South Korea (7), Kuwait (7), Germany (6), and Bangladesh (5).

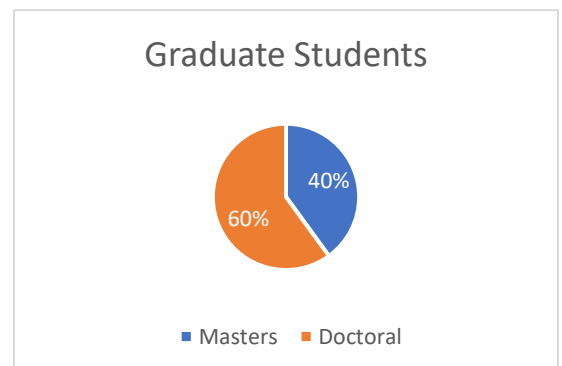
Below is a visual representation of the top countries represented at UCCS in Fall 2021 by population count.



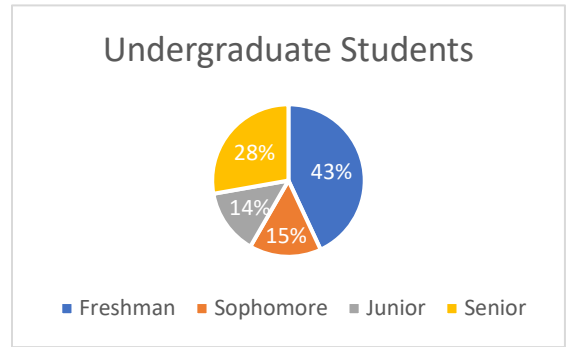
The majority of international students are degree-seeking and hold F-1 status, which means they are typically here for a longer period to complete their UCCS degrees over a multi-year timeframe. The Fall 2021 count shows that 51.9% of all international students are studying in graduate programs.

The below graphs show the breakdown of students in Fall 2021 by degree level and students' year of study:

<b>Graduate:</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>Total</b>
Masters	32	
Doctoral	48	



<b>Undergraduate:</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>Total</b>
Freshman	31	
Sophomore	11	
Junior	10	
Senior	20	



<b>Non-Degree</b>	<b>6</b>
Exchange	3
Undergraduate non-degree	1
Graduate non-degree	2

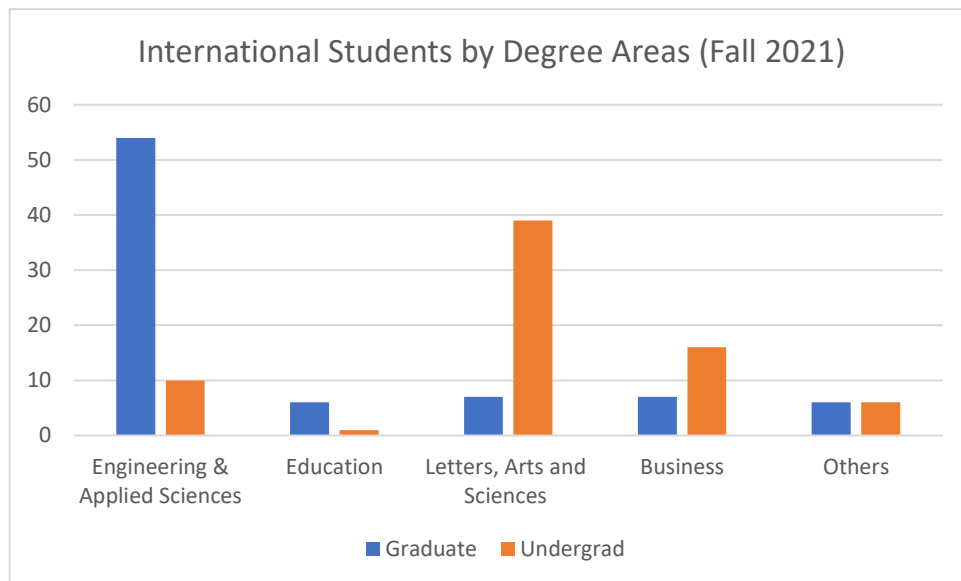
*NOTE: All numbers come from Fall 2021 Open Doors data as reported to the Institute for International Education following that report's protocol.*

The COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted international student enrollment across the country due mainly to continued embassy and consulate closures and backlogs as well as travel restrictions. Many students were unable to obtain student visas to enter the U.S. as a result of these embassy and consulate backlogs and closures, while other students simply could not enter the U.S. due to pandemic-related travel restrictions.

