

**RESULTS OF THE
1993 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
GRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY¹**
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INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings from the “1993 University of Oregon Graduate Student Survey,” which was designed to assess University of Oregon graduate student experience on campus and in the community. The survey focused attention on the comparative experiences of domestic and international graduate students. Under the direction of Dr. Patricia A. Gwartney, the survey was designed and conducted for the University’s Office of International Affairs. The survey was developed as a class project of Sociology 665--Survey Methods and Design, Winter 1993. It was conducted by the University of Oregon Survey Research Laboratory in conjunction with the students of Sociology 607--Survey Analysis, Spring 1993.

The analysis in this report reflects every aspect of the original survey, providing a comparison of the university experiences of domestic and international graduate students in the following areas: overall happiness; perception of safety on campus; use of the services provided by the University and satisfaction with those services; level of students’ integration into their departments; level of integration into campus and community life; stereotyping among graduate students; students’ suggestions for improving the University; selected experiences in the classroom; other student characteristics such as demographics and religion; and students’ reasons for enrolling at UO. Summaries of four analyses generated by students in the Survey Analysis course are included as an appendix to this report.

METHODS

Data

Most data for this analysis were collected through a telephone survey, using the computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) equipment of the Oregon Survey Research Laboratory. Additional data were collected from student registration records, with assistance from Thomas M. North of the University Registrar’s Office and permission from Dean of Students Jane DeGidio. Registration data were linked to the survey data. The data are archived in the UO Social Science Data Services Laboratory for future use.

Sample

From the population of 2,602 domestic students and 597 international graduate students enrolled at UO Spring term 1993, 600 subjects---300 each domestic and international---were selected using stratified random sampling without replacement. 103 subjects were ineligible due to incorrect telephone numbers, no longer enrolled, or out of area during the interviewing period. Of the 497 eligible subjects, 407 interviews were completed, yielding an 82% response rate. The completed sample sizes were 187 for domestic students and 220 for international students. We hypothesized that domestic racial/ethnic minority students’ experiences would be different from whites’ and

international students'. Only 16 students in the sample, however, were domestic minorities---too small to analyze meaningfully as a separate group. Thus, minority students were included with white domestic students. (Due to missing data, sample sizes reported in the tables vary somewhat.) The margin of error is 6.6% for international students' results and 7.2% for domestic students' at the 95% confidence level.

Analysis

The main hypothesis tested in the analyses reported below concerns differences between domestic and international students' experiences. That is, this analysis is intended to determine the effect of student type, international or domestic (the independent variable), on each variable considered in the following analysis (the dependent variables).

Chi-square tests were used to determine the statistical significance of differences between domestic and international students for nominal and ordinal scale variables. Interval and ratio scale variables were examined with t-tests (difference in means). Two-tailed t-tests (differences in either direction) are used unless noted otherwise.

FINDINGS

The heading of each section is preceded by a number or a combination number and letter. These correspond to table numbers developed for that section. The tables may be found at the end of this report.

Characteristics of Graduate Students

1: Demographic Variables

1A: Age.

On average, international graduate students are younger than domestic students ($p < .001$). The mean age of domestic students is 33.4, while international students' mean age is 30.9, about three years younger. Both groups have a similar age range: ages 23 to 57 for domestic students and 22 to 56 for international students. However, domestic students' age dispersion is considerably higher than international students': The standard deviation of domestic students' ages is 8.2; that is, about 70% of domestic students are distributed between the ages of about 25 to 42. International students' age standard deviation is 5.5 years; about 70% of international students are distributed between the ages of about 25 to 37.

1B: Sex.

Among international students the proportion of males is higher than among domestic students. The sex ratio² for domestic students is 101 (101 males for every 100 females). The sex ratio for international students is 145 (145 males for every 100 females). This difference, however, is not statistically significant.

2: Academic Characteristics

2A: Types of Programs.

The survey results indicate that international students are more likely to be in master's programs, while domestic students are more likely to be in doctoral programs. Forty-three percent of domestic students are in doctoral programs compared to 37% of international students ($p < .05$). Forty-eight percent of domestic students are in master's programs compared to 59% of international students. The remaining graduate students tend to be in pre-doctoral and pre-master's programs.

2B: Graduate Teaching Fellowship (GTF) Appointments.

The proportion of students with and without Graduate Teaching Fellowship (GTF) appointments is almost exactly the same for domestic and international students. Thirty-five percent of graduate students currently have GTF appointments, while 65% do not.

2C: Cumulative Credit Hours and Current Credit Load.

The cumulative credit hours of domestic and international students differ significantly. On average, international students have higher cumulative credit hours and a wider standard deviation, with a wider range. International students' cumulative hours range from 0 to 306, with a mean 63 and a standard deviation of 57. Roughly 70% of international students' cumulative hours are within the range of 5 to 120 hours. Domestic students' cumulative hours range from 0 to 268, with a mean of 58 and a standard deviation of 48. Roughly 70% of domestic students' cumulative hours are within the range of 9 to 106 hours. The difference is significant at $< .05$.

Regarding current hours, international students carry a slightly higher (but statistically insignificant) average current credit hour load than domestic students. The mean for domestic students is 10.9 hours, while the mean for international students is 11.1 hours. In the distribution of the current hours, domestic students have a wider dispersion at 4.2 hours, than international students' dispersion at 3.7.

