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MIND THE GAP: UNDERSTANDING THE LACK OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION BETWEEN U.S. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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MIND THE GAP:
UNDERSTANDING THE LACK OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION BETWEEN U.S. NATIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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PIM 73

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in
International Education at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

August 9, 2015

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DEDICATION

To the remarkable students, both international and local, that I have had the privilege of learning from. Their curiosity, resilience, and understanding are sure to transform the world.

Thank you to all of my supporters who have been on my team throughout this journey; I would not be in the field of international education nor graduate school without so many people believing in me. My family, sisters, friends, SIT PIM 73s, FIUTS, CSU mentors, tomodachis, and my “otter half” have been integral in this process and are true inspirations. Many thanks to the Seattle coffee shops that provided me with delicious caffeinated drinks to fuel my writing and provided me with a space to go on a capstone hiatus. Lastly, I’d like to dedicate this paper to good beer, live music, the Cascades, and the Olympics for ensuring I live a balanced life.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FIUTS: The Foundation for International Understanding Through Students

IELP: International & English Language Program

U.S.: United States

UW: The University of Washington Seattle

ABSTRACT

This capstone paper explores the issue of social integration between international and U.S. national students and focuses on the international student community of the Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS), a non-profit that supports students at the University of Washington-Seattle (UW). A survey was administered to 106 UW students involved in FIUTS to test the hypothesis that the FIUTS community desired to have more U.S. nationals involved in the program. After establishing a desire for increased social integration between U.S. national and international students from within the FIUTS community, fifteen U.S. national students who were not involved in FIUTS were interviewed. The interviews of U.S. nationals not involved in FIUTS sought to identify the level of awareness of FIUTS, knowledge of its program offerings, and perceived barriers to entry into FIUTS programming at UW. The findings of this study show that awareness of FIUTS, English language proficiency, cultural differences, lack of incentive for U.S. national students to be involved in FIUTS programming, and the desire for natural friendships to be the most common rationales for U.S. national students not involving themselves in FIUTS. A list of recommendations for international educators to overcome the addressed barriers and suggestions for future research were compiled. Recommendations include collaborating with First Year Programs and Study Abroad to offer an event for all UW students during orientation and creating a marketing campaign targeting U.S. national students.

INTRODUCTION

This capstone paper explores the lack of social integration between international students and domestic students at the University of Washington-Seattle's (UW) campus. Social integration, as defined by this study, is the formation of friendships between international students and the host-community. There is a known trend of international and U.S. national students being divided in U.S Universities, which is why gaining a comprehensive understanding of the divide is increasingly important (Gresham & Clayton, 2011, Church, 1982; Neubert, 2015, Owens & Loomes, 2010).

The Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS) is an on-campus, non-profit organization affiliated with UW that develops and delivers quarterly international student orientations at UW and supports all UW students throughout the year through its events and activities, leadership, education, and community programming, in addition to hosting large-scale special events open to the public. All of FIUTS' extracurricular programs are open to all UW students, where some events are also open to community members. FIUTS serves as an ideal case study to examine the barriers to social integration between international and host-country students at large universities because the students that participate in FIUTS are overwhelmingly international students and yet its programs are open to all students. In the 2014-2015 academic year (06/16/2014-06/12/2015), only 113 of the 1,251 total (unique) participants in FIUTS Events and Activities and Facilitator Program were U.S. national students (FIUTS, 2015. Unpublished raw data).

Informal conversations with international students at UW Seattle prior to this study revealed that many international students are unable to form friendships with U.S. national students, despite international students' efforts and desire. In these conversations, several

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international students shared that they find it easy to make friends with other international students, but are disappointed by the difficulty they experience when trying to form relationships with U.S. nationals. These casual observations of the separation between the two groups are consistent with past research on the topic, which explains that international students wish that more Americans would participate in international student activities (Sultana & Smith, 2011). The hope is that more U.S. national students would be involved with FIUTS as U.S. national students already involved report that they are able to learn more from international students than from their American counterparts and find great value in forming bonds with people from different cultures.

International student enrollment in universities in the U.S. has dramatically increased in the past seven years. According to The Institute of International Education (IIE), in the academic year of 2013-2014, the number of international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities was at an all-time high of 886,052 (2015a). This is an 8% increase over the prior year and a 52% increase since 2007 (Institute of International Education, 2015a; Institute of International Education, 2015b).

Following this trend, UW has experienced an even more dramatic rise in international student enrollment. For example, UW hosted 6,677 international students in Fall 2014, a 149% increase since 2007 (University of Washington International Student Services, 2014, p 17; University of Washington International Student Services, 2007, p 8). More recently, as of Fall 2014, about 15% (6,677 international student out of 44,786 total students enrolled) of the student body enrolled at UW were international students (University of Washington International Student Services, 2014, p 17; University of Washington Admissions, 2014). Although there was no data available for country of origin for UW Seattle campus alone, UW International Student

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Services reported 3,616 out of 7,299 (49.5%) students' country of origin was China in Fall 2014 on all three UW campuses (University of Washington International Student Services, 2014, p 6). Furthermore, 6,186 out of 7,299 (84.8%) total international students enrolled in Fall 2014 hold passports from Asian countries (University of Washington International Student Services, 2014, p 35).

A core component of UW's vision is building global citizenship. UW prides itself on being, "compassionate and committed to the active pursuit of global engagement and connectedness...(they) embrace (their) role to foster engaged and responsible citizenship as part of the learning experience for (their) students, faculty and staff" (University of Washington, 2015). In order to cultivate global citizenship, UW must create an environment where students from all nations are encouraged to form relationships, learn from, and share with one another.

Owens & Loomes (2010) point out the benefits of multiple stakeholders in creating an environment that encourages integration. The authors state, "University effort to provide a diverse range of social, learning support and integration activities are vital for the success, safety and security of international students whilst also enhancing customer satisfaction and student retention so vital to long-term sustainability" (p. 279). For UW to compete effectively in attracting new international students and uphold its reputation of being an institution where international students thrive, it should address the challenges the current students face, most notably the struggle to integrate into mainstream campus society, and adopt a more multicultural approach by addressing the gap that exists between international and U.S. national students.

Although there has been a growing focus on international students in the past decades, little is known about the motivations, or lack thereof, of host country students to be a part of the international student community. There is a noticeable gap between the international students

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and domestic students at UW and this study strives to reduce that gap. The purpose of this capstone paper is to better understand why there are so few U.S. national students at UW involved in FIUTS, as representative of possibilities for integration between international students and domestic students. This goal is accomplished by looking at both U.S. nationals not involved in FIUTS and students involved in FIUTS (U.S. nationals and international students).

To adequately address this issue of a lack of U.S. nationals involved in FIUTS programming, three sub-questions were used to direct the research with U.S. nationals: 1) Awareness – “Are U.S. nationals at UW aware of FIUTS? If not, what are the best ways to inform them of FIUTS and its potential benefits?”; 2) Knowledge – “Do U.S. nationals at UW know that FIUTS’ programming is open to all students, not only international students? If not, what are the best ways to correct such misconceptions?”; and 3) Attitude – “Are U.S. nationals at UW interested in FIUTS’ student programs? If not, how can FIUTS make its programs more attractive to U.S. nationals?”

Beyond these three vital research questions trying to understand U.S. nationals not involved in FIUTS, a survey was administered to students in the FIUTS community. This survey was necessary to determine whether the current participants of FIUTS Student Programs have a desire to have more U.S. nationals involved in FIUTS and to hear the perspective of students currently involved in FIUTS. Since there are a diverse range of students involved in FIUTS, this question was broken down into five separate categories to ascertain as to whether there was a difference in each of following categories in terms of desire for more U.S. nationals to become involved in FIUTS: 1) education level (undergraduate, graduate, International & English Language Program (IELP) students, and scholars), 2) international versus domestic students, 3) level of involvement in FIUTS, 4) English language abilities, and 5) Western versus non-

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Western country of origin. For the purpose of the study, Western countries are defined as countries in the European Union, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

The goal of this study is to make FIUTS more inclusive in its Leadership Program and Event and Activities Program. This study seeks to demonstrate that the need to integrate international and U.S. national students is essential. FIUTS, through its partnership with UW, can help achieve this vital need by better understanding what is preventing U.S. national and international students from integrating and making steps to bridge the gap between the two communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: CO-NATIONAL, MULTINATIONAL, AND HOST-NATIONAL SOCIAL NETWORKS:

Bochner, McLeod & Lin's functional model of *conational*, *host-national*, and *multinational* networks is helpful to show the function of each network for international students (1977). The three social networks are discussed in detail below.

CO-NATIONAL NETWORKS

According to Bochner et al., *co-national* friendships, or friendships with those that are from the same country or culture, "provide a setting in which ethnic and cultural values can be rehearsed and expressed" (1977, p 291) and have been reported to be international students' predominant network (Furnham & Alibhai, 1985). Kim's (2001) theory of cross-cultural adaptation explains that co-national friendships are helpful in providing short-term support in the beginning of the "adaptation phase", as communication is relatively easy and these connections

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relieve stress related to ethnicity. However, Kim argues, these relationships can inhibit the adaptation process by creating an ‘insular effect’ making them less willing to adapt to the host culture and build relationships with host-nationals. Kim (2001) claims that the “greater the co-national interpersonal communication, the lesser the intercultural transformation i.e. functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity” (Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011, pp 282-283). Consistent with Kim’s (2001) theory, another study found that students with a majority of friends from their home country were less satisfied with their lives and felt less socially-connected, whereas those maintaining a higher ratio of host-national friends were less homesick and more content (Hendrickson et al., 2011).

HOST-COUNTRY NETWORKS

The primary function of *host-national* or *host-country networks*, as cited by Bochner et al. is “to instrumentally facilitate the academic and professional aspirations of the sojourner” and is the second-most common network, after co-national (1977, pp 291-292). Gresham & Clayton’s study found that the success of many international students’ study abroad experience was dependent on whether they developed meaningful relationships with host country students (2011). The results showed that when these friendships were able to develop, international students were able to more easily overcome the challenges that come with deprivation in “friends, status, profession, and possessions, English-language proficiency and confidence in language” (Gresham & Clayton, 2011, p 364; Furnham & Bochner, 1982). Acculturative stress has also been shown to be minimized by increased socialization with American, host-national students (Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timimi , 2004; Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002). Local students are important resources as they are better able to navigate the local systems and provide insight into the culture, guiding international students

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through the adjustment process. Furthermore, these connections have been shown to positively influence international students' contentment, and perceived success, and reduce their level of homesickness (Hendrickson et al., 2011). Getting to know host-country students on a deeper level can offer international students insight into the culture, through "insider" tips to help them feel at home and gain a feeling of acceptance by the host country.

Literature on this topic indicates that by increasing their social bonds with domestic students, international students were able to reexamine their cultural identity and decrease stereotypes, increasing their understanding of the local environment and their integration into the campus culture (Hendrickson et al., 2011; Church, 1982). A study on the *Community Connections* program in Australia, which aimed to increase domestic and international student integration, demonstrated that social integration is necessary for optimal learning health, both mentally and emotionally (Gresham & Clayton, 2011). Hechanova-Alampay et al. (2002) made an interesting distinction, reporting that the type of social support is more important than the amount of support, supporting Kim's (2001) claim that host-country students better aid the long-term adjustment of the sojourner as compared to other social networks.

MULTINATIONAL NETWORKS

Multinational networks or friendships with other international students (that are not from their home country) "provide companionship for recreational, non-culture and non-task oriented activities" and are the least common network that international students utilize (Bochner, 1977, p 292). These bonds are often based on commonalities of adjusting to a foreign country and oftentimes are grouped together during the institutions orientation program. Furthermore, speaking English with other non-native English speakers may be less intimidating, allowing the international students increased ease and comfort speaking a common non-native language.

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Chavajay's (2013) results indicated that international students "perceived greater socioemotional and instrumental support from other foreign students living in the U.S. and from family and friends living overseas than from the local U.S. people" (pp 672-673). However, international students that built bonds with host-country students were more satisfied than if they just socialized with other international students (Rienties, Heliot, & Jindal-Snape, 2013).

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT STRESSES AND CHALLENGES

The day-to-day challenges that international students face are much greater than U.S. nationals due to the added stress of culture shock, being away from their support network of family and friends, limited personal resources, oftentimes studying in their non-native language, and having to adapt to an unfamiliar pedagogical system (Bochner et, al., 1977; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman., 2008; Ang & Liamputtong, 2008; Kelly & Vogel, 2008; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). Thus, international students encounter both academic and social stresses when adjusting to the new college environment (Senyshyn, Warford & Zhang, 2000, Tomich, McWhirter & Darcy, 2003).

Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" is a useful theoretical framework to better understand the challenges international students' experience. Maslow claimed that the lower levels on the "needs pyramid" (i.e. "physiological needs," "safety needs," and "belongingness & love needs") must be satisfied before one can reach the upper, more fulfilling levels of the pyramid (i.e. "esteem needs," "self-actualization," and "transcendence") (Maslow, 1943). From the moment international students arrive, they must learn to navigate unfamiliar housing, food, transportation, communication, and monetary systems in order to satisfy their "basic human needs." Meeting their physiological needs may not be easy, as it can be difficult to find the food they are accustomed to or required to eat for religious reasons (Owens & Loomes, 2010). This

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disorientation may cause fatigue and even possible illness (Storti, 1990). Signing a housing contract can be intimidating in a foreign environment and many international students involved in FIUTS have been victims of housing scams. Safety needs is another concern international students confront. Living with strangers in a homestay, moving to a country with more lax gun control laws, and supporting themselves financially without access to U.S. financial aid can make international students feel uncomfortable, especially without continuous access to their family and friends for support. The third level of Maslow's hierarchy, "love and belonging," can be difficult for international students to satisfy (Furnham & Alibhai, 1985; Hendrickson et al., 2011, Chavajay, 2013; Melnick, Kaur, & Yu, 2011). Generally, international students enter the university without a social network, unlike many of their U.S. national student counterparts. Friendship is one of the most important factors of satisfaction, acculturation, and the success of international students (Bochner, Hulnick & Furnham, 1985) and it does not come easily. Due to cultural differences, language abilities, and perceived discrimination, many international students find it hard to connect with the host-country community and are unable to achieve a sense of belonging. One can infer from the literature on the subject that intense transitional demands and lack of an adequate social support system leave the majority of international students in the lower three tiers of Maslow's pyramid. Contrastingly, United States national students, often more easily become a part of a community and one would presume that they would frequently fall in the 'Esteem' level of the pyramid where they are focused on their coursework and seeking recognition- both socially and academically.

A study that followed 294 international and U.S. national students over their first six months at a U.S. university reported that international students encountered more adjustment difficulties than U.S. national students that relocated within their home country (Hechanova-

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Alampay, et al., 2002). International students also expressed that they had less social support than their U.S. national student counterparts (Hechanova-Alampay, et al., 2002). Owen & Loomes (2010) also found that “international students encounter high levels of personal stress and isolation related to essential as well as higher level physiological and psychological needs, particularly in their first term of study” (p 285).

STRUCTURED SOCIAL INTEGRATION & SUPPORT

Much of the literature on intentional integration of international and host-country students has shown that international students benefit from getting to know host-country students, but find it difficult to form these bonds on their own (Gresham & Clayton, 2011; Hendrickson, 2011; Menzies & Baron, 2014; Mestenhauser, 2003; Owens & Loomes, 2010; Rienties et al., 2013; Das, 1974; White & Rosado, 2014; Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Melnick, et al., 2011). Sadly, international students have even reported feeling “invisible” (White & Rosado, 2014, p 241) when they are not able to form bonds with locals (Church, 1982). They value their relationships with host-country students, but because such relationships do not occur naturally, they require facilitation and support (Gresham & Clayton, 2011, Church, 1982; Neubert, 2015, Owens & Loomes, 2010). Das’ study reported that both international and U.S. national students desired more interaction with each other but recounted that there were not enough opportunities (1974). These sentiments are echoed by White & Rosado’s claim that “just having different isolated groups occupy the same building at a university does not mean cultural awareness, diversity, or an inclusive climate for all students has been attained” (2014, p 246).

Having friends, taking part in extracurricular activities, and experiencing casual contact with university staff, aids social integration and adaptation to the host-culture (Rienties et al., 2013; Menzies & Baron, 2014). Furthermore, the literature indicates that students’ social life

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outside of the academic context has a strong influence on learning outcomes and leads to a greater sense of belongingness within the university (Rienties et al., 2012; Zhou et al., 2008, Bochner et al., 1977; Furnham & Alibhai, 1985; Mestenhauser, 2003; Sovic, 2009). These findings imply the necessity of creating structured social integration programs on college campuses as they can have a large impact on students' success and satisfaction.

BENEFITS TO HOST-COUNTRY STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY

International students add great value to U.S. universities. The fact that international students contributed over 27 billion dollars to the U.S. economy in 2013/2014 (Institute of International Education, 2015a) is only a portion of what they offer to higher education institutions and the local community. Apart from their financial impact, they act as ambassadors of U.S. culture, hopefully taking back to their home countries positive attitudes toward the U.S. (Lee & Rice, 2007). They offer diversity to the campus and provide domestic students with cross-cultural experience that better prepares them to enter the globalized workforce and world.

Bengt Nilsson's (2003) concept of "Internationalization at Home" (IaH) views international students as resources that are available to the host-community (Mestenhauser, 2003). IaH makes it possible to educate a greater number of students because it is not limited to those who study abroad. For some Americans, the cultural exchange that takes place on campus could be the first substantial relationship that they have with a person from another country, as many students do not have the opportunity to go abroad. This relationship-based model re-conceptualizes the field of International Education by concentrating on what students learn instead of projects they "do." By concentrating on learning and relationships, knowledge is sustained beyond the learning environment and time in which they learned it. Mestenhauser argues that having conversations with people from other cultures helps one to understand other

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cultures from an emic perspective (from the lens of the culture the idea or practice comes from) and encourages “cognitive enrichment” by stretching the mind to develop new categories to process information (2003). The presence of international students provides the opportunity for both U.S. national and international students to learn from each other by sharing their different perspectives, life experiences, value systems, and cultural backgrounds (Hendrickson, et al., 2011; Kim, 2001).

White & Rosado’s project to stimulate meaningful conversations between international and domestic students found that “when everyone truly connects, respect is gained for others’ perspectives. International and U.S. national students genuinely value and seek their respective counterparts’ presence in their lives and they maintain the foundation of what it means to be ‘multicultural’” (2014, p 246). The American participants in the aforementioned study came to find international students as “just another group of students to connect with” (White & Rosado, 2014, p 245). In other words, U.S. national students learned to view international students as part of their community as opposed to viewing them through the lens of ‘us’ and ‘them’.

The literature recognizes the benefits for host-country students when they have an opportunity to create relationships with international students. After meeting with international students one-on-one two to three times a month as a part of a program to connect host-country and international students (Gresham & Clayton, 2011). The U.S. national students surveyed from that program reported that their personal awareness and knowledge of other cultures had increased, their capacity to communicate cross-culturally had improved, and that they had gained significant understanding of what it was like to be an international student, as well as increased confidence gained from interacting across cultures (Gresham & Clayton, 2011). These students

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were able to appreciate the added value that the international students' perspectives provided, and thereby experienced a richer education.

A third study compared the attitudes of Americans toward foreign students before and after an international crisis claimed that, "the more frequent the students reported contact with foreign students, the more positive were their attitudes before and after a crisis" (Matross, 1982). These findings have implications that extend beyond the university experience by engendering a sense of global citizenship. The sustainability of the positive impacts of integration is of key importance. The international students that the Americans forged relationships with gave them a face to associate with a group of people, which allowed them to dismiss negative stereotypes during difficult times (Matross, 1982).

KNOWN BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION:

When researching the known barriers to integration between host-country and international students, the following three themes were identified: discrimination, non-Western country of origin, and English language proficiency.

DISCRIMINATION

Unfortunately, discrimination is a reality for many international students. This inequity serves as barrier for adequate social integration into the host-community, as stereotyping reduces the chances of finding commonalities (Russell, Rosenthal, & Thomson, 2012; Elder, 2015). Research has demonstrated that many international students feel excluded in social situations and in the classroom (Lee & Rice, 2007). Moreover, international students are occasionally victims of targeted aggression (Lee, 2007). When international students perceive they are being targeted or discriminated against by the host-community members then the international students are less likely to want to associate with them.

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Additionally, some host-country students have negative attitudes towards international students (Burch, 2008; Lee & Salamon, 2004; Charles-Toussaint & Crowson, 2010). Studies have noted that many domestic students, even domestic student immigrants, are disappointed at having to work with international students, (Burch, 2008; Lee & Salamon, 2004). Charles-Toussaint & Crowson (2010) reported that U.S. students with the greatest levels of prejudice attitudes also perceived international students, “as threatening their beliefs and values, while also posing threats to their social status and economic, educational, and physical well-being” (p 423). The researchers recommend more frequent and deeper contact between host-country students and international students in order to reduce these prejudices.

NON-WESTERN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Past research has found that students from non-Western countries find it harder to adjust to the U.S. compared with students from Western countries (Berger & Milem, 1999; Fischer, 2012; Chataway & Berry, 1989; Poyrazli, et al., 2004; Rienties, Heliott, Jindal-Snape, 2013; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). As previously noted, in the context of this study, countries in the European Union, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa are categorized as Western countries.

It is presumable that the more culturally different the host-culture is from a student’s home culture, the more difficult it is for the student to adjust. Furnam and Alibhai (1985) refer to this concept as “cultural distance” and find it helpful to explain why students from countries that have different values, such as “collectivism” and “Confucianism,” will experience more stress when studying in the U.S. Students with “vast cultural differences” (Al Reshoud & Koeske, 1997, p 243) from the host-culture, purposefully choose not to pursue friendships with host-

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country students because they are not comfortable with the fundamental elements of the culture (Pruitt, 1978).

Students from China and other East Asian countries have reported fewer friendships with host-country students, greater dissatisfaction, and higher levels of acculturative stress than their European counterparts (Fischer, K., 2012; Chataway & Berry, 1989, Poyrazli, et al., 2004). This is particularly applicable to UW seeing that Asian students make up 85% of the international student population on all UW campuses (University of Washington International Student Services, 2014, p 35). Another study analyzed social networks of 191 international students and found that Chinese students tend to form close networks with other Chinese students but rarely integrate into the host-community, whereas European students are more able to network with host-country students (Rienties, et al., 2013). These studies argue that host-country students find it easier to relate with their peers who have similar norms and values and find it easier to build relationships with international students from Western countries, whose cultures align more closely with theirs.

Poyrazli & Lopez (2007) found that race and ethnicity predicted the students' perceived level of discrimination by the host-community. International students that look and sound different than the host-country majority may feel more like an outsider than those who more easily blend in. Furthermore, Rienties, et al.'s study on academic performance of international students showed that non-Western students had notably lower scores on academic and social integration and adjustment compared with other students, further supporting that non-Western students face more adjustment challenges (2013).

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

International students find it difficult to make friends with host-country students partially due to language barriers (Rienties et, al. 2012; Montgomery and McDowell 2009; Zhou, Topping, & Jindal-Snape, 2011). It is not surprising that a study on international students' confidence found that language confidence is a problem for international students when it comes to socializing (Telbis, Helgeson, & Kingsbury, 2014). Students' ability to communicate effectively correlated with their quality of social life and capacity to adjust (Barratt & Huba, 1994; Hayes & Lin, 1994, Kim, 2001). In addition to confidence, homesickness is related to English language level. International students who have higher levels of homesickness often also have lower levels of English skills (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). English language skills serve as a barrier for international students to initiate relationships with host-country students and to maintain meaningful relationships. Students who are unable to understand common communicative practices, such as humor and small talk, may find it difficult to connect with host-country students. This can lead international students with modest English skills to become more homesick and give them a sense of failure in their new environment.

STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES OF LITERATURE

Many of the studies surrounding the experience of international students focus on culture shock and students' academic adjustment within the classroom. Although there is plentiful data to support the importance of social networks in international students' experience and the mutually beneficial relationship of host-country and international students, there is relatively little known about the barriers to integrating these two groups.

Furthermore, FIUTS has not inquired about its constituents' friendships with U.S. national students. Student feedback from a survey completed by active FIUTS students, both

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U.S. national and international, helps inform FIUTS' strategy to meet its mission to, "build international awareness, cross-cultural communication, and informed leadership" (FIUTS, 2014).

Although several studies mention the benefits to host-country students from interacting with international students, researchers have not collected enough data from these students. There is little known about host-country students' motivation, or lack thereof, to socially engage with international students. Much of the data supports the notion that there is a need amongst international students to form relationships with host-country students, but there is insufficient data concerning the attitudes, awareness, and knowledge of host-country students to reciprocate, leaving international educators with insufficient knowledge on how to reduce the divide. This gap in research prevents international educators from creating well-informed international and host-country student social integration programs. Additionally, the present study better informs FIUTS on the general awareness and messaging of its program at UW so that it can market its programs more effectively.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

SURVEY

To begin, a survey to all UW students that were active in FIUTS was administered. This survey was intended to reveal if the students in the FIUTS community favor the idea of more U.S. national students joining FIUTS as participants in FIUTS' Events and Activities and/or leadership programs. The survey also requested the thoughts and opinions of those involved in FIUTS to better answer the research question: "Why are so few U.S. national students involved in FIUTS?". As mentioned previously, the survey was structured to reveal if there is a difference between the following categories in terms of their desire to have more U.S. national students join

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the FIUTS community: 1) graduate, undergraduate, IELP students, and scholars; 2) international students and U.S. national students; 3) those with varying levels of (self-reported) involvement in FIUTS; 4) those with different (self-reported) English language abilities; 5) and students from Western vs. non-Western countries. The distributed survey consisted of a combination of both open-ended and close-ended questions, aimed at collecting narratives of FIUTS students' respective experiences forming friendships with UW students within and outside of FIUTS. The survey was administered through an online survey instrument, Survey Monkey, and remained active from March 30th, 2015 to April 6th, 2015. The Survey Monkey link was shared via e-mail to all students that participated in FIUTS' Events & Activity Program in the 2014-2015 academic year and to all facilitators that had been active during the 2014-2015 academic year. The survey link was also promoted on the "FIUTS" Facebook fan page, "FIUTS UW International Students" Facebook group, "FIUTS Facilitators" Facebook group, "FIUTS Student Board" Facebook group, and the FIUTS April 4th, 2015 e-newsletter. The 106 surveys collected on Survey Monkey were consolidated and analyzed using analysis features in Microsoft Excel. See [Appendix A](#) for consent form and survey instrument used.