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

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

	Total	Graduate	Undergrad	Non-Degree
<b>Engineering &amp; Applied Sciences</b>	66	54	10	2
<b>Education</b>	7	6	1	0
<b>Letters, Arts and Sciences</b>	47	7	39	1
<b>Business</b>	26	7	16	3
<b>Others</b>	12	6	6	0
<b>Total</b>	158	80	72	6



## Advising Services for International Students

IA provides various types of services in support of international students, with particular emphasis on international student retention, success, and student and institutional compliance. In addition, it is extremely important to IA and to others at UCCS that international students perceive that they are well-supported and served at UCCS. UCCS is similar to other small public institutions with similar numbers in that international student advising is a full-time position at a minimum.

The advising services consist of:

- Daily immigration advising available to international students by appointment and walk-in.
- Communication protocol - responses/answers within the same business day in most cases on questions that come in via email and phone. In addition, a communication plan has been established that involves a bi-weekly electronic newsletter, regular direct and personal emails about all mission-critical IA issues, programs, and events as well as relevant UCCS information and events.
- A schedule of workshops offered on topics of interest and need for the population.
- A dedicated webpage containing all the forms needed for the most common student requests and development of a standard protocol and business processes for managing them; and
- A turnaround time for student requests and applications – such as for changes to student immigration documents, requests for an office letter to assist with SSN application, requests for a signature on the immigration document for travel, for example – of 1-2 business days and often same day.

Perhaps the most important function within ISSS is that of immigration advising, which serves to assist students in maintaining compliance with U.S. regulations and to complete mandatory federal reporting required for UCCS to host international students and scholars. Many aspects of international student life have an immigration-related component, and keeping up to date with U.S. regulations, changes, and proposed changes is critical. The advisor and/or program manager position liaises with the Department of Homeland Security (and its constituent units) and the Department of State about various matters when necessary. In the course of handling these immigration advising duties, the IA staff are officials authorized and required to use the SEVIS database to report required information and monitor international students at our institution (see next section). As such, continuing education and training are needed to stay up to date about the immigration arena, trends, and changes to regulations that affect our students.

By 'advising,' this report refers to two basic functions of the advisor and program manager roles:

- To proactively work to keep students informed about immigration regulations, compliance, and changes, by means of communicating with all students in formal ways (typically presentations and workshops, as well as email and newsletters), and
- To work with students individually and in groups in addressing their individual concerns and questions as needed and requested by students.

Advising (in both senses of the word) starts pre-arrival and continues throughout a student's time on the UCCS campus as they pass through different stages of study, and often continues beyond graduation.

Institutional interpretations of the various regulations pertaining to F-1 and J-1 students and scholars have been formalized and are in place on the various forms and informational materials coming from the International Affairs Office (including the IA webpages).

## OPT Advising for Former Students

The ISA and ISPM continue to dedicate a significant amount of time to advising former UCCS students, now international student alumni, still holding F-1 status while elsewhere in the U.S. This is because these international alumni now hold a work permission called OPT (Optional Practical Training) that is facilitated by IA and approved by USCIS. By federal regulation, the university continues to have the responsibility of ensuring compliance, monitoring of their location, work reporting, and further applications for extensions in some cases. At the time of this writing in June 2022, the number of students in this situation is 39, while our overall student enrolled population was about 154 in Spring 2022. Furthermore, the OPT and STEM OPT programs continue to change, which requires additional research and advising for the ISPM position.

OPT advising for specific cases typically begins in a degree student's final semester. Attendance at an OPT application workshop is required as an introduction to the application process and important OPT regulations. In the final semester, an application is made to USCIS by the student with an I-20 from the ISA or ISPM, recommending the permission. If eligible, the student is granted one year of work permission tied to their academic major. If the student's degree is within a STEM field and compliance during that first year of OPT is maintained through proper employment and reporting, then the student can apply before that year ends for an additional 24 months of permission called 'STEM Extension OPT'. During this 24-month extension, compliance requirements actually increase, so that the advisor and/or program manager is assisting and reporting in SEVIS as required several times, as well as helping students with any issues or questions that may come up.