² Sex ratio is calculated by dividing the number of males by the number of females and multiplying the quotient by one hundred.

These differences, higher cumulative hours and smaller dispersion of current hours for international graduate students compared to domestic, may be due to the full time restriction placed on international students.

3: Marital Status and Living Arrangements

Several survey questions concerned students' marital status and living arrangements. The overall response patterns of domestic and international students are quite similar.

3A: Marital Status.

The modal marital status of both domestic and international students is never married, at 46% and 58% respectively. The proportion married is about 40% for both domestic and international students. But the proportion of divorced and cohabiting students is considerably higher for domestic students. Domestic students reported being divorced and cohabiting at 7.8% and 7.2%, respectively, while only .5% and .9% of international students, respectively, reported the same. These differences are statistically significant at the $<.001$ level.

3B: Living with Spouse.

Married students were asked if they were currently living with their spouse.³ A large majority of both domestic and international students currently live with their spouses. But about 12% of international students are not living with their spouses, which is roughly four times the 3.2% of domestic students. Although this difference is not statistically significant at .05, it should be noted.

3C: Parental Status.

The great majority of graduate students do not have children, and international students are less likely to have children than domestic students ($p<.01$). About 78% of international students are childless, and about 65% of domestic students are childless.

3D: Number of Children at Home.

Respondents who answered "yes" to the parenthood question were asked how many children currently live with them. Although the differences between the responses of domestic and international students are statistically insignificant and for the most part the response patterns are quite similar, an interesting trend should be noted. Among domestic and international student parents, 80% and 85%, respectively, live with one or

³ The purpose of this question was to explore differences in social support, since married international students were thought to more often leave spouses in their home country.

two children. However, 15% of domestic student parents are not living with their children, nearly twice that of international students (8.5%).

3E: Current Living Arrangement.

Overall, international graduate students are more dependent on UO housing than domestic graduate students. Three times more international students live in UO family housing (33%) than domestic students (10%), and six times more live in UO residence halls (7.1% compared to 1.2%). Among those who live off campus, a difference of more than 30 percentage points exists between domestic students (89%) and international students (58%). These differences are highly significant ($p < .001$).

4: Religion and Participation in Religious Activities

Responses to the question “What is your religion?” do not vary significantly between domestic and international students. A little over 40% of both groups answered “none,” and a little over 50% of both identified with some type of religious group. Only among the few students who identified themselves “atheist or agnostic” were responses between domestic and international students somewhat different, at 7.2% and 2.8%, respectively.

Among those with some sort of religious affiliation, participation in religious activity does not vary significantly between domestic and international students. Over half of both groups answered that they participate in religious activity “less than once per month.” Roughly 15% of both groups of students participate “once per month” and “a few times per month.” Roughly 20% of domestic students and 15% of international students chose “once a week.”

5: Number of Languages Students Communicate Well In

Graduate students were asked the number of languages in which they can communicate well. Responses ranged from one to seven languages. Because international students should be able to communicate well in at least two languages, their native language and English, a one-tailed t-test was used to test the hypothesis that international students speak more languages than domestic students.

Domestic students speak significantly fewer languages, with a mean of 1.6, while the mean of international students’ languages is 2.6 ($p < .05$). International students also have a wider range of responses, from 1 to 7 with a standard deviation of 1.0. The responses of domestic students ranged from 1 to 5, with a standard deviation of .9. Thus, on average, international students speak one more language than domestic students. However, it is possible to project that when English is disregarded from the number of languages in which students can communicate well, multilingualism is about the same for domestic and international students.

6: Characteristics Specific to International Students

6A: Number of Years Lived in the U.S.

International graduate students' number of years lived in the U.S. ranges from less than 1 year to 18 years. Overall the average is 3.1 years; however, both mode and median are 2 years, indicating that the distribution is skewed toward fewer years. The standard deviation is 2.5, indicating that about 70% of international students have been in the U.S. between .6 years and 5.6 years.

6B: Host Family.

More international students do not have a host family or friendship family (68%) than have one (32%). The ratio between students who have and do not have a host family is 2.12, indicating that for every one hundred students who have a host family, there are 212 students without host families.

6C: Difficulty Adapting to U.S. Culture.

More international graduate students reported they had no difficulty adapting to U.S. culture (56%) than students that had difficulty (44%). The ratio between them is 1.26; that is, for every 100 students who had difficulty adapting to U.S. culture, 126 students did not. Of those international graduate students who had difficulty adapting to U.S. culture, 16% said they had a "very difficult" time adapting, 60% had "some difficulty," and 24% said they had "little difficulty."

6D: Preparation for U.S. Culture.

A large majority of international graduate students feel prepared for life in the U.S. when they first arrive in this country. A little less than 80% of international students answered that they were either "very well" or "somewhat well prepared" for life in the U.S. when they first came here. However, the proportion of students who answered "not very well prepared" and "not at all prepared" is not that low. A little over one-fifth of international students surveyed reported that they were not prepared for the life in the U.S.

6E: Supplementary English Language Training (SELT).

Students were asked about their experiences with SELT classes. 41% of international students have taken SELT classes. Of those, 28% were "very satisfied" and 38% were "somewhat satisfied." Thus, the overall rate of satisfaction with SELT classes is 66%. About one third of the students were not satisfied with the SELT classes.