The survey provided a space for international students involved in FIUTS to openly share some of their experiences making friends with U.S. national students and for U.S. nationals involved in FIUTS to share their experiences connecting with international students, both within and outside of the FIUTS community.

The limitations of this survey include a self-reporting bias and differing interpretation of the questions. Furthermore, the international students involved in FIUTS may not be a representative sample of UW international students, or international students at comparable U.S. universities.

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INTERVIEWS

To gain a better understanding of those that are not currently involved in FIUTS, fifteen, ten to twenty minute in-person interviews were conducted on UW's campus with UW U.S. national students that were not involved in FIUTS programs. All interviewees were randomly selected to participate in the study. See [Appendix B](#) for consent form and interview instrument used.

One of the limitations to the interview portion of this research is that only a small percentage of the UW students were interviewed, making it difficult to truly generalize the results to all UW U.S. national students or be confident that the results are representative of all host-country students in similarly sized, public universities. Additionally, participants may have withheld giving responses that could be perceived as negative towards international students or negative opinions of FIUTS, the organization the researcher was openly affiliated. Lastly, the strategy to randomly select participants was to approach people that were not, at the time of approaching them, engaged in conversation on UW campus in commonly populated public spaces like Red Square and the Husky Union Building (HUB). Discerning international students from U.S. national students was a constant challenge, as it proved difficult to distinguish students' home country by appearance alone. The researcher did not approach people she perceived to be of Asian heritage, causing the resulting selection to be a predominantly white sample of students. Additionally, because the researcher typically approached people who were found sitting or waiting in line alone, it is possible that interview participants may be less social than their other student counterparts that were socially engaged with other people at the time of interviews.

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FINDINGS

SURVEY

In total, 106 UW students involved in FIUTS participated in the survey. Out of the 106 participants, 18% were U.S. national students and 82% were international students coming from both Western and non-Western countries. The Western countries represented were Germany (3), Czech Republic (1), Denmark (1), France (1), Israel (1), and Portugal (1). The overwhelming majority of participants were from non-Western countries which included China (29), India (11), Japan (8), Mexico (4), Saudi Arabia (3), Singapore (3), Thailand (3), Indonesia (2), Malaysia (2), Ukraine (2), and Vietnam (2), Taiwan (2), Iraq (1), Macau (1), Bangladesh (1), Cambodia (1), Chile (1), Hong Kong (1), Romania (1), Russia (1), S Korea (1), and Turkey (1). In terms of education level, 62% were undergraduate students, 25% were graduate students, 6% were scholars and about 8% of the respondents were enrolled in IELP. The reported English language level of the participants was extremely high in that on a 1-10 scale (10 meaning superior/native English speaker), 87% rated their language level as a seven or higher. Involvement in FIUTS was in the middle, where on a scale of 1-10 (10 meaning very involved in FIUTS) 62% of the participants rated their involvement as a five or higher, with the majority of respondents rating their involvement in the 4-6 range. The demographics of the survey participants generally reflect the makeup of the FIUTS student community, with the exception of a low participation rate of IELP and Chinese students, and an especially high participation rate of Americans, graduate students, and scholars.

To answer the main research question of the survey, the question was posed, “Do you want more U.S. (domestic) students to be involved in FIUTS?”. The great majority (83%) of the participants responded in favor of this idea, whereas 16% were undecided and only 1% indicated

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he or she did not want more U.S. national students involved in FIUTS. To better understand the differences in responses and to compare these findings with trends found in the literature previously discussed, *Linear Regression Analysis*, a method used to analyze linear correlations between two variables, was used. The *Linear Regression Analysis* was used to determine if there were significant correlations between desire for more U.S. national students to be involved in FIUTS and the following categories: Western vs non-Western country of origin ($R^2=.012$), English language ability ($R^2=.014$), international vs U.S. national students ($R^2=.013$), involvement in FIUTS ($R^2=.031$), and education level ($R^2=.013$), (R^2 meaning the percentage of variance explained from the data). Using an Alpha of .95, or a 95% confidence interval, none of the above listed categories had a significant correlation with the desire to have more U.S. nationals involved. These results indicate there was no correlation, showing that the variation in responses cannot be explained using the above listed categories.

To paint a complete picture of the participants' experience making friends at UW, the survey examined co-national, multi-national and host-country friendships at UW. Approximately 40% of the participants indicated that co-national friendships comprised more than half of their friends at UW, although 25% reported 0-10% of their friends at UW were from their home country. The median percentage of co-national friendships was 41-50%. Nearly 70% of participants responded that less than half of their friends are international students that are not from their home country (multi-national friends), making the median 31-40%. Furthermore, only 24% of the international student participants expressed that more than half of their friends at UW were host-country students. The median percentage of host-country friendships resulted in the lowest of the three categories at 21-30%. However, about half of the participants reported that they were very to somewhat satisfied with their friendships with U.S. nationals with a median

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satisfaction rating of seven, on a 1-10 scale. United States national students, in general, were more satisfied with their relationships with U.S. national students compared to international students' satisfaction rating on their relationships with U.S. national students. United States nationals reported a median satisfaction rating of nine, whereas international students gave a median rating of seven. See [Appendix C](#) for tables and charts describing the survey results.

To gain more insight into the reasoning behind the participants' responses, a list was created of the following themes based on the qualitative answers the participants provided in the surveys. These responses contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the students' experience making friends at UW.

THEME ONE: INCREASING U.S. NATIONAL STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN FIUTS WOULD ALIGN WITH THE FIUTS MISSION

One of the most common themes was a sentiment that Americans are an integral part of international understanding. Many participants believed the two-way exchange between international and U.S. national students to be at the core of the FIUTS mission:

"1. US is part of the global world thus they need to be presented in the FIUTS family 2. International students come to United States to not only study their academic subject but also the American culture. Thus we would love more contact with American students.(although there is not a strict universal agreement on the "American" identity.)" -- China, undergraduate

Several students also viewed the presence of international students on UW campus through the lens of Internationalization at Home (Nilsson, 2003) by bringing attention to how the perspectives of international students enhance campus:

"I think the international knowledge and access that FIUTS provides would be beneficial to domestic students in the sense that they would be able to develop cultural awareness without having to go abroad and would help with the integration of international students as well. The point of FIUTS is to help share culture but if domestic students don't get involved then there's a whole part of the community that is missing out." -- India, undergraduate

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“It is really interesting to know different culture by making friends with domestic students!! Sharing culture is a good way to eliminate stereotypes also. Like sometimes American people think Chinese are really rude since they don't give enough tips but actually it is because giving tips is not common in China” -- China, IELP

“As a domestic student involved with FIUTS I have found huge value in the relationships I have made through engaging with the international community. I believe it is a huge opportunity to build an international network while at home but overwhelmingly I am surprised by how few other US students actively participate as facilitators.”-- USA, undergraduate

THEME TWO: DIFFICULTIES OF BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS

Although, there was a clear desire to connect with U.S. national students, international students admitted to facing challenges in their efforts to share meaningful interactions with U.S. national students:

“I don't really have friends from the US.” -- Hong Kong, undergraduate

“there are so many international students at UW, which is absolutely great. But on the other hand, it's not easy for me to make American friends.” -- Japan, IELP

“It would be nice if FIUTS was a place where you could also meet domestic students. The domestic friends I have here are from my program.” -- Denmark, graduate

One student, reflected on the functions of co-national, multinational, and host-country networks over time (Bochner et al., 1977):

“It was very difficult for me during my freshmen year of college to make friends with American students. Before coming to the U.S., I thought that it was going to be very easy for me to make American friends as I'm a fluent English speaker. However, boy, was I wrong! Now that I look back at my freshmen year, I would probably attribute cross-cultural misunderstandings as being one of the major reasons that prevented me from having "successful friendships" with Americans. So, during my first year of college, I spent most of my free time socializing with people that grew up in the region that I grew up in. During my sophomore year of college, I began to "assimilate" to American culture -- whatever that's supposed to mean -- and decreased the time that I spent with people that came from my region of the world. It wasn't until my junior of college that I began to "integrate" to life here in Seattle, in the sense that I've managed to maintain a healthy balance of American friends and international friends (including people that come from where I come from).” -- Kuwait, undergraduate

A few Americans noted the temporary nature of international students' tenure in the U.S. as an added challenge the two groups need to overcome in order to socially integrate:

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“It's sometimes hard to commit enough time to the international students as a domestic student. In Seattle you have your entire network of local friends/family etc. so you have to push yourself to engage with international students. It is easier to build relationships with people who are here over a quarter because with other obligations there is just not enough free time to get to know international students who are here only briefly....” -- USA, undergraduate

A couple of students, such as the one below, addressed the difference between Western and non-Western cultures:

“I think local students feel far more comfortable making friends with Western internationals than they do with internationals from other parts of the world. Local students seem to be far quicker to engage and get along with someone from Germany, for instance, than they do someone from Japan. I have hypothesized that this is because Western students share more common historical knowledge and culture that makes breaking the ice easy. Making friends from other parts of the world often requires more effort and patience to get through the cultural barriers, making it less likely to happen naturally...” -- USA, undergraduate

Eleven students commented on the prevalence of linguistic and cultural barriers:

“It's hard making friends with students from the U.S. Since the culture's really different. It would be really weird to interrupting them all the time asking for explanations about what they're saying. And the classes we're taking are mostly huge classes. It's really hard to make friends in class.” -- China, undergraduate

“They are kind and friendly to me, but we can not be really close friend maybe because my English is not good enough.” -- China, undergraduate

“My class has some domestic students, but they tend to be together with only domestic students. I believe this is not only because I am not great at speaking English, but because we can not share topics to talk with. For example, I have no idea about TV shows, restaurants, joking and other American culture things that domestic students are often talking about” -- Japan, unknown

Two American participants, such as the one below, were concerned that many Americans do not know that FIUTS is open to them:

“The majority of domestic students I have spoken to have no idea what FIUTS is, which I think leads to a major lack in communication between international and domestic” -- USA, undergraduate

Another reason identified for the divide was that Americans, with the exception of a “certain” personality type, are not interested in international students:

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“Culturally and in so many ways we are very different. So it was interesting to make friends with them but sadly not many domestic students are open to interaction”-- India, graduate

“It takes certain personality type for domestic students to get involved in FIUTS and make international friends. From what I've observed, these domestic students have great curiosity and patience; they are also very open-minded.” -- Vietnam, undergraduate

THEME THREE: POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

Most students from the United States commented on the benefits of befriending international students:

“I have loved getting to make friends with international students. It has opened up my views to new areas of the world I had not previously thought of and I have already had the chance to visit many of the international students I've met while at UW creating very rewarding trips abroad through connecting with locals” -- USA, undergraduate

International students also shared that by forging friendships with local students, they can improve their English and learn about American culture:

“Domestic students will bring in an extra touch in FIUTS. They can show international students how American culture is like, and can bring in different perspectives in thinking.” -- China, undergraduate

“Having domestic students (involved in FIUTS can) help me improve my English and learn about the US culture faster.” -- Vietnam, undergraduate

“It would be nice if domestic students represent their country in FIUTS.” -- India, scholar

A few students remarked that they are open to being friends with anyone, regardless of their nationality:

“It is about attitude instead of nationalities so I prefer people who are warm” -- Mexico, unknown

THEME FOUR: MAKING FRIENDS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF FIUTS

Sixteen students commented on how making friends with domestic students was best achieved outside of FIUTS:

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"It's been easiest to become friends with coworkers and roommates for me. The FIUTS events tend to be so full of international students and quite a few of the US students stick to one/two/three other students they already know well. That's not entirely a bad thing, but it's easier to get to know people you are "stuck with", because you can't just switch to a different group if you feel a little wrong with one group." -- Germany, undergraduate

"I made most of my domestic friends through high school, and some through classes at the UW. The domestic friends that I made within FIUTS are mostly staff, because most of the facilitators are international students." -- China, undergraduate

On the other hand, eight participants attribute their friendships with the other group to FIUTS programs:

"By being a facilitator, I get to know other facilitators, both domestic and international. We keep facilitate together and strengthen the friendship. We also gather for other activities. It is pretty hard to make close friends who are my classmates because we don't have enough time to know more about each other. Most of the time we meet is in class for a group meeting for a project. FIUTS has provides a great environment for cultural exchange and international friendship" -- Vietnam, undergraduate

"FIUTS was the best environment to meet international students and build friendships. As a domestic student, even though there ma(n)y international students in our classes, there is hardly any interaction and it is not the same as having a more casual environment to do activities and makes friends. FIUTS allowed for international and domestic student interaction." -- USA, undergraduate

"I've grown up in a multicultural and multilingual household. I had some friends from different cultures, too. But due to the places I've lived and the activities I did, I did not have a significant multicultural friend group. I did not realize what I was missing until I participated in (FIUTS) CulturalFest in 2013 and found myself surrounded by people like me. Living multiculturally and bringing the beauty of their culture, language, attitude, world view, art, etc. to everyone they meet. I wish I had become part of the multicultural culture, so to speak, sooner. As it is, most of my closest friends are either international students or other multicultural domestic students. I absolutely love it." -- USA, graduate

THEME FIVE: THE APPEAL OF FIUTS IS THAT IT IS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COMMUNITY

Not all participants were confident that they wanted more Americans to join FIUTS. Five participants expressed apprehension about more U.S. nationals joining FIUTS for the reason that the appeal of FIUTS, for them, is it is one of the few places for international students to connect with each other:

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“I like how FIUTS has been a platform for international students to meet other international students so I think having too many domestic students involved in FIUTS will kind of destroy the "personality" of FIUTS. Just a few will be alright. Since students pretty much have a lot of opportunities to meet with domestic during their stay at UW. If they are reluctant to meet domestic students in their daily school lives since it is out of their comfort zones, having domestic students at FIUTS won't do much to help and it might leave the domestic students at an awkward situation somehow.” -- Macau, undergraduate

“As helpful as it may be for some to form connections to domestic students in order to assimilate, FIUTS for me has been more of an experience to get to know the rest of the world. It's a small community where we as a minority can feel like we belong together. Though I do not feel that the presence of domestic students to be harmful to my involvement, in some senses, they can be rather intimidating, as if we internationals are stepping into their territory.” -- Indonesia, undergraduate

The only student that selected that he or she does not want more U.S. national students involved in FIUTS shared his or her reasoning:

“International students are easier to get along with and more genuine.” -- Thailand, graduate

For a complete list of themes and qualitative responses from the survey see [Appendix D](#).