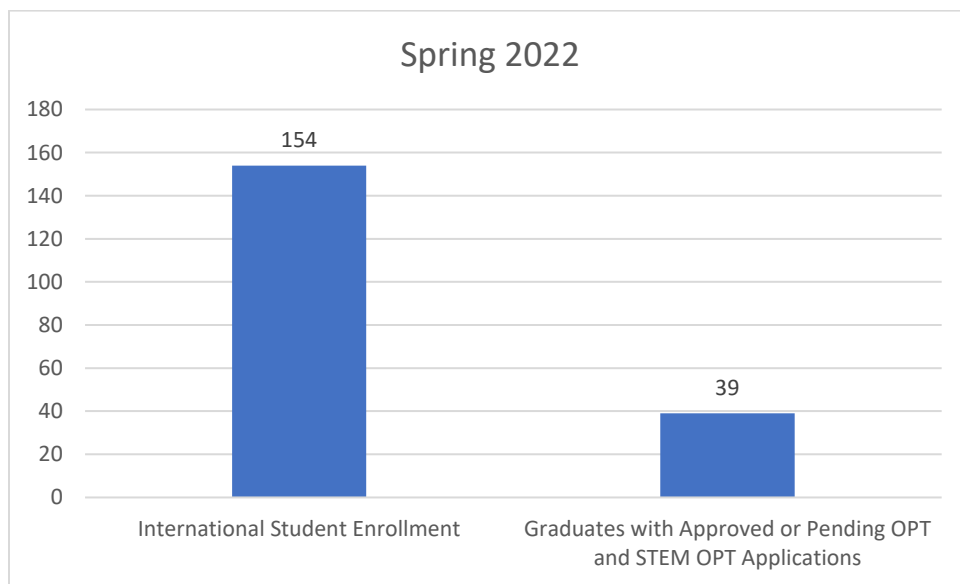
OPT can also be requested during a student's program, before graduation, but typically this is rare, as students keep their allotted time for the post-graduation application. Initial OPT advising for graduating students is time-intensive, requiring in most cases personal advising by appointment, and STEM applications are similarly time-consuming – though typically this is mostly a document review done at a distance.

### Spring 2022 Summary

Below is an outline of data points and associated figures for Spring 2022:

- International student enrollment – **154**
- Graduates with approved or pending OPT and STEM OPT applications, no longer UCCS students – **39**

The following graph is a visual representation of student enrollment and graduates with approved or pending OPT and STEM OPT applications.



## CPT Advising for Current Students

A second type of employment authorization is CPT, Curricular Practical Training. CPT is available to students who have an internship required in their degree or for whom an internship can be done as a for-credit component of their degree. In either case, CPT can be authorized by the advisor and the student can then do the internship off-campus, paid or unpaid.

By regulation, in order to be authorized, CPT requires that an internship be an integral part of an established program. IA policy to comply with the regulations means that CPT can be authorized if an internship is a requirement of a degree program, or if it is an option in a degree program (taken for academic credit) available to all students.

In the Spring 2022 semester, 3 continuing UCCS international students had CPT authorization while 6 students are authorized for Summer 2022.

## Taxation

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

For the 2021 tax year (with tax returns due in April 2022), the CU International Tax Office, located in Denver, provided licenses to a tax software product called Sprintax. The office was able to offer this software to nonresident F and J visa students and employees while supplies lasted. IA provided the communications to students from the CU International Tax Office. While the software proved to be helpful to students, the licenses only offer free services for federal tax returns, leaving our students and scholars to pay out of pocket for state tax filing.

## Advising on Immigration Updates and U.S. Executive Orders

The confusion and concern regarding events in the U.S. political arena remained relatively stable over the last year as a result of COVID-19. The information provided in this area was restricted to updates to our Immigration Updates webpage, our COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Information for International Students and Scholars webpage, and in direct advising provided upon request to student questions. UCCS students were impacted by travel restrictions put into place in response to COVID-19 and continue to be subject to increased scrutiny in visa applications and visa renewals. It is very likely that prospective students and interested applicants have been impacted as well.

Sessions, website updates, and advising were offered through the bi-weekly electronic IA newsletter as well as through direct email to all students from the advisor. Additionally, in



November 2021, we invited an immigration attorney to provide a workshop to students related to immigration updates and visa options as a proactive measure. Advising students regarding these political events and changes continues to be a concern going forward.