Graduate Students' Experiences

7: Happiness at UO

Respondents were asked to rate their overall feelings of happiness at UO on a five point scale, ranging from 1 "not very happy" to 5 "very happy." Both domestic and international students are generally happy at UO, and happiness at UO. does not vary significantly between domestic and international students. The mean for domestic students is 3.69 and the mean for international students is 3.72. Domestic and international students also have a similar dispersion around the mean: .88 for domestic students and .81 for international students.

8: Safety on Campus

Graduate students were asked how safe they feel on campus during the day and after dark. The responses of both domestic and international students were very similar for their perceptions of safety during the day. However, the responses differed noticeably in their perceptions of safety after dark. Moreover, women's perceptions of safety after dark differed from men's. Overall, however, a large majority of graduate students feel safe on campus both after dark and during the day.

About 90% of both domestic and international students said they feel "very safe" during the day, and about 10% of both groups said they feel "somewhat safe" during the day. Less than one percent said they feel either "not very safe" or "not at all safe" during the day.

Regarding safety after dark, more international students feel safe than domestic students. Seventy-three percent of domestic students feel either "very safe" or "somewhat safe," while 77% of international students feel safe after dark. Although the proportion of students who feel "very safe" is about the same for domestic and international students, more international students (38%) feel "somewhat safe," than domestic students (34%). The proportion of international students who feel "not very safe" is slightly higher than for domestic students. Yet 9.6% of domestic students feel "not at all safe" after dark, and only 2.8% of international students feel "not at all safe" after dark.

When males and females are examined separately, it is evident that they have different perceptions of safety after dark on campus. Ninety-eight percent of domestic men and 94% of international men feel "very safe" or "somewhat safe" on campus after dark. In contrast, 49% of domestic women and 54% of international women feel safe after dark. Among men students, 1% of domestic and 6.5% international felt "not very safe" after dark on campus. Among women students, 33% of domestic and 39% of international felt "not very safe." Among men, only 1% of domestic and zero international felt "not at all safe" on campus after dark. But among women, fully 18% of domestic and 7% of international felt "not at all safe" on campus after dark.

9: Use of Services Provided by the University

9A: Service Use Index.

The analysis of this section is based on an index of University services usage which summarizes the overall pattern of services use. The service use index was created by summing the “yes” responses to questions inquiring if respondents had ever used the Bookstore, Housing Office, Counseling Center, Health Center, Graduate School, Business Office, Registrar’s Office, Affirmative Action Office, activities sponsored by international student groups, and Office of International Education and Exchange (OIEE). The possible range of scores for this index is 0 to 10. The index does not account for frequency of service use; nonetheless, since it includes a wide range of services provided by the University, it is a meaningful indicator of service use among domestic and international graduate students.

Overall, the pattern of service use is similar between domestic and international graduate students, except in the use of the Housing Office, international student groups, and OIEE. The mode of the services use index for domestic student is 4, while the mode for international students is 5. International students also have a higher mean 5.8; for domestic students it is 4.3. The standard deviation of the index for both groups is 1.5, indicating that although the mean is different, the dispersion around the mean is the same for domestic and international students.

When the Affirmative Action Office, international student groups, and OIEE are excluded from the services use index, because they are aimed more or less at specific student groups, the pattern of service use between domestic and international student becomes closer. For both domestic students and international students the mode and median is 4. International students have a somewhat higher mean at 4.4 with a wider dispersion; for domestic students the mean is 4.1.

9B: Use of Specific Services.

Nearly all domestic students and international graduate students used the Bookstore. Also, use of the Business Office and Registrar’s Office was high among both groups. The Business Office has been used by 84% of domestic and 78% of international students. The Registrar’s Office was used by 78% of domestic and 85% of international students. About 70% of both domestic and international students have used the Health Center at some time. From these frequency distributions of service use, it is possible to say that the Bookstore, Business Office, Registrar’s Office, and Health Center are essential services to both domestic and international students.

The Counseling Center and Graduate School are less commonly used by either domestic or international graduate students. About 15% of both had visited the

Counseling Center. The Graduate School was used by 38% of domestic students and 40% of international students.⁴

Three services used very differently among domestic and international graduate students are the Housing Office, international student groups, and OIEE. Only about 23% of domestic students used the Housing Office, compared to 54% of international students, close to 30 percentage points difference. Regarding participation in international student groups, there is about 24 percentage points difference. While only about 20% of domestic students participated in international student groups' activities, 44% of international students report participating in such events. The difference in services use is most noticeable at OIEE. Almost no domestic students used this service (3%), while nearly all international students used it (90%). The very high international student use of OIEE is understandable since OIEE is essential for meeting needs unique to international students (for example, information on immigration status).

10: Satisfaction with Services

Students who used various University-provided services were asked how satisfied they were with the service. Satisfaction with services does not vary significantly between international and domestic graduate students, with one exception, Bookstore service. More than two-thirds of both groups reported being either "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with all services. Services that received highest satisfaction rates (the sum of "somewhat satisfied" and "very satisfied") were the Health Center, OIEE, and international student groups, with satisfaction rates of 91%, 88%, and 97% respectively from domestic students and satisfaction rates of 93%, 90%, and 88% respectively from international students.⁵

Another overall trend is that international students were more likely to report "no opinion" and "don't know" than domestic students. On average, 2.7% of international students reported no opinion, while domestic students' average was .7%. Similarly, .89% of international students reported "don't know," compared to .01% of domestic students.