INTERVIEW

To assess some barriers to social integration, fifteen UW U.S. national students that were not involved in FIUTS were interviewed. Through responses compiled during these interviews, this study facilitates a better understanding of the awareness domestic students maintain with regards to FIUTS and its programming. Additionally, interviews generated a list of reasons that prevented the interviewees from joining the international student community at FIUTS.

One third of the interviewees had heard of FIUTS, yet only one person could generate an accurate description of the organization, including the knowledge that FIUTS is open to both international and U.S. national students. For this reason, it is not surprising that two thirds of the participants mentioned not knowing about FIUTS as one of the main barriers for U.S. national students to get involved in FIUTS' programmatic opportunities. Additionally, three students expressed that FIUTS did not seem like a place for U.S. national students. Once it was

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established that there was a lack of awareness of FIUTS, the researcher was able to elicit responses from students to determine the best ways to inform them of FIUTS' events and program offerings. Students recounted the ways they typically learn about on-campus organizations. Word-of-mouth/friends, campus-wide e-mail, information tables in busy areas on UW campus such as Red Square, and Facebook were said to be the most common sources of information. Other suggestions students offered were putting up posters around campus (in the library, around food venues, and in the dorms), collaborating with First Year Program's Orientation, e-mails from professors or from listservs for their major(s), and the UW student directory.

All of the participants articulated that they have observed a gap between international and U.S. national students. More importantly, every participant viewed it as a problem. There was a consensus amongst all participants that language was a barrier for international students. One student commented, "there's only so far you can go in a conversation with someone with poor English. You have to find out things about each other." Another major trend that came up during the interview processes was that local students do not want to seek out international students; they prefer that friendships are organic and non-structured. An interviewee explained, "I don't like fabricated social interactions. I prefer the authentic offhand experiences of making friends and I don't want to go to an event to make friends. I see the purpose that it serves, but it doesn't serve my purpose." Similarly, seven students made reference to Americans being in their own world where international students do not cross their mind. This relates to similar comments made in interviews that U.S. nationals do not have enough motivation to get involved in an international student community. A graduate student studying International Studies spoke about the apathy of other Americans: "What's in it for them? There is less incentive for Americans.

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They typically don't care about learning about other cultures and they certainly don't go out of their way to do so." A few participants pointed to the added challenge that international students are not entering college with a friend group like many local students do. Moreover, interviewees constantly recounted that they did not have time and/or they were involved in other organizations.

Most participants reported barriers related to the differences of the two groups. Four interviewees recalled observing international students pairing together in groups, often speaking a foreign language. Following this notion of a lack of shared understanding, three participants said they could not relate to international students because they do not have anything in common or anything to talk about. Half of the participants verbalized that different cultures and cultural norms were a considerable barrier and two participants admitted that they do not feel equipped with the cross-cultural skills to join an international student community. Furthermore, a few of the interviewees noted that East Asians, in particular, are much more conservative than Americans, adding to the list of potential contributing barriers to international and U.S. national student integration. Lastly, one participant openly shared negative stereotypes of international students, "I never talk to them (international students) but I see them smoking on campus. They make fun of me for not having expensive technology and clothes. I come here to get an education and they come here to get rich so we don't understand each other." To view tables describing interview themes see [Appendix E](#).

DISCUSSION

The results of the survey demonstrate that students involved in FIUTS wish to have more U.S. national students involved. This identified need has major implications for FIUTS as an

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organization and for UW as a whole, as it should take into account the voices of its community and actively encourage participation from more U.S. national students. The fact that there were 106 survey participants is an extremely high number of respondents for FIUTS. Other surveys disseminated to the same number of students within FIUTS have historically resulted in an average of roughly thirty responses. The number of FIUTS students that were willing to share their experiences making friends at UW shows that the subject is something that students care about and therefore something worthy of further exploration.

As stated earlier, the research questions directing the survey were: “Is there a difference in each of following categories in terms of desire for more U.S. nationals to become involved in FIUTS: 1) education level (undergraduate, graduate, International & English Language Program (IELP) students, and scholars), 2) international verses U.S. national students, 3) level of involvement in FIUTS, 4) English language abilities, and 5) Western verses non-Western country of origin?”. The results indicate that there was not a significant correlation between desire to have more U.S. national students involved in FIUTS and education level, English proficiency, Western vs non-Western country of origin, involvement in FIUTS, or international vs U.S. national students. Although there was diversity in student profiles of the participants, the above factors that compose their profile did not have a strong influence on their desire to have more U.S. national students involved in FIUTS. Because each student follows a unique path within the university, it is of special importance that there is a general consensus among the FIUTS community to encourage more U.S. national students to get involved, regardless of the demographic indicators asked in the survey.

Contrary to past research (Bochner et al., 1977), participants involved in FIUTS reported having a higher proportion of multinational networks compared to host-country networks. This

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may be due to the success of FIUTS aligning with its mission to facilitate connections with people from different cultural background or due to its difficulty in recruiting U.S. nationals to participate in its programs. It should also be mentioned that students from underrepresented countries, such as Romania and Mexico, may have provided a low score for co-national friendships because they do not have an opportunity to meet people from his or her home country at UW, inflating the multi-national network results. The low score for host-country networks strengthens the need for FIUTS to dedicate effort to engaging U.S. nationals.

Beyond the reported proportions of co-national, multinational, and host-country friendships, was the function that each network provided. Several students referenced international students' connections with U.S. nationals to be particularly valuable in terms of providing transition support, insights into the culture, and English-language mentorship, and is consistent with past research (Kim, 2001; Gresham & Clayton, 2011; Furnham & Bochner, 1982).

Both interviewees and survey participants commented on how U.S. national students enter the university with a social network, therefore international students may need to overcome more social challenges than U.S. national students. The participants admitted struggles, such as language and cultural barriers, which fits in with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory in that international students need to transcend the lower three tiers of the pyramid, 'physiological need', 'safety needs' and the 'need for belonging', in order to reach 'esteem', the fourth tier (Maslow, 1943). The fact that international students rated their satisfaction with their friendships with U.S. national students an average of two points lower than U.S. national students did, supports the theory that feeling a sense of being accepted by the host-community is more challenging for international students.

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The reoccurring theme that U.S. national students prefer friendships to form organically is divergent with past research that claims that these relationships require structural support (Gresham & Clayton, 2011, Church, 1982; Neubert, 2015, Owens & Loomes, 2010). Most U.S. national students interviewed were open to forming friendships with international students but were opposed to joining an event or group for that purpose. In other words, for most U.S. national students interviewed, it was not a negative attitude toward international students that prevented the interviewees from participating in FIUTS programs, but a distain for structured environments intended to help students make friends, such as FIUTS, that deterred them from getting involved in FIUTS or organizations like FIUTS. For international educators, this finding may translate into creating programs or events in which both international and U.S. nationals are more easily able to casually connect with one another, such as an event during orientation, meanwhile keeping the goal of social integration internal.

U.S. nationals involved in FIUTS voiced a perspective that aligned with the lens of Bengt Nilsson's (2003) concept of Internationalization at Home. Both international and U.S. national students involved in FIUTS were able to recognize the benefits for both parties in an exchange, yet most of the U.S. nationals who were not involved in FIUTS were not able to identify incentives that would motivate them to integrate into the international student community at FIUTS.

One may attribute the differences in attitudes towards international students between the U.S. nationals involved in FIUTS and those whom are not involved in FIUTS in several ways. It may be that the U.S. national students that are involved in FIUTS are predisposed to appreciate the cultural diversity that FIUTS offers. Some students may identify with a minority ethnicity, be raised in a culturally diverse environment, have studied abroad or are learning a foreign

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language, giving them a starting point to relate to international students and motivation to initiate interaction. As an interviewee mentioned, some U.S. national students without international experience may not feel equipped to enter an international community or might feel like they do not fit in. To address these misgivings, trainings focused on cross-cultural communication and culture sharing should be offered to the UW U.S. national student population so they are able to have the tools and confidence to engage with international students. FIUTS should also advertise the opportunity to share American culture with IELP students, making it clear that there is a place for American students.

Although non-IELP international students must meet the minimum English requirement of a scoring a 76 on the internet-based TOEFL, a 540 on the paper-based TOEPL, a 7.0 on the International English Language Testing System, obtain a Critical Reading score of 550 on the SAT, or an English score of 22 on the ACT for their UW application to be considered, English proficiency was the most commonly mentioned barrier to integration (University of Washington Admissions, 2015). The stereotype that “all international students cannot speak English” is prevalent, making it an important barrier to take into account. Congruent with literature reviewed, many international students attributed their difficulties in making friends with host-country students to their English language abilities (Telbis, Helgeson, & Kingsbury, 2014).

Beyond that, cultural misunderstandings and inferior knowledge of the local, host culture were also deemed to be a setback for the two groups to engage in meaningful conversations. FIUTS may consider addressing this during orientation or offering events like American Culture Night during the year to provide international students with conversation starters and common U.S. popular culture references.

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Discrimination, especially toward East Asians, is another deterrent to social integration made known in this study. Furnam and Alibhai (1985) concept of cultural distance was supported by an American involved in FIUTS who made the observation that Western international students tend to be easier to relate to. An interviewee expanded upon this concept, saying that although he was friends with several students from the Middle Eastern, the East Asians on campus were too conservative for him to connect with.

Similar to Lee & Rice's study, a few international students commented on how many Americans had no interest in befriending international students (2007). In addition to discounting international students for their limited English abilities and cultural differences, one student addressed the financial inequalities she perceived between international and U.S. national students. The impression that all international students are rich aligns with Charles-Toussaint & Crowson (2010) theory that international students can be seen as a threat.

Plausibly, one of the greatest reasons why so few U.S. nationals are involved in FIUTS is that they have not heard of it. Most students interviewed not only had little to no knowledge of FIUTS programming, but did not even recognize the name FIUTS. This lack of awareness from U.S. national students brings light to the scope of its messaging on campus.

PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY

There are several ways the results of this study can be implemented. To begin, the researcher recommends that FIUTS create a marketing campaign to spread awareness of its programs. This campaign should launch in the summer and increase in the beginning of Fall Quarter before students are set in their schedule and devote their time to other organizations. In hopes of correcting the misconception of FIUTS being too much of a time commitment, the marketing campaign should be specifically targeted at U.S. national students and capitalize on

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the flexible time commitment. One suggestion is to create a short video clip featuring American students currently involved in FIUTS speaking to the value of FIUTS program offerings, including leadership development and the opportunity to visit new friends around the world. This video can be shared on the FIUTS website, including the blog, and via Facebook, one of the interviewees' recommended advertising platforms. The promotional video can address some of the hesitations the interviewees shared and provide viewers with an incentive to participate in FIUTS programs. Additionally, as the interviewees suggested, posters should be displayed around campus, and messaging should be distributed via various UW listservs, as interviewees claim they view university e-mail as a reputable source.

In combination with the marketing campaign, the researcher suggests that FIUTS integrate more into the student body by collaborating with on-campus partners and resource fairs. An obvious first step is to submit an event to be a part of UW's First Year Program's Dawg Daze, an eleven-day program full of events for all freshman and first year students to welcome them to campus and start building relations with other students and campus resources. Participating in programs like Dawg Daze responds to a need generated by the common remark that most U.S. national students are not proactive or intentional about connecting with international students. If FIUTS is a part of an event U.S. nationals are already likely to attend during the formative time of the first week of the year, friendships that form can be much more natural. As the participants indicated, Americans who are well-traveled are more likely to be able to relate to international students. Pursuing a close relationship with UW Study Abroad Office to attract students who have studied abroad and collaborating with registered student organizations would be in FIUTS' best interest.

Beyond FIUTS and UW, the research at hand brings to light a topic that is likely to be

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seen in most, if not all, higher education institutions. The barriers that U.S. national students reported may be used as a guide to design thoughtful programs that bridge the gap between international and U.S. national students. These barriers and recommendations to overcome said barriers can be applied to multiple contexts to make a truly internationalized campus.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research is constrained by the scope of this project and is only the beginning of a topic that needs to be further explored. International Education practitioners should expand upon this study and collect more data from host-country students. In addition, international educators should create programs that bring international and host-country students together and evaluate those programs. Past research indicates the benefits to international students but few studies have focused on the host-country students that form friendships with international students. How can we motivate host-nationals to form meaningful friendships with international students? The absence of literature from the Internationalization at Home and host-student perspectives is indicative of the apathy to connect with international students expressed by host-national students in this study.