## Full-Service Advising

As a full-service advising shop for students and scholars, continual tweaking of processes, schedules, and communication needs to be done to ensure students understand how best to utilize IA services. Information provided at the pre-arrival stage and at orientation to new incoming students will continue to address getting this information into the hands of students as early as possible. The focus of the International Student Advisor and Program Manager is to implement clear, service-oriented, best-practices models for advising based upon standards in the field to ensure the most effective compliance practices for students and for the institution.

## Institutional Compliance and SEVP Certification

In 2019, the '*Principal Designated School Official*' position transferred from the prior ISA to the Director of IA. The Director, in collaboration with the ISA and ISPM, are now responsible for UCCS compliance with the regulations relating to the F-1 program (international students on F-1 visas).

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

- Ongoing university procedures and policies of working with international students regarding the requirements and benefits of their F-1 status and ensuring their compliance with the F-1 regulations
- Working with university units to assist them in understanding the F-1 regulations that affect their students and their programs
- Making sure that record-keeping and document management are handled in such a way as to be in compliance with the F-1 regulations
- Submitting any needed updates in relation to UCCS information and programs to the U.S. government agency (SEVP) that oversees the F-1 program
- Submitting a recertification application and supporting information and documentation every 2-3 years, as required by SEVP. The recertification application submitted previously was approved and is valid through 4/26/2024.
- Submitting re-designation materials for the exchange program with the Department of State every two years
- Submitting updated operational plans to SEVP and EVP due to the COVID-19 pandemic

## Technology and Website

### International Student Information Management System

The ISSS staff (along with Admissions & Records) uses Sunapsis, which acts as a go-between for the CU-SIS system and SEVIS, the federal database used to monitor F-1 and J-1 students, scholars, and dependents. This system went live in February 2019 for

all CU campuses. Updates and configurations continue to be implemented over time and are the responsibility of the technology team at UIS, in Denver, in coordination with the UCCS IA and Admissions officers. Testing and individual configurations for the UCCS campus (to reflect UCCS policies and practices, for e-forms, etc.) have been taken on by the ISSS staff in IA along with the school official who uses Sunapsis for Admissions to issue initial I-20s, with assistance from UIS.

## The IA Website

The IA website, which uses a system called Drupal, is updated by the staff within the IA Office. More complex edits still require the assistance of the website team at UCCS, and they are responsive in providing that assistance.

The next significant challenge for the ISSS area of the webpages is to reflect the change to using Sunapsis, since that change will see some big variations to how students can submit requests and interact with the advisor. These changes are still forthcoming. Other areas that continue to need constant updating to reflect changes are the OPT, CPT, and STEM OPT information pages, the Forms pages containing request forms and information handouts, and the taxation pages.

## Document Management

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

On a daily basis, the International Student Advisor and Program Manager work with the following systems in order to fulfill the basic functions of the position:

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

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

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

- To efficiently manage student advising
- To systematize documentation (including advising notes) and documentation retention to meet institutional and government requirements

- To keep students and the campus informed in a timely manner of changes to IA or UCCS policies, USCIS updates, and forms with website updates
- To be able to add outside sources of information to the IA webpages, as well as orientation session materials, workshops, etc., to keep our students and the campus informed.

## Programming

IA's programming for international students is another important facet of fulfilling the mission of the office. Programming has several important functions for the office:

1. It introduces students to important information about the university and the international student compliance requirements (orientation)
2. It connects students to a network or networks that hopefully they will learn can act as good sources of support for them (all types)
3. It keeps students informed along their educational path (workshops, primarily)
4. It gives students a chance to experience different facets of U.S. life that they may otherwise not be able to enjoy (events and event collaborations)
5. It gives students a chance to share their cultural backgrounds with the rest of the campus and community (events)
6. It helps to internationalize and inform the campus (events, workshops)

In all these functions, we see common threads, and those threads are promoting efforts to improve international student success, retention, and engagement with the campus and community. For this reason, it was important to the IA Office to continue with programming despite the restrictions on events caused by the pandemic. IA offered a fully remote set of programming for the Fall 2021 semester with some in-person events added in Spring 2022. Fall 2021 virtual workshop attendance was similar to fall 2020 with increased attendance compared to prior years, due largely to the remote options for students to attend. IA continued to host virtual coffee hours on a monthly basis with students and scholars in an effort to provide time to address immigration updates and answer any student questions. Overall, remote workshops continue to offer a preferred and flexible option for the international student and scholar population at UCCS.