One statistically significant difference between international and domestic graduate students was in satisfaction with the Bookstore. This result seems to be due to the different distribution of responses in the "very satisfied" and "somewhat satisfied" categories. That is, more domestic students reported being "very satisfied" (48%) than "somewhat satisfied" (42%), while more international students reported they were "somewhat satisfied" (55%) than "very satisfied" (25%). Also, about twice the proportion of international students (16%) reported they were "somewhat dissatisfied" with the Bookstore than domestic students (7%).

⁴ The Affirmative Action Office is not included in this discussion because the number of students who have used it is so small that meaningful conclusions are impossible to draw.

⁵ In several instances sample sizes are small and the results need to be generalized with caution.

Services with relatively high dissatisfaction rates (the sum of “somewhat dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied”) among domestic students were the Housing Office, Counseling Center, and Graduate School. Domestic students reported dissatisfaction rates of 26% with the Housing Office, 33% with the Counseling Center, and 19% with the Graduate School. Medium dissatisfaction rates for these services were expressed by international students: 13% for the Housing Office, 9% for the Counseling Center, and 12% for the Graduate School. The Counseling Center and the Graduate School also received the highest “no opinion” and “don’t know” responses from international students at 9% and 11%, compared to 0% and 3% for domestic students, respectively. Although the Housing Office produced relatively low “no opinion” and “don’t know” responses (1% from international students compared with 2.6% for domestic students),

Services that produced high dissatisfaction rates among international students were the Bookstore at 17%, the Business Office at 17%, and the Register’s Office at 15%. The dissatisfaction rates of domestic students for these services were 9%, 12%, and 9%, respectively.

11: Driving to Campus and Parking

Domestic graduate students are significantly more likely to drive to campus than international graduate students ($p < .01$). 75% of domestic students answered that they have driven to campus in the past, compared to 60% of international students.

Domestic and international students were equally, and very, dissatisfied with campus parking. More than half of both groups indicated they were “very dissatisfied,” and another quarter of both indicated they were “somewhat dissatisfied.”

12: Integration into Major Department

Graduate students were asked several questions regarding satisfaction with their major departments and the level of integration they had achieved into their major departments. Questions included overall satisfaction, academic preparation, three questions on student behaviors in relationships with faculty, and three questions on attitudes about relationships with faculty. Responses to these questions reveal several statistically significant differences between international and domestic students. These differences were most apparent in students’ perceptions of their relationships with faculty, and especially their attitudes about relationships with faculty.

12A: Department Satisfaction.

In satisfaction with their departments, international and domestic students showed no significant difference. More domestic students reported being “very satisfied” (41%) than “somewhat satisfied” (38%), while more international students said they were “somewhat satisfied” (44%) than “very satisfied” (32%). However, when the ratios

between satisfied and not satisfied⁶ were compared between domestic and international students, there was only a slight difference: The satisfaction ratio of domestic students is 3.7 (10 dissatisfied students for every 37 satisfied students), while for international students, the satisfaction ratio is 3.5 (10 dissatisfied students for every 35 satisfied students). This difference indicates that domestic students were slightly more satisfied than were international students.

12B: Academic Preparation.

Differences in the academic preparation of international and domestic students were significant at $<.05$. The majority of domestic students felt that they were “very well prepared” (56%), followed by “somewhat well prepared” (35%), “not very well prepared” (7%) and “not at all prepared” (1%). A plurality of international students felt they were “somewhat well prepared” (45%), followed by “very well prepared” (41%), “not very well prepared” (12%) and “not at all prepared” (1%). The preparation ratio⁷ shows the difference between domestic and international students more clearly. While domestic students have a preparation ratio of 10.3 (or 10 unprepared students for every 103 prepared students), the ratio for international students is 6.7 (or 10 unprepared students for every 67 prepared students).

12C: Student Behavior in Interaction with Faculty.

Graduate students were asked if they consulted faculty on degree requirements, grading, and career development. No statistically significant differences between domestic and international students were found in the first two, but differences in career development consultation were highly significant (at $<.001$).

Concerning advice on degree requirements, the distribution of domestic and international students' responses is almost identical: 74% of domestic and 75% of international students reported having sought that advice. Similarly, 63% of domestic students and 70% of international students sought advice concerning grading. For career development, the difference between domestic and international students is relatively large: While 55% of domestic students sought advice on career development, only 29% of international students sought such advice.

12D: Helpfulness of the Faculty.

Students who said they had asked faculty members' advice on degree requirements, grading, and career development were further asked how helpful the faculty members had been. On all three types of advice, international and domestic

⁶ The satisfied and not satisfied ratio was calculated by dividing the sum of “very satisfied” and “somewhat satisfied” by the sum of “somewhat dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied.”

⁷ The preparation ratio is calculated by dividing the sum of “very well” and “somewhat well” prepared by the sum of “not very well” and “not at all well” prepared.

students' perceptions of faculty helpfulness show no significant differences. Concerning degree requirements, 91% of domestic students and 94% of international students thought faculty were either "very helpful" or "somewhat helpful." On grading advice, 88% of domestic students and 89% of international students thought faculty were helpful. Regarding advice on career development, 81% of domestic students and 87% of international students reported faculty were helpful.