CONCLUSION

The rapidly growing numbers of international students at UW presents opportunities and challenges for the University, as these students have needs that are different from those of U.S. national students. UW should address the needs of international students in order to create an environment in which they, as members of the UW community as a whole, can succeed. The University needs well-informed student support offices and partnering organizations, like

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FIUTS, that understand all aspects of the international student experience, including social integration with U.S. students and the barriers that prevent such integration.

The present study examined why there are so few U.S. nationals involved in FIUTS from multiple perspectives. The results indicated that most UW U.S. national students have little to no awareness or knowledge of FIUTS. When further questioned, most U.S. nationals not involved in FIUTS were at least somewhat interested in FIUTS Student Programs' offerings albeit would ultimately not join due to competing commitments, the lack of a strong incentive to connect with the international student community, being resistant to structured programs, and a professed inability to relate to international students. Furthermore, nearly all students involved in FIUTS, regardless of their education level, country of origin, level of involvement in FIUTS, English language abilities, and whether they were from a Western or non-Western country, desired to have more domestic (U.S. national) students involved in FIUTS.

Dialogue about the social separation between international and U.S. national students and the structured integration required must continue. International educators should adopt the lens of Internationalization at Home by acknowledging the benefits that international students provide to U.S. campuses and U.S. national students. Faculty, staff, and university offices should be sensitive to the unique experience of international students and unite as a campus to bridge the gap between international and U.S. national students and address the barriers to social integration as found in this study.

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APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM & SURVEY INSTRUMENT

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH STUDY:

Mind the Gap: Understanding the lack of social integration between U.S. nationals and international students

Dear Study Participant,

You are being invited to participate in a research study focusing on the integration between domestic and international students at The University of Washington (UW) Seattle. This study is being conducted by Danika Delano from the International Education Master's Program at The School for International Training (SIT) Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont. It is her aim, as a researcher, to use the collected data from this study as a means to better understand the experiences of those involved in The Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS). The goal of this study is to use this information to better understand the needs and desires of those in the FIUTS community.

You are eligible to participate in this research, if you so desire, because you are a UW Seattle student that is a part of the FIUTS community. The process is simple and only requires that you are willing to give your time to answer questions regarding your experience at UW. You will be given a 10-minute survey regarding your experiences as a UW student.

There are no known risks in participating in this study. In addition, there are no costs. The information that you provide inform FIUTS and the field of international education of the needs and wants of those involved in the FIUTS community. Participants responses on this survey will influence the student support strategies that FIUTS takes in the future.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you have the right to decline participation. If at any point in the process you may decide to withdraw your participation, your information will be deemed unpublishable and will be removed from the research.

You will have access to the published results of this study upon request.

This survey has been designed to ensure the anonymity of your identity. The data you provide is confidential and will not be connected to you as an individual in any reporting of this data. FIUTS reserves the rights to use this data for marketing purpose to meet the needs of the FIUTS community.

By taking this survey, you are recognizing your willingness to participate in a study regarding the social integration between international and domestics students on UW, Seattle campus.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact Lyneé Connelly, the faculty advisor at SIT Graduate Institute by email: lconnelly@nmhschool.org or the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at irb@sit.edu. You can also contact the researcher, Danika Delano, via email at danika@fiuts.org.

I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.

If you understand the informed consent form, accept its term, and are at least 18, please select "Yes, I consent." If you respond "No, I do not want to participate/ I am not 18 + years old," your responses in this study will not be used.

- ☐ "Yes, I consent"
- ☐ "No, I do not want to participate/ I am not 18+ years old"

Instructions: Please answer all questions based on your experiences at The University of Washington, Seattle (UW)

1. Are you an international student? (circle one) **Yes / No**
2. What is your home country? _____
3. I am a University of Washington (UW) _____ student (choose ONE of following):

Graduate Undergraduate IELP Scholar I am not a UW student
(your responses will not be considered)

4. On a scale of 1-10, please rate your **conversational English language level**.

Very low Superior (Native English speaker)
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. On a scale of 1-10, please rate your **involvement in FIUTS**:

Not involved Very involved in FIUTS
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. What **percentage (%)** of your friends at UW are from your **home country**?

None All/ nearly all of my friends
are from my home country
0-10 % 11-20% 21-30% 31-40% 41-50% 51-60% 61-70% 71-80% 81-90% 91-100%

7. What **percentage (%)** of your friends at UW are international students **NOT** from your home country?

None All/ nearly all of my friends are international
students NOT from my home country
0-10 % 11-20% 21-30% 31-40% 41-50% 51-60% 61-70% 71-80% 81-90% 91-100%

8. What **percentage (%)** of your friends at UW are from the **United States** (domestic students)?
 *Domestic students should answer the same as #6

None All/ nearly all of my friends
are domestic students
0-10 % 11-20% 21-30% 31-40% 41-50% 51-60% 61-70% 71-80% 81-90% 91-100%

9. On a scale of 1-10, how **satisfied** are you with friendships you have made with UW students **from the United States** (domestic students)?

Very unsatisfied Very satisfied
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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10. Do you want more U.S. (domestic) students to be involved in FIUTS (circle one)?

Yes / No / Undecided

11. Please explain your answer to #10.

12. International students, please share your experiences making friends with students from the U.S. (domestic students) both within FIUTS and outside of FIUTS.

Domestic students, please share your experiences making friends with international students both within FIUTS and outside of FIUTS.

13. Is there anything else you would like FIUTS to know about the friendships between international and domestic students at UW Seattle? You may share your observations of others and your personal experiences.

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM & INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH STUDY:

Mind the Gap: Understanding the lack of social integration between U.S. nationals and international students

Dear Study Participant,

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You are eligible to participate in this research, if you so desire, because you are a UW domestic student that is not involved in FIUTS. The process is simple and only requires that you are willing to give your time to answer questions regarding your experience at UW. **The interview will take about 10 minutes and will be about your experiences as a UW student.**

There are no known risks in participating in this study. In addition, there are no costs. The information that you provide will be benefitting FIUTS and the field of international education by providing insight into the lack of integration between U.S. nationals and international students, helping to create a more internationalized campus.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you have the right to decline participation. If at any point in the process you may decide to withdraw your participation, your information will be deemed unpublishable and will be removed from the research.

You will have access to the published results of this study upon request.

This survey has been designed to ensure the anonymity of your identity. The data you provide is confidential and will not be connected to you as an individual in any reporting of this data.

By signing this form, you are recognizing your willingness to participate in a study regarding the social integration between international and domestics students on UW, Seattle campus.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact Lyneé Connelly, the faculty advisor at SIT Graduate Institute by email: lconnelly@nmhschool.org or the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at irb@sit.edu. You can also contact the researcher, Danika Delano, via email at danika@fiuts.org.

I have read above, I understand its contents, and I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.

Participant: _____ Participant's Signature: _____

Researchers' Signature: _____

Interview Questions: Domestic Students at The University of Washington Seattle Outside the FIUTS Community

Qualifying Questions:

*Only University of Washington (UW) Seattle domestic students that are not involved in FIUTS will be interviewed

- 1) Are you a student here at UW? (all interviews were conducted on UW Seattle's campus)
- 2) Are you involved in FIUTS?
- 3) Are you an international or domestic student?

Interview questions:

- 1) Have you heard of FIUTS (show interviewee the FIUTS logo)?
 - 1a) If so, how?
 - 1b) If not, how do you typically learn about organizations on campus (then skip to question #4)?
- 2) To the best of your knowledge, what is FIUTS (if participant has heard of FIUTS)?
- 3) To the best of your knowledge, who are FIUTS programs open to (if participant has heard of FIUTS)?
 - 3a) Are they open to domestic students (if participant does not mention domestic students in their response)?
- 4) What is your experience with international students at UW?
 - 4a) Are you interested in making friends with (more) international students (explain)?
- 5) Why do you think that international students have a difficult time making friends with domestic students (aka American students)?
- 6) Are you interested in any of FIUTS programs (especially Events and Activities & FIUTS Facilitator Leadership program)? Interviewer will briefly explain these programs if the interviewee is unfamiliar. Please explain answer.
- 7) Why do you think so few American students are involved in FIUTS activities?
- 8) This research is about the social interaction between international and domestic students at UW Seattle. Is there anything you would like to add to this topic?

APPENDIX C: ANALYSIS OF SURVEY- FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1. Survey participants' desire to have more U.S. national students involved in FIUTS

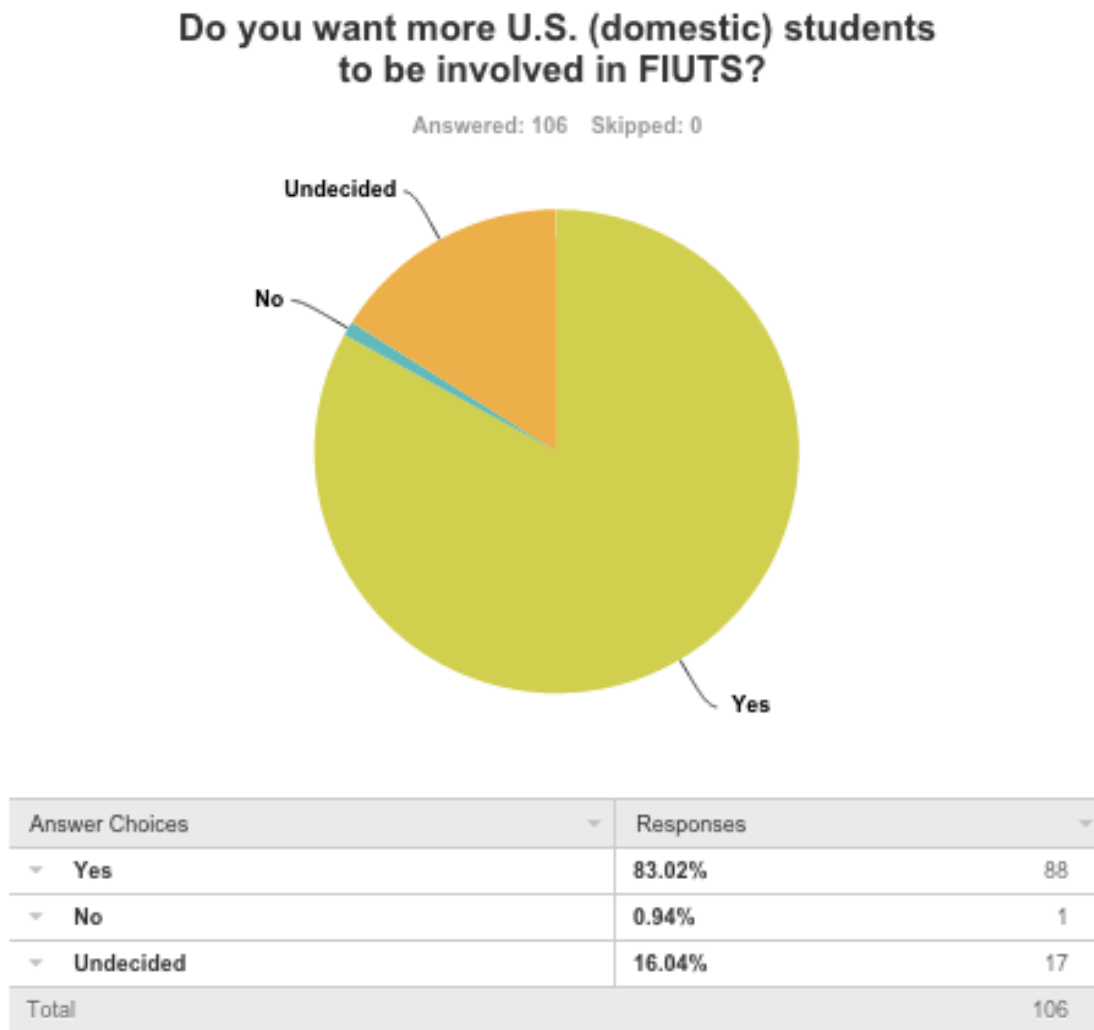


Figure 2. Demographic data of survey participants- International versus U.S. national students