IA programming consisted in 2021-2022 of the following main initiatives:

### Orientation (Fall and Spring)

The International Enrollment Program Director position in Admissions coordinates orientation in collaboration with IA and other university units. The collaboration is effective and continually being evaluated and tweaked. Though IA is not the office mainly responsible for this programming, it is included here because it is mission-critical and a priority for us to contribute to the interests of our mission. The 'SEVIS Reporting' session that the IA advisor leads is essential in the fulfillment of our compliance mission.

### Fall 2021 Orientation (August)

Every fall, orientation programming begins on the Wednesday preceding the start of classes the following week. The main orientation programming in Fall 2021 consisted of

required sessions such as welcome sessions, SEVIS reporting, paying UCCS bills, campus tour, and discussion panel events. Thursday and Friday following the main orientation date had other UCCS events for students to attend. About 30 students attended orientation programming as new UCCS students in Fall 2021.

### Spring 2022 Orientation (January)

Orientation in spring semesters is held on the Friday before classes begin. The SEVIS reporting session required of all new students was presented by the ISA. The check-in process also includes collecting, scanning, and storing immigration documents for all newly enrolled international students, which was done this year via email. About 15 students attended orientation programming as new UCCS students in Spring 2022. This count included new incoming degree-seeking students (both graduate and undergraduate), returning students beginning new degree programs, new exchange students, and other international students in statuses other than F-1/J-1.

### i-Workshops

'i-Workshops' is the name given to the series of workshops that IA's International Student Advisor puts together each semester, starting with orientation workshops (coordinated with Admissions) and running through nearly the end of each semester. These workshops have previously included sessions on 'Getting a Social Security Number and/or Driver's License,' 'Employment Rules for International Students,' 'OPT Info Session,' 'Understanding US Healthcare and Insurance,' 'Taxation,' and more. Students are welcome to submit ideas for new workshops as well. This year, workshops continued to be focused on the areas of greatest interest and need, primarily OPT and work authorization, since turnout at the other workshops was low. Advising on other areas, such as health insurance, SSN and Driver's License, etc., can occur in direct advising in response to student inquiries and through direct email and website updates to the entire student population.

The following table lists the workshops offered in the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters, which were all offered in a virtual format.

<b>Fall 2021 Events</b>	
Authorized Employment Options	August 27, 2021
OPT Workshop #1	September 8, 2021
OPT Workshop #2	September 14, 2021
OPT Workshop #3	September 17, 2021
Mayor's Reception	October 30, 2021
Options After Graduations	November 16, 2021
International Student Panel: Success Stories from UCCS Graduates	November 17, 2021
OPT Workshop #4	November 18, 2021
<b>Spring 2022 Events</b>	
FAQ & Walkthrough	January 15, 2022
OPT Workshop #1	February 9, 2022
International Student Panel	February 14, 2022

OPT Workshop #2	February 15, 2022
OPT Workshop #3	March 3, 2022
OPT Workshop #4	April 1, 2022
International Student and Scholar Certificate Pick-up and Photo Opportunity	May 4, 2022

## IA Events

The office has put together events to bring students together in social, cultural, and educational settings, away from campus (usually). In 2021-22, these included the Mayor's Reception, a hiking trip, i-Buddy events, and the Recognition Celebration held each fall and spring for our departing students and scholars (see a full description below).



*Students posing for a picture with Mayor John Suthers at the 2021 Mayor's Reception.*

## International Student & Scholar Recognition Celebration

This event, held by IA each April/May and November/December, celebrates students in the following categories:

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

The program for this event includes welcome remarks, a special guest speaker, recognition of the honorees, special recognitions and thank-you's, along with an informal reception.

In Fall 2021, this event was not offered due to COVID-19. In lieu of an in-person event, IA honored these students through email communications and mailing students their hard-copy certificates in the mail. In Spring 2022, an International Student and Scholar Certificate Pick-up and Photo Opportunity event was held in lieu of a ceremony. It was a

fun event where students could pick up their certificate and take photos with them to celebrate their achievement.

## International Education Week 2021

In 2021, International Education Week events were held Monday, November 15 – Friday, November 19. The schedule included Education Abroad advising events, an International Activity (ELC Table Gamers) with the Excel Languages Center, a workshop for International Student Options after Graduation, an OPT Workshop, and a panel discussion featuring success stories from UCCS international student alumni. Below is a copy of the schedule of events.