12E: Student Attitudes on Their Relationship with Faculty.

As noted earlier, questions regarding domestic and international students' attitudes toward their relationship with faculty show significant differences. Although a majority of both domestic and international students report close relationships with faculty, fewer international students report close relationships with the faculty than domestic students. In addition, more international students answered "don't know."

When asked whether they feel comfortable asking a professor for a letter of recommendation, high proportions of both domestic (94%) and international students (82%) answered "yes." However, more than twice the proportion of international students (3.8%) reported "don't know" than did domestic students.

Similar patterns are found for questions on faculty taking a personal interest in students' academic careers and faculty concern for students as individuals. For both these questions, about 81% of domestic students answered "yes" compared to about 63% of international students. For both these questions, about 2% of domestic students reported "don't know" compared to 8-9% of international students.

These results regarding students' advice seeking behavior and students' perceptions of their relationship with faculty indicate that international students are less likely to feel close to the faculty members in their department. This holds true even though both domestic and international students seek advice from faculty with about the same degree of frequency (with the exception of seeking advice on career development), and the faculty apparently treats both domestic and international students similarly.

13: Integration into Campus and Community

A series of survey questions related to students' level of integration into the campus and Eugene/Springfield communities. The questions asked about students' experience of unfair treatment on campus and the community, whether they feel they have enough friends, feeling of belonging to the graduate student community, number of foreign friends, and language spoken at home. We include language spoken at home here because we expect that students who speak a language other than English at home are less likely to be well integrated into the community.

13A: Unfair Treatment on Campus and in the Community.

More domestic students (46%) reported experiencing unfair treatment on the UO campus than international students (40%). But slightly more international students (43%) reported experiencing unfair treatment in the community than did domestic students (40%). For both unfair treatment questions, there were no statistical differences between the experiences of domestic and international students.

13B: Enough Friends.

The majority of both domestic and international students feel they have enough friends in the area. Seventy-four percent of domestic students answered “yes” to this question, compared to 68% of international students. This difference is insignificant.

13C: Part of the Graduate Student Community.

The majority of both domestic and international groups reported that they feel part of the graduate student community, at 63% and 57% respectively. This difference between groups is also insignificant.

13D: Number of Foreign Friends.

Number of foreign friends is very different for domestic and international graduate students ($p < .001$). No domestic students answered that “all” of their friends are foreign, but 6% of international students reported having only foreign friends. Only 11% of domestic students answered “many,” but half of international students did. Two-thirds of domestic students, 65%, said “some” of their friends are foreign, while 41% of international students said the same. Close to one-quarter of domestic students answered that they had no foreign friends, but only 2.4% of international students have no foreign friends.

13E: Language Spoken at Home.

Nearly all domestic students speak English in their homes (92%), but only a little more than one-third of international students speak English in their homes (36%). Some students reported that the language they speak at home depends on who is present (1% for domestic students and 10% for international students). But over half of international students speak a language other than English at home (53%), while the proportion for domestic students is very low (7%). These differences are very highly significant ($p < .001$).

Responses to the integration questions, indicate that although there is an interesting trend in unfair treatment, statistical significance is found only in number of foreign friends and language spoken at home. This result is possibly indicates that while

domestic and international students experience about the same levels of integration, the segments of the population they are integrated into are somewhat different.

14: Classroom Experiences

Three survey questions concerned classroom experiences: degree of comfort speaking in class; how often graduate students have been the only representative of their race, gender, or ethnicity in classrooms; and how often students felt expected to represent their race, gender, or ethnicity in classrooms. The responses to all three questions show highly significant differences between domestic and international students ($p < .001$).

14A: Comfort Speaking in Class.

Compared to domestic students, fewer international students feel comfortable speaking out in class. Among domestic students, 57% are “very comfortable,” but only 28% of international students are “very comfortable” speaking in class. A plurality of international students, 42%, are “somewhat comfortable,” with 31% of domestic students responding similarly. Nearly one third of international students were either “not too comfortable” or “not at all comfortable” speaking in class, while a little more than one tenth of domestic students answered uncomfortable.

14B: Only Person of Race, Gender, or Ethnicity in the Classroom.

Response patterns to the question, “How often have you been the only person of your race, gender, or ethnicity in the classroom?” are opposite for domestic and international students. While the highest proportion of domestic students (72%) responded “never”, the lowest proportion of international students (10%) selected “never.” Close to half of international students answered that they are “often” the only person of their race, gender, or ethnicity, compared to 11% of domestic students. Interestingly, however, 23% of international students--nearly one-quarter--have “never” or “rarely” been the only person of their race, gender, or ethnicity in the classroom, and a little over one-tenth of domestic students “often” have been the only person of their race, gender, or ethnicity in the classroom.

14C: Expected to Represent Race, Gender, or Ethnicity in Class.