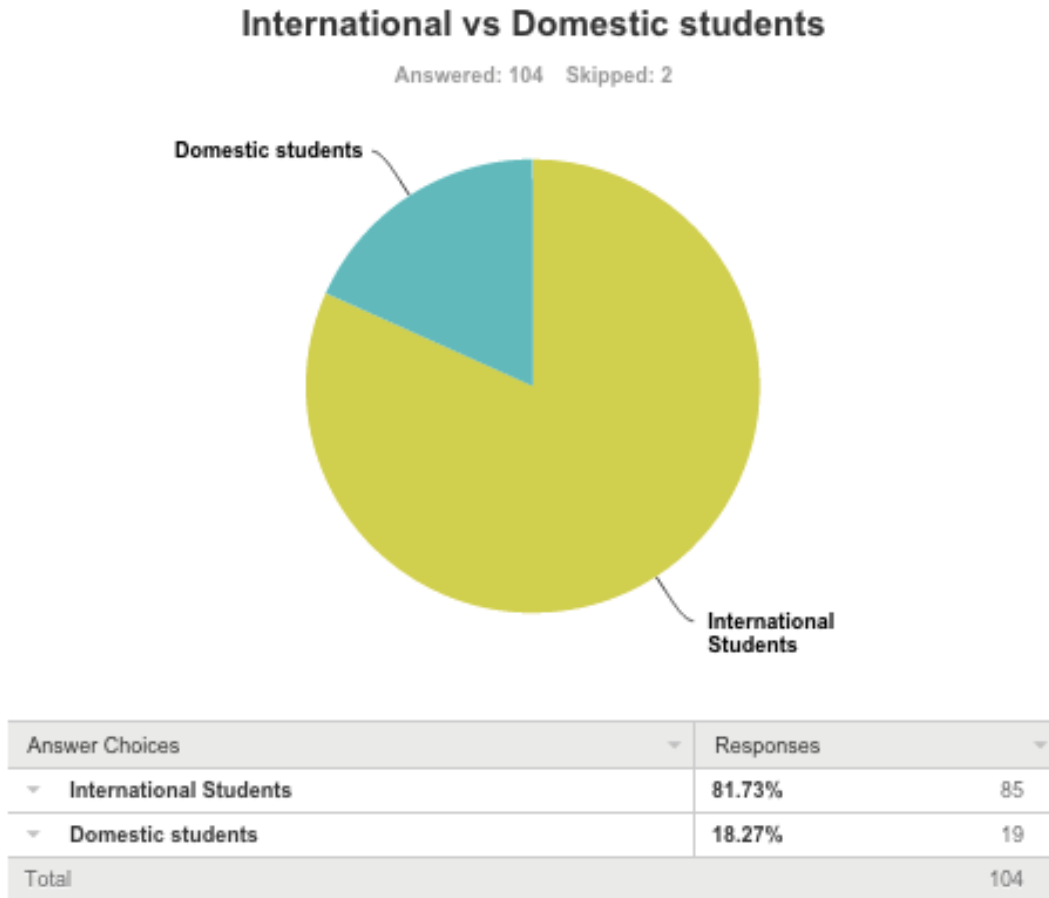


Table 1. U.S. national versus international students desire to have more domestic students involved in FIUTS

International versus U.S. national students	Want more domestic students involved in FIUTS	Undecided	Do not want more domestic students involved in FIUTS
U.S. national	14	1	
International	73	17	1

Figure 3. Demographic data of survey participants- Education

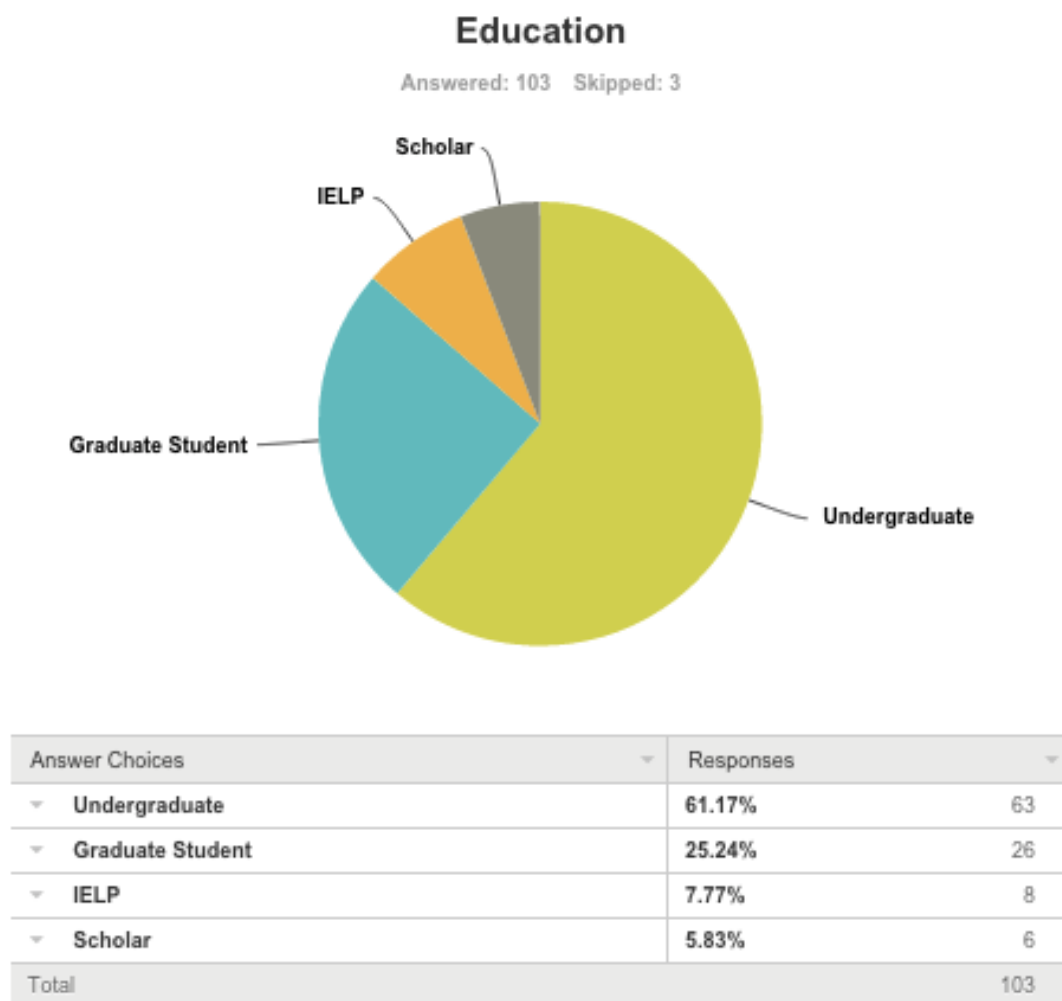


Table 2. Comparison of education levels of survey participants and their desire to have more domestic students involved in FIUTS

Education	Want more domestic students involved in FIUTS	Undecided	Do not want more domestic students involved in FIUTS
Undergraduate	55	8	
Graduate	20	5	1
IELP	6	2	
Scholar	5	1	

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Figure 4. Demographic data of survey participants- English language level

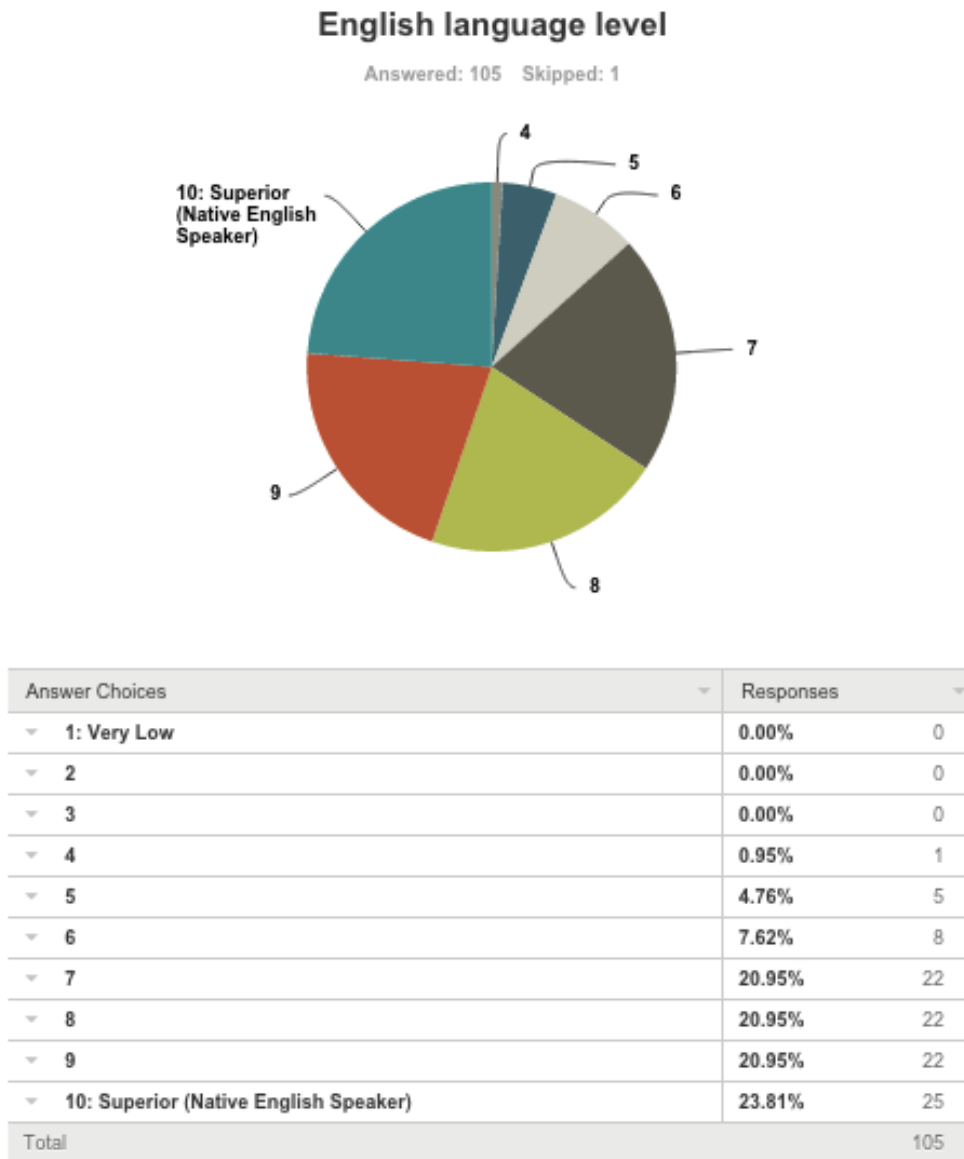


Table 3. *Comparison of English language levels of survey participants and their desire to have more domestic students involved in FIUTS*

English-language level	Want more domestic students involved in FIUTS	Undecided	Do not want more domestic students involved in FIUTS
1 (low)	0	0	
2	0	0	
3	0	0	
4	1	0	
5	3	1	1
6	6	2	
7	19	3	
8	19	3	
9	17	5	
10 (high)	22	3	
Unknown	0	1	

Figure 5. Demographic data of survey participants- Level of involvement in FIUTS

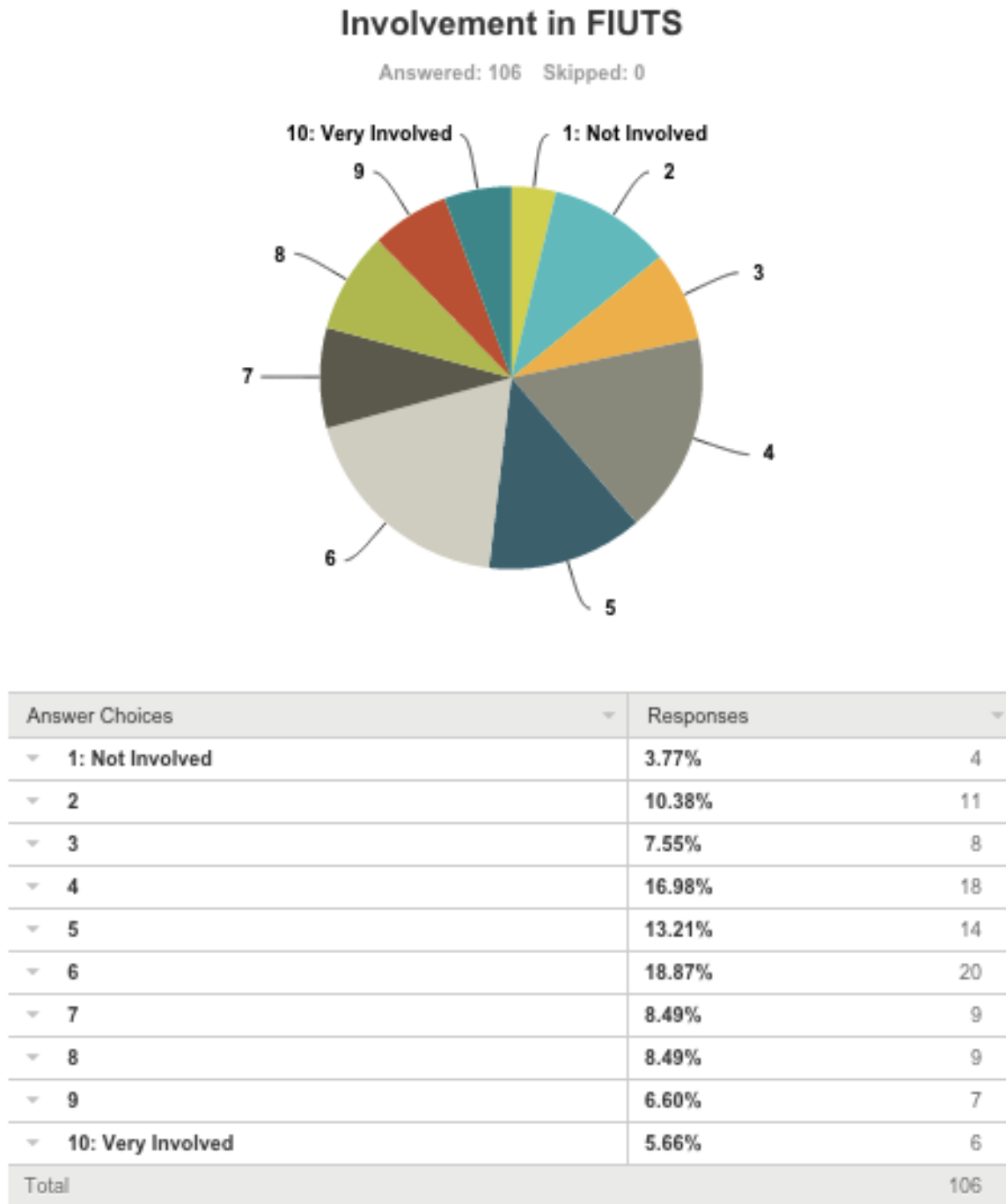
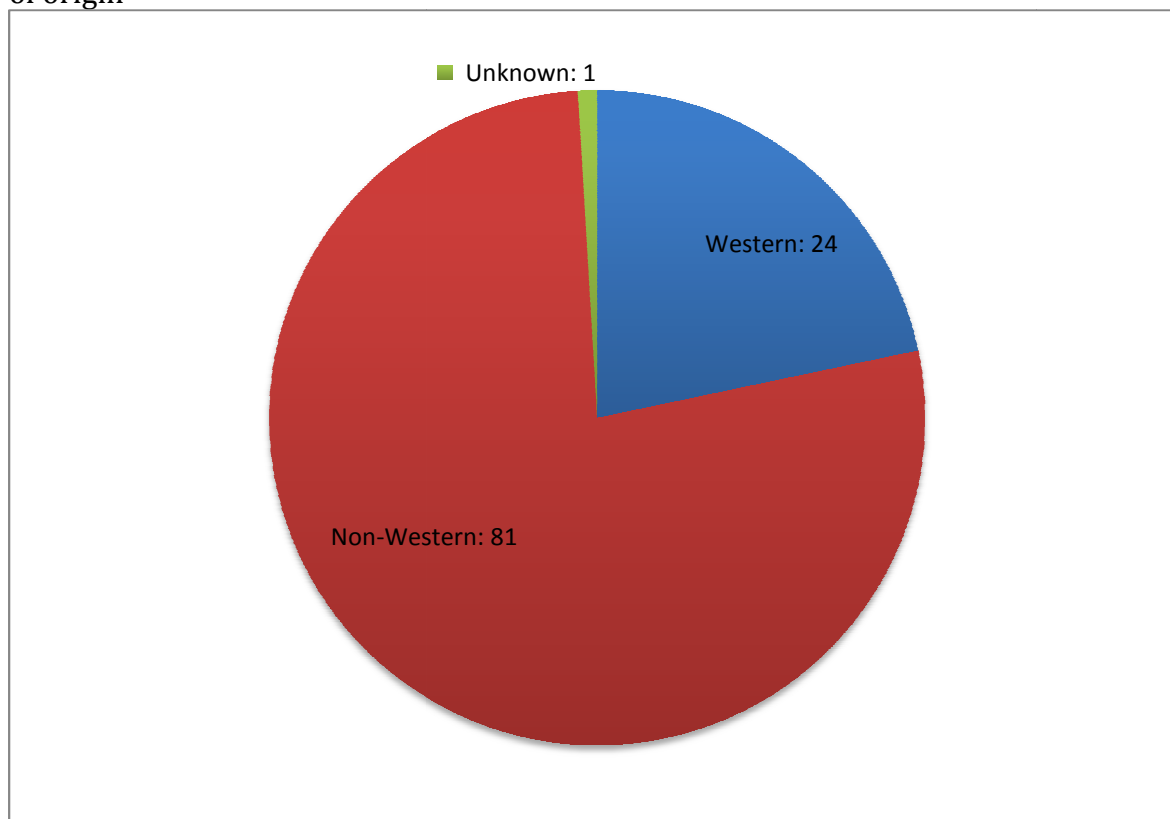