**INTERNATIONAL  
EDUCATION WEEK 2021  
NOVEMBER 15-19**

**Monday, 11/15**  
4:00-5:00PM - ELC Table Gamers  
(International Activity)  
Excel Language Center

**Tuesday, 11/16**  
2:00-3:00 PM - Options After Graduation: H1B,  
Other Visas & Permanent Residency  
Via Teams  
2:00-3:00 - PM Education Abroad  
Opportunities with Program Partner USAC  
Via Zoom

**Wednesday, 11/17**  
5:30-6:30 PM - International Student  
Panel: Success Stories from  
UCCS Graduates  
Via Teams  
4:00-5:00 PM - Abroad 101  
Live Sessions  
Via Teams

**Thursday, 11/18**  
2:00-3:00 PM - Harnessing Your  
International Experience  
for Career Success  
Via Teams

**Friday, 11/19**  
4:00-5:00 PM - i-talk with  
iBuddy  
Copper House g202

  
 INTERNATIONAL@UCCS.EDU  
 UCCS.EDU/INTERNATIONAL  
 719-255-5018

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

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

- The legacy of previous international student programming at UCCS requires that IA highly collaborate with other university units, since prior to 2016 there were no international student events except those done by MOSAIC
- There are a multitude of events on campus, and collaboration is needed to make sure that we don't program events in conflict with other programming from other offices, thereby harming each event attempted
- The limited budget(s) of the offices involved mean that collaboration is a better use of programming dollars and can offer the most value
- The expertise is different in different offices, and collaborating is a way to take advantage of that
- Collaboration helps keep our stakeholders involved, interested, and motivated on the IA mission and helps to internationalize the UCCS workforce
- Collaboration introduces and shows our students to the multitude of parties on campus interested in knowing about and contributing to international students' academic, professional, and personal success.

## Liaising with Other University Units

By virtue of the responsibilities of the ISSS staff, IA interacts with various other university units in the course of fulfilling our responsibilities: Graduate School, Registrar, Admissions, Compliance, Academic Advising, Bursar, and a few academic units are the units we deal with most often. It has become apparent that the campus community recognizes the ISA and ISPM roles to be ‘the points of contact’ to communicate and collaborate with on questions and issues relating to international students’ unique needs and responsibilities at UCCS. The relationship of the ISA and ISPM to these various individuals and units continues to be excellent. More outreaches could continue to build and improve these relationships.

The ‘Friends of Internationals’ mailing, and communication list continues to be the core resource for individuals who are communicated with about international student issues. The list constitutes about 80 UCCS faculty and staff members. Comments from these individuals are often received after they have had a chance to view the electronic newsletters that are sent to the international student population. Contributions to the newsletter from these friends are also welcome and included in the newsletter for international students.

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

## Moving Forward

### Challenges

One major challenge that the office will continue to face is managing the impacts of COVID-19. International student enrollment decreased substantially over the last two years due to newly admitted students’ inability to obtain visas because of embassy and consulate closures and backlogs around the world. Additionally, numerous travel restrictions remained in existence and continued to hinder students’ ability to enter the U.S. to return to school. Overall, building up our international student population will pose a challenge since many of the factors impacting students’ ability to attend are external to the office.

Staffing and turnover have been challenges for the office as well as nationwide. The “Great Resignation” is presenting difficulties with hiring new staff for the office due to low candidate pools and favorable conditions for workers to be more selective in the jobs they accept. It is crucial that the International Affairs Office hire a new International Student and Scholar Advisor so that the same level of service is delivered.

### Opportunities Going Forward

While Fall 2021 only saw a slight increase in international student enrollment, there could be higher-than-normal enrollment numbers in Fall 2022 and beyond. Evidence shows that

international students still want to study in the U.S. and we're hopeful that students' deferred attendance at UCCS will eventually result in more substantial matriculation.

Further collaboration with other departments for events and programming will continue to be essential. IA was able to co-sponsor several exceptional events previously that were especially enriching and beneficial for our international students. We're excited to continue collaborating with these departments and hopefully form some new partnerships as well.

We look forward to another positive year of contributing to international student support, success, and retention at UCCS, as well as improving the internationalization of the campus.