Differences between domestic and international students for the question “How often have you been expected to represent your race, gender, or ethnicity in class?” are most noticeable in the response category “never.” Domestic students reported having never felt expected to represent their race, gender, or ethnicity 3.3 times more often than international students (54% compared to and 16%). The second highest difference is in the answer “sometimes.” International students felt they are sometimes expected to represent their race, gender, or ethnicity 2.7 times more often than domestic students (15% and 41% respectively). The ratio of domestic and international students in the “often” category is 2.1; international students are twice as likely to often feel expected to

represent their race, gender, or ethnicity (8% and 17%). The least pronounced difference is “rarely,” with about the same proportion of domestic and international students reporting they were “rarely” expected to represent their race, gender, or ethnicity in the classroom (23% and 26%).

Overall, the classroom experiences of domestic and international students are very different at the aggregate level. While international students feel less comfortable speaking in class, they are more often the only person of their race, gender, or ethnicity in a class, and are more often expected to represent their race, gender, or ethnicity in the classroom; this may place additional strains on international students in their classroom experiences.

15: Perceptions of Students from Different Backgrounds

To assess graduate students’ perceptions of racial/ethnic groups at UO, two sets of questions were asked. The first set concerns stereotypes and the second concerns exposure to minority and international students on campus.

15A: Stereotyping.

Respondents were asked the extent to which they perceive international, domestic, and minority graduate students to be friendly, to work hard in their studies, and to receive special treatment at UO. Respondents expressed their positions on a five point scale, with five equivalent to “strongly agree” and one equivalent to “strongly disagree.”

Domestic and international graduate students appear to consider international students, domestic students, and minority students equally friendly. The mean friendliness score regarding all three types of students is about 4, with international students’ scores slightly lower (or more neutral). There are no statistically significant differences.

Domestic graduate students view international graduate students as harder workers than international students themselves. While domestic students rated international students with a mean of 4.49, international students rated fellow international students with a mean score of 4.41. The difference, .08, although small, is statistically significant ($p < .05$). It is impossible to explain this slight difference meaningfully without an appropriate theory. There were no significant differences between domestic and international students’ responses regarding perceptions of whether domestic students and minority students work hard. The means, ranging between 3.87 and 4.05, are essentially the same.

International graduate students more often than domestic graduate students agreed with the statement that minority graduate students receive special treatment. The mean of domestic students’ perceptions of minority students’ special treatment is 2.79, while international students’ mean is 2.93. Although this difference is small, it is statistically significant ($p < .001$). There were no significant differences between domestic and

international students' perceptions regarding special treatment of domestic and international students, although means ranged from 2.17 to 2.95.

This series of questions about how students of one group perceive students from different backgrounds shows an interesting pattern. International graduate students rate themselves, on average, as most friendly, hardest working, and least specially treated of the three groups, but domestic students' perceptions of themselves, on average, is the opposite. Domestic students perceive themselves as least friendly, least hard working, and most specially treated.

15B: Exposure to International Students and Minority Students on Campus.

The second set of questions concerns respondents' perceptions of the number of international and minority students on campus, and the importance of studying with international students and minority students. Answer categories to the former question were "too many" and "too few;" however, answers also were recorded for respondents who volunteered "it makes no difference" and "the number is about right." For the latter question, four answer categories ranged from "very important" to "not at all important."

The results show significant differences between domestic and international graduate students' perceptions of the number of international students at UO ($p < .001$). One-third of domestic students (34%) said there are "too few" international students, while a plurality of international students (45%) said their numbers are "just about right." Over twice as many international students said there are "too many" international students on campus (16%) as domestic students (7%). More domestic students said it "makes no difference" (11%) and "don't know" (15%) than international students (2% and 12% respectively).

Large majorities of domestic (77%) and international students (70%) believe there are "too few" minority students at UO. But the proportion answering "don't know" was relatively high for both domestic (11%) and international students (14%). These differences were not statistically significant.

A total of 93% of domestic students and 95% of international students perceive that studying with international students is "very important" or "somewhat important." A total of 89% of domestic students and 81% of international students believe it is important to study with minority students. However, 6% of domestic students and 5% of international students think studying with international students is "not very important" and "not at all important," while 8% of domestic students and 13% of international students think studying with minority students is not important. These differences were not statistically significant.

It is interesting to note that while domestic students' response pattern for importance of studying with international and minority students is roughly the same, international students' response pattern for these two questions differ somewhat. A very high percentage of international students say it is very important to study with international students, but their response on the question of studying with minority

students is lower by over 20 percentage points. Also, the response “not important” to study with minority students is higher by 8.5%.

Another interesting point is that when the responses on the perception of the number of students and the importance of studying with international and minority students are compared, the result is somewhat contradictory. While both domestic and international student responses that there are “too few” minority students were more frequent than responses that there are “too few” international students, the importance of studying with minority students received comparably lower importance ratings than studying with international students. This difference is most pronounced for international students; the difference for domestic students is very slight.

16: Improving the University

In an open-ended question, students were asked for suggestions on how to improve the University for graduate students. Text responses to this question were recoded to simplify analysis, and the recodes are summarized in Table 16.

In general, domestic students and international students have similar ideas for improving the University. More funding is the most frequent suggestion made by both, with domestic students somewhat more concerned than international students.