Table 4. Comparison of survey participants' level of involvement in FIUTS and their desire to have more domestic students involved in FIUTS

Level of Involvement in FIUTS	Want more domestic students involved in FIUTS	Undecided	Do not want more domestic students involved in FIUTS
1 (low)	2	2	
2	7	4	
3	7	1	
4	15	3	
5	11	3	
6	19	1	
7	8	1	1
8	8	1	
9	6	1	
10 (high)	6		

Figure 6. Demographic data of survey participants- Western versus non-Western country of origin



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Table 5. Comparison of Western versus non-Western country of origin and their desire to have more domestic students involved in FIUTS

Country of origin	Want more domestic students involved in FIUTS	Undecided	Do not want more domestic students involved in FIUTS
Western	18	6	
Non-Western	69	12	1
Unknown	1		

Figure 7. The Co-national friendships chart shows the percentage of UW students the survey participants reported that are from their home country

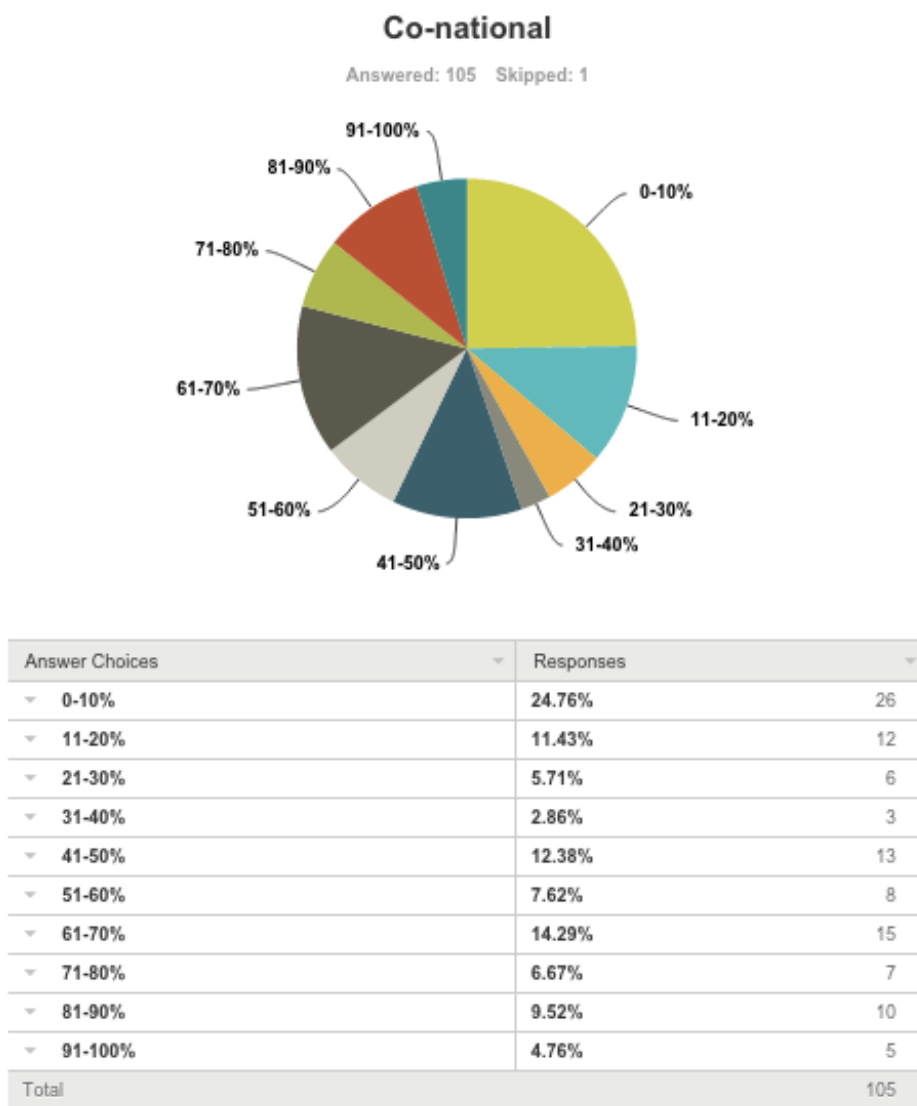


Table 6. *Comparison of survey participants' percentage of co-national friendships and their desire to have more domestic students involved in FIUTS*

Ratio of Co-national friendships	Want more domestic students involved in FIUTS	Undecided	Do not want more domestic students involved in FIUTS
0-10%	19	6	1
11-20%	10	2	
21-30%	4	2	
31-40%	3	1	
41-50%	12	1	
51-60%	7	1	
61-70%	13	2	
71-80%	7		
81-90%	8	2	
91-100%	5		
Unknown	1		

Figure 8. The Multinational friendships chart shows the percentage of UW students the survey participants reported that are international students not from their home country

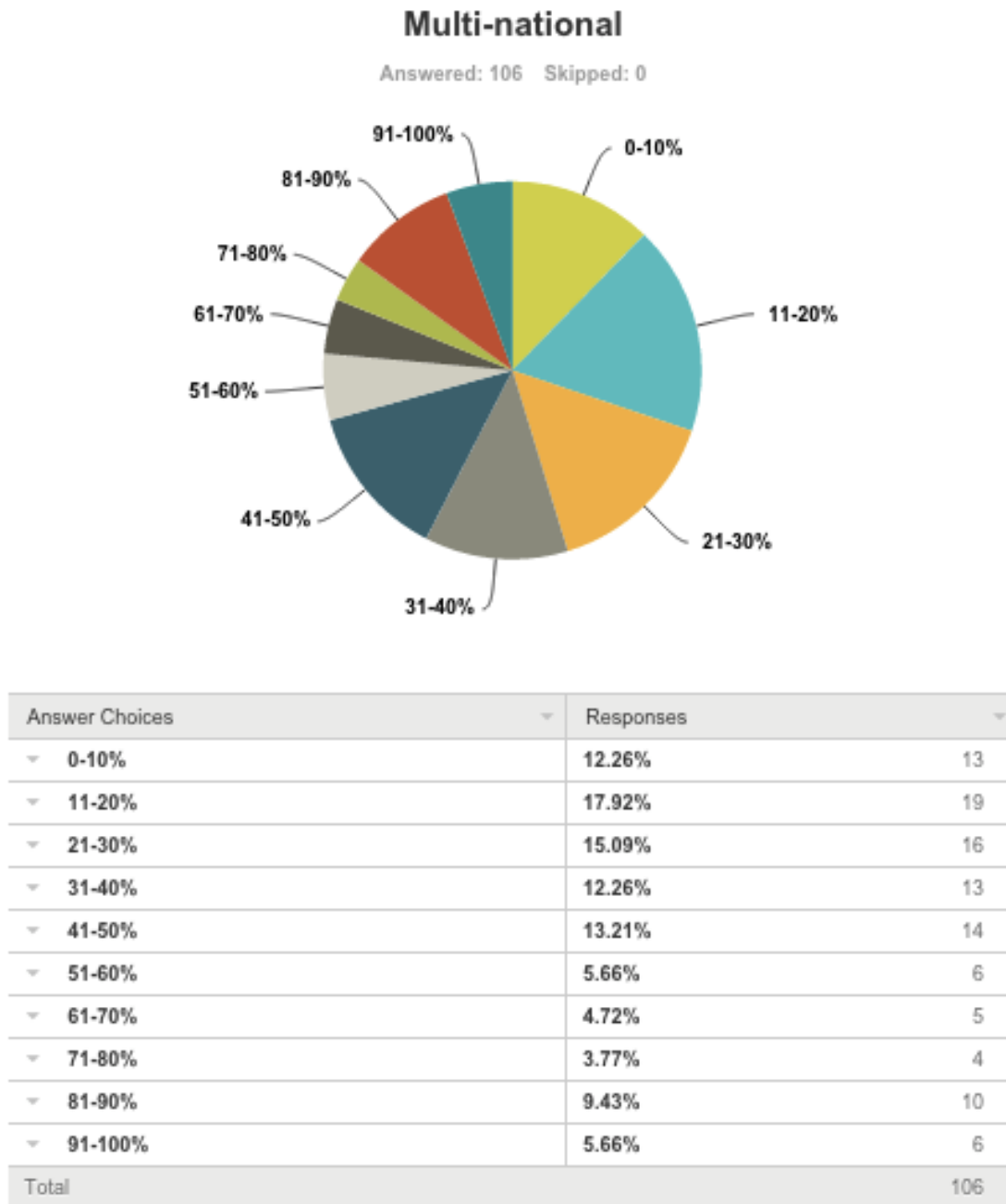


Table 7. Comparison of survey participants' percentage of multinational friendships and their desire to have more domestic students involved in FIUTS

Ratio of Multinational friendships	Want more domestic students involved in FIUTS	Undecided	Do not want more domestic students involved in FIUTS
0-10%	10	3	
11-20%	15	4	
21-30%	16		
31-40%	10	3	
41-50%	10	4	
51-60%	5	1	
61-70%	5		
71-80%	3	1	
81-90%	8	1	1
91-100%	6		

Figure 9. The Host-national friendships chart shows the percentage of friendships with students from the U.S. international students reported having

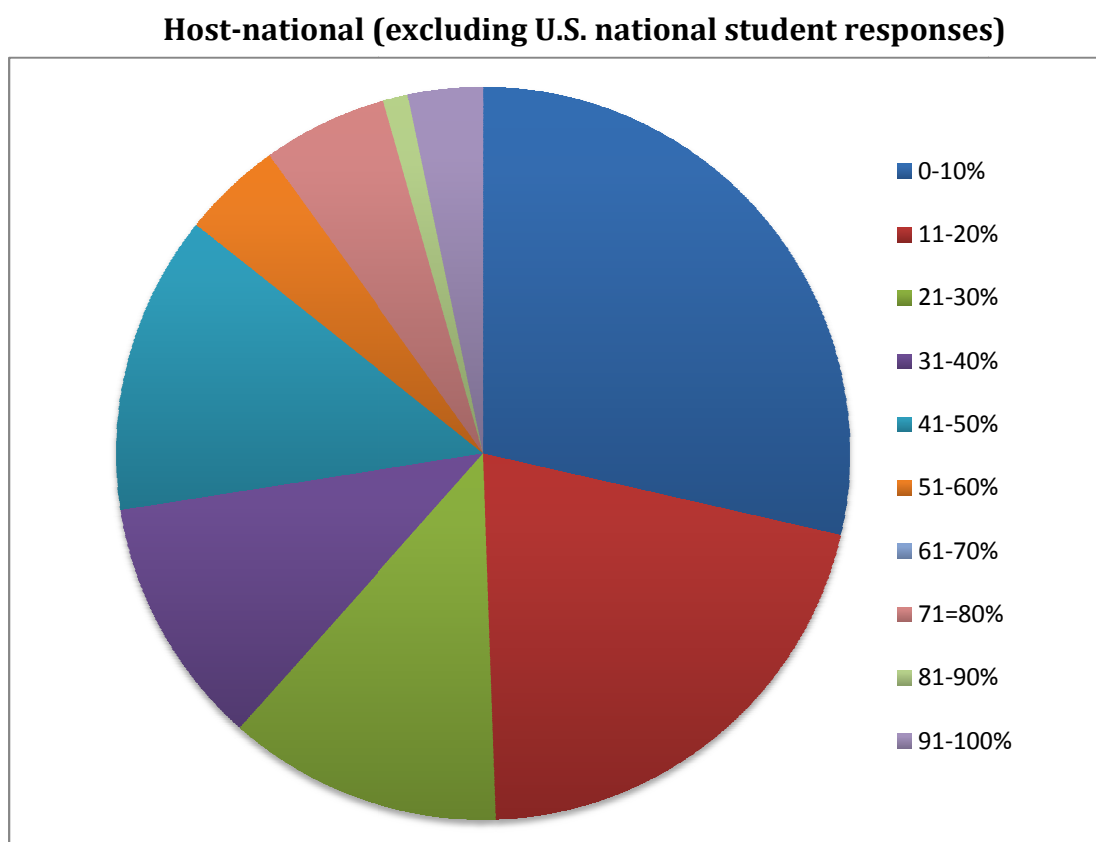


Table 8. *Comparison of survey participants' percentage of host-national friendships and their desire to have more domestic students involved in FIUTS*

Ratio of Host-national friendships	Want more domestic students involved in FIUTS	Undecided	Do not want more domestic students involved in FIUTS
0-10%	20	5	1
11-20%	18	1	
21-30%	8	2	
31-40%	6	4	
41-50%	9	3	
51-60%	4		
61-70%			
71-80%	4	1	
81-90%	1		
91-100%	3		
U.S. nationals	14	1	

Figure 10. Shows the survey participants' satisfaction with their friendships with U.S. national UW students

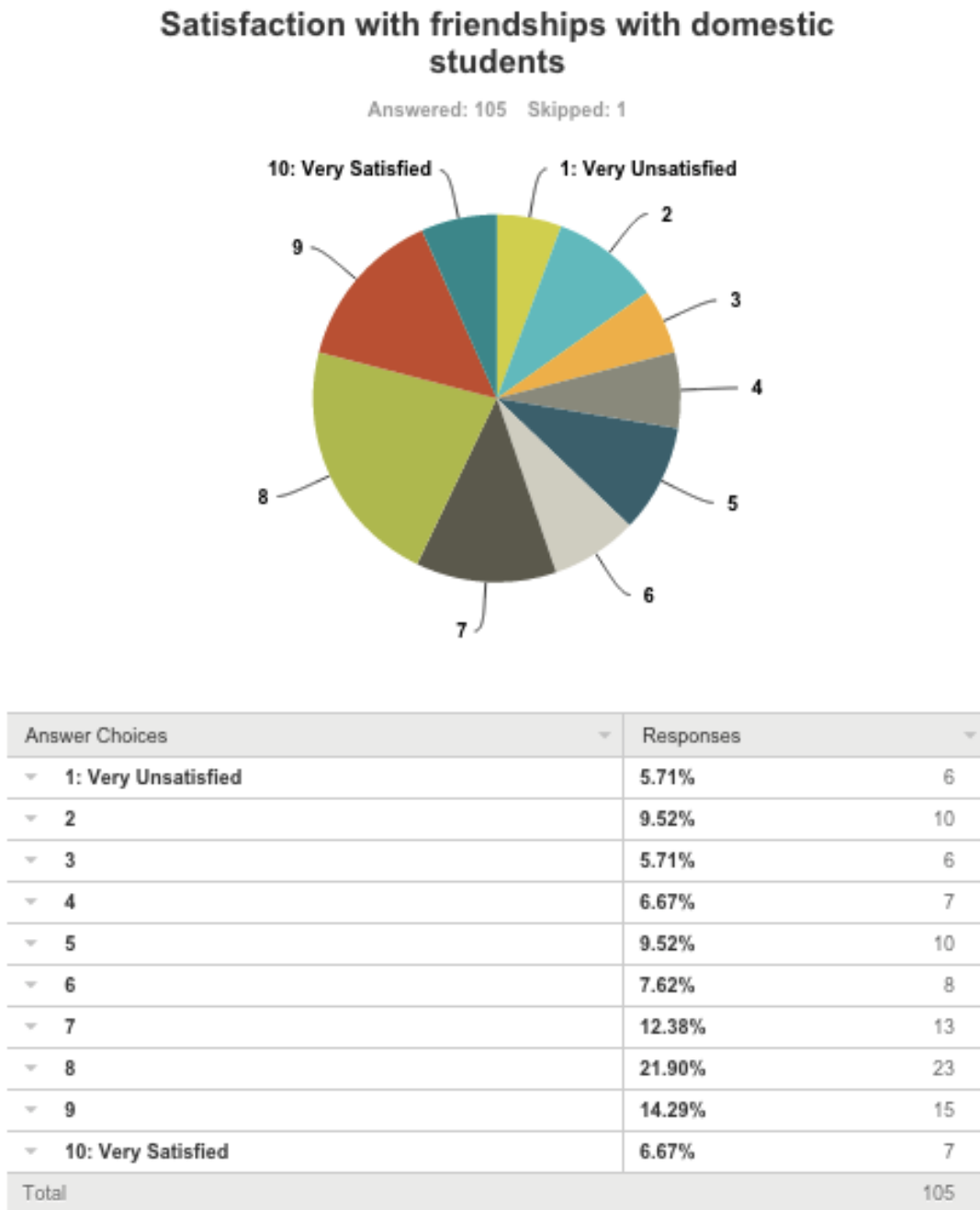


Table 9. *Comparison of survey participants' satisfaction with their friendships with domestic students at UW and their desire to have more domestic students involved in FIUTS*

Satisfaction with friendships with domestic students	Want more domestic students involved in FIUTS	Undecided	Do not want more domestic students involved in FIUTS
1 (low)	5	1	
2	6	3	1
3	5	1	
4	6	1	
5	8	2	
6	6	2	
7	12	1	
8	19	4	
9	14	1	
10 (high)	6	1	
Unknown	1		

APPENDIX D: QUALITATIVE DATA FROM SURVEY CATEGORIZED BY THEME

* Asterisk indicates domestic student participant

Americans are part of international understanding/ the FIUTS mission/ both parties can learn from each other (31 responses):

- We can build more understanding about each other's culture.
- FIUTS aims to foster international understanding through students - leaving domestic students out of the equation does not help fulfill this goal.
- Getting them involved would give an opportunity to expand cultural understanding.
- That helps to build the relationship between international student and domestic students.
- I think if there were more US students, who are willing to get close to the internationals, it would help to break up close ties a little bit, that are formed between students from the same country. The US students would present people, who would not be sorted with their fellow US people directly and would thus get spread evenly through the groups.
- 1.US is part of the global world thus they need to be presented in the FIUTS family 2. International students come to United States to not only study their academic subject but also the American culture. Thus we would love more contact with American students.(although there is not a strict universal agreement on the "American" identity.)
- I think that a lot of domestic students are ignorant about the cultures that international students come from. While students majoring in the social sciences and liberal arts are likely to have some exposure to multiculturalism and diversity, domestic students majoring in the STEM field, for example, are less likely than their other domestic peers to have exposure to international students.
- expose the americans to more diverse culture
- I went to UW to met people from all corners of the world, but that is not limited to people from outside the US. I found in domestic students some of the most friendly and easygoing people. They teach me a lot everyday
- Cross-cultural communication is a two way street:)
- I think the international knowledge and access that FIUTS provides would be beneficial to domestic students in the sense that they would be able to develop cultural awareness without having to go abroad and would help with the integration of international students as well.
- I think a healthy balance of domestic and international membership leads to better pairing and student involvement from both sides.
- We need more diversity, of course including American culture!
- More learning can happen both ways!
- The point of FIUTS is to help share culture but if domestic students don't get involved then there's a whole part of the community that is missing out.
- The process of culture exchange is important to the development of self
- Because I believe that interacting with international students are beneficial to domestic students as well. UW has a great diverse community that not many people are taking advantage of. Many domestic students look at international students and think that "they

got accepted because they pay more". I was surprised how many domestic students did not know that tuition for international students and out of state students are the same. It is very not true that they are at UW because they pay more, but many international students are well qualified for their talent. As the demand for higher education in US is increasing in many countries, those international students must have went through a tough competition if not tougher. The reason why I want domestic students to be more involved is that I want them to take these opportunities and learn about different parts of world. Interactions can lead to understanding, and understanding can be a change in the world! :)

- I feel there is a huge gap created between internationals and domestic. We should work really hard to close the gap.
- *Meeting people and making friends with people who have different perspectives and speak different language is a good thing in my opinion.
- *I think it is important to not just have international students meeting other international students, but for domestic students to participate and get to know students from other countries and cultures.
- *As a domestic student involved with FIUTS I have found huge value in the relationships I have made through engaging with the international community. I believe it is a huge opportunity to build an international network while at home but overwhelmingly I am surprised by how few other US students actively participate as facilitators.
- *I think FIUTS offers a unique opportunity for domestic students to get involved in something global that otherwise I they might not get exposure to.
- *I think it is an important experience for U.S. students and a great way to welcome international students. It really does bridge the gap.
- *If the whole point of FIUTS is not to focus on international students only but to facilitate discussion between international students and domestic students, I believe it is an absolute given that more domestic students should be involved.
- *I think it is a great opportunity to learn about the world because the world has come to the US, UW specifically. I think we shouldn't be afraid to learn about them, but instead learn to be wise how we share our lives, not as boastful or proud, but being ourselves not worrying about offending others. This allows them to see us as we are, and us to learn and see who they are
- *More mixing needs to occur between locals and internationals.
- It is really interesting to know different culture by making friends with domestic students!! Sharing culture is a good way to eliminate stereotypes also. Like sometimes American people think Chinese are really rude since they don't give enough tips but actually it is because giving tips is not common in China.
- *Important to have both domestic and international students from all ages and grade levels to participate- perhaps promote FIUTS to more domestic students..
- *One of the most fascinating things about other cultures to me is the language. My brain has an enormous affinity to languages and language learning. So, with so many multicultural friends, I pick up daily phrases from them or from online or wherever, and find myself using them and really enjoying using them in my daily life. The linguistic interplay between people from different cultures is one of the most fun parts about it.

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- I just want to say thank you to FIUTS for organizing all those amazing programs. I have met a lot of friends (but mostly international friends) through your programs and I really appreciate what you guys have done!:)
- Many international students sacrificed something (family, friendship, etc.) in their home countries, and invested their time at UW. I would love to hear more stories from international students why they are now at UW! I would like to have a chat on-line in any site or page or even in a social network to share our experiences among all the community. In that way we may learn more from each other and build a community of friendship

Difficulties of bridging the gap between the two groups:

International students have a hard time making friends with Americans/ they want more American friends (27 responses):

- I want more American friends but am very intimidated because my English is poor compared to them. There are so many people from my country that it is easier to make friends with them. Other people from other countries always stick together too.
- don't like still staying in the circles of Chinese students while in the U.S. I want to learn more about American culture and make more students from the U.S.
- I am a facilitator in FIUTS, so if there are more domestic students involved in FIUTS activities, I can make friends with them.
- I want to have some domestic students friends!
- International students including scholars have few opportunity to make friends with domestic students.
- I want domestic students join to FIUTS
- Make more friends
- It will be fun to be able to blend with the domestic students in FIUTS
- Seattle freeze could be real.
- As an IELP student, I'd like to have as many domestic friends as possible.
- It would be nice if FIUTS was a place where you could also meet domestic students. The domestic friends I have here are from my program
- There are few domestic students involve in FIUTS activities.
- I want more US students friends.
- While it is interesting to get to know international students, it would be nice to meet domestic students
- *It's unbalanced, it'd be nice if there were more domestic students, maybe not 50-50 but at least more than there are now.
- *As a local student, I don't personally care if there are more local students involved in FIUTS, but I do think that the international students would get more out of FIUTS activities if it had more local student involvement. Many internationals have a hard time making local friends on their own and that's a shame because domestic students have so much to offer in terms of their knowledge of the area and how to navigate life here in the US.
- I don't have any friends at UW.
- *Because international students are new to the area, it's easier for them to form friendships with those of their culture or community but FIUTS has enabled students

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from many different cultures to form diverse friendships, which is why I am able to and have the amount of international friends that I do.

- I know it seems daunting to talk to strangers, let alone strangers from other culture, who looks different, speaks