Following are some of the more noticeable differences between domestic and international students’ suggestions. More sensitivity and assistance to international students is one of the greatest concerns expressed by international students, ranking second, only after more funding. This suggestion came mostly from international students at 10%; .6% of domestic students also suggested this improvement. Improving library resources and access is another suggestion made mainly by international students - - suggested by 5% of international students and 1% of domestic students. Better information and orientation prior to beginning study at UO is suggested by both groups of students, but international students (6%) seem to have a stronger need for better orientation than domestic students (3%).

Other suggestions frequently made by both domestic and international students are lower costs, more socializing opportunities, more faculty-student interactions and more career information.

17: Most Important Reason for Enrolling at UO

Another open-ended question asked students their most important reason for enrolling at UO, and it too was recoded for convenience in analysis. The responses of the students are summarized in Table 17.

For international students school and department reputation was the most frequently cited reason for attending UO for graduate school (21%), and it was second for domestic students (22%). Low tuition cost was the second most cited reason from international students (13%); this response was fourth for domestic students (9%). Other

reasons often cited by both domestic and international students include being offered financial aid, a GTF position, and/or a tuition waiver; out-of-staters wanting to come to Oregon; and professional academic/research interests. Reputation of faculty members or recommendation by a faculty member, and to be with a spouse, friend, or relative are also reasons given by both domestic and international students. However, these reasons are more frequently cited by international students than domestic students. For domestic students, the most frequently cited reason for attending graduate school at UO was wanting to stay in Oregon (23%). Only international students cited exchange programs (5%) and lower TOEFL requirements (2%) as reasons for enrolling at UO.

CONCLUSION

In general, both the characteristics and the experiences of domestic students and international students at UO are similar. Although there are a number of statistically significant differences between domestic and international students, these tend to be small and few. However, even a small degree of difference does not mean that these differences are unimportant. Small differences may have large consequences for the quality of life and learning of UO graduate students. In order to make better sense of these differences, further research is necessary: research based on specific theories that can account for and explain even these “small” differences.

APPENDIX: Summary of Student Papers

Murata, T. (1993). *“Comparing the behavior of international and domestic students in their use of university resources.”* Unpublished manuscript. June 1993.

This study investigated differences in the use of resources on campus between domestic and international students. Murata hypothesized that international students' alien status has a negative influence on their use of University resources, because alien status in U.S. society at large is likely to be mirrored in the University setting. The main independent variable in this study was student type, domestic white or international. The dependent variable was the services use index (as described on pp. 14-15).

First, the frequency distribution of services was examined. Overall, domestic white students' and international students' services use is similar, except international students use the Housing Office and the Office of International Education and Exchange more.

Second, bivariate regression was used to determine the individual effects of variables likely to affect services use. Findings were that student type, sex, duration of residence at the University (cumulative hours), unfair treatment at UO, unfair treatment in the community, an interaction term for male international students and happiness at UO, language spoken at home, and an interaction term for male international students who speak a language other than English at home -- all showed significant relationships with the services use index. The variables that unexpectedly did not have a relation to services use were satisfaction with the services used, happiness at UO, comfort speaking in class, feeling part of the graduate student community, host family, and enough friends in the area.

Third, using variables that exhibited significant bivariate regression relationships, their net effects were estimated. The final regression equation (which explained 34% of the variation in services use and was highly significant) had coefficients of 1.46 for student type, .13 for cumulative credit hours, .44 for unfair treatment in the community, .54 for male international students who speak a language other than English at home, and -.24 for the interaction of male international students and their happiness score.

The hypothesis that international students use fewer services was not supported by the study findings. The alternative explanation suggested by Murata was that differential access to resources outside the University is the factor most important in determining service use. Generally, international students have fewer resources available to them outside the University. The difference in availability of resources seems to result from the difference in the level of integration into the surrounding community. Additionally, male international students appear less able to gain access to resources outside the University than female international students. This difference seems to be due to the different social experiences of male and female international students.

Olney, K. R. (1993). “Social relationships and happiness among domestic and international graduate students.” Unpublished manuscript. June 1993.

In this study, the relationship between social integration and overall happiness at UO was investigated. Olney hypothesized that a higher level of integration into the University is positively correlated with the overall happiness score. This hypothesis is based on the Durkheimian theory of social integration. “Durkheim related human progress and the desire for social relationships to the human drive to increase one’s own happiness.” Olney also focuses on whether social integration affects domestic and international students differently.

The analysis in this study consists of two parts. The dependent variable in both parts was the overall happiness score. The independent variable for the first part of the study was cumulative credit hours, representing the duration of stay at UO. The researcher hypothesized that duration of enrollment at UO is related to the level of integration into the University. In this analysis, the bivariate relationship between the happiness score and cumulative hours was examined.

The independent variables for the second part of the study were cumulative hours, frequency of religious participation, number of children, marital status, enough friends, feeling part of the graduate student community, comfort in asking for a letter of recommendation, and host family. All of these variables are in some way related to social cohesion and integration. These variables were used as predictor variables in multiple regression analysis to assess independent as well as compound affects of these variables on overall happiness.

Findings for the first section are that for low cumulative hours (0-30), international students’ happiness scores tend to be very happy or very unhappy, while domestic students’ happiness scores tend more toward the middle. For students with medium cumulative hours (31-65), substantially more international students express neutral and ambivalent feelings than domestic students. Among higher cumulative hours (65 and over), international students tend to express more neutral feelings and domestic students tend to express more unhappy feelings.

The regression analysis showed that international and domestic students’ happiness scores are affected differently by the independent variables. Examining graduate students as a whole, three variables--enough friends in the area, feeling part of the graduate student community, and comfort in asking for a letter of recommendation--showed significant relationships to the happiness score. However, among domestic students, only the latter two predictors bore significant relationships to happiness. And among international students, only the variable enough friends in the area had a significant influence on the happiness score.

Despite some significant predictor variables in the regression equations, the model explains only a small portion of the variation in the happiness score. When graduate students are taken as whole, the equation explains 9% of the variation. When

analyzed separately, it accounts for 11% of the variation for domestic students and 8% for international students.

Olney concluded that little variation in happiness in graduate school can be attributed to the degree of social integration. Only those variables that directly relate to integration in university and professional life affect happiness. Less proximate determinants, such as family and community, appear unrelated to happiness in graduate school. Olney suggested that this is because the social lives of domestic graduate students are put on hold due to their commitment to graduate training. International students' happiness is more directly related to the development of friendship and a support system while they are away from home. Happiness is not affected significantly by the "progress variable," perhaps because pursuit of a career for international students is somewhat less tangible while they are in the U.S..

Southard, P. A. D. (1993). "Graduate students' attitudes and stereotypes." Unpublished manuscript. June 1993.

This study investigated the relationship between cultural types and stereotypes. Southard theorized that individuals' outlooks on the world differ depending upon their socialization and culture. Moreover, the socialization that occurs in different cultures influences the development of specific stereotypes. Southard hypothesized that there should be differences between domestic and international students in their expression of stereotypes, since their cultural backgrounds differ significantly. A difference in expression of stereotypes should also be found between males and females, because even though males and females may be socialized into the same culture, social expectations for them differ significantly.

The analysis in this study was conducted using analysis of variance to determine the differences between stereotyping by U.S. and international students and by male and female students. Gender and citizenship are the independent variables in this study, and stereotyping is the dependent variable. Stereotyping was assessed using three sets of stereotype scales, and the responses to the questions number of international and minority students, and importance in studying with international and minority students.⁸

Southard found that there is little overall difference in stereotyping by domestic and international or male and female students. In the comparison of U.S. and international students, only one item showed a significant difference: More international students tend to feel that domestic students receive special treatment. In the comparison of males and females, significant differences were found in only three variables. More male students tend to feel domestic students are friendly, and minorities students are

⁸ Southard's results do not agree with those presented earlier in the report. The difference is due to Southard's exclusion of "neutral" responses from the stereotype scores in her analysis. Although some survey questions did not provide a "neutral" response possibility (but accepted it when offered by respondents), the stereotype scales used by Southard included "neutral" ("3" on a 5-point scale) as an integral part of the possible responses. The validity of disregarding those "neutral" or "3" responses is questionable.

treated special, while more female students feel that it is important to study with minority students.

These findings did not fully support the initial hypotheses. Southard proposed that being graduate students of the same university establishes a common culture which counteracts some aspects of the cultures in which students were raised, effectively erasing pre-existing differences.

Wiese, R. (1993). *“Issues of cultural distance and happiness among graduate students.” Unpublished manuscript. June 1993.*

This study investigated the relationship between happiness/satisfaction at UO and cultural distance, with a focus on the differences between domestic and international students from certain cultural backgrounds. Cultural distance refers to the degree of difference between the U.S. culture and a student’s own culture. The study hypothesized that greater cultural distance is adversely related to happiness, since a greater degree of cultural distance requires a longer period of adjustment to U.S. culture.

The main independent variable in this study was the region of the world from which the student came: “domestic,” “European,” “Taiwanese,” “Chinese” and “other Asians.” It was assumed that European students have less cultural distance than Asian students. Students from African and Latin American countries were excluded because their small sample sizes do not allow meaningful analysis.

The analysis in this study consisted of two parts. In the first section, the effects of cultural distance were measured by the overall happiness score, as well by academic satisfaction, integration and acceptance, and socialization. Academic satisfaction was represented by five variables: prepared academically for graduate study, department satisfaction, comfort asking for a letter of recommendation, faculty takes a personal interest, and faculty shows concern for you as an individual. Integration and acceptance was represented by four variables: unfair treatment at UO, unfair treatment in the community, comfort participating in class discussion, and enough friends in the area. Socialization was represented by two variables: preparation for life in the U.S. and difficulty adapting to U.S. culture. The variables were tested for their relationship with region using chi-square correlations. Wiese found all of these variables differ significantly according to the region from which the students came. Overall, domestic students scored highest on those variables that apparently have a positive correlation with happiness. Europeans were second, followed by Asians.

The study’s second part explored the net effects of academic satisfaction, integration/acceptance, and socialization variables on the overall happiness score, analyzed separately for each region, using multiple regression. For domestic students, the regression equation explained 21% of the variation in happiness, with department satisfaction and unfair treatment at UO the significant predictors. For Europeans, the explained variation was 35%, with department satisfaction and enough friends in the area the significant predictors. For other Asians, the explained variation was 13%, and for Taiwanese it was 9%. For other Asians, only department satisfaction was significantly

related to the happiness score. For Taiwanese, department satisfaction and comfort participating in class were the significant predictors.

Findings of this study support the hypothesis that cultural distance affects the happiness of the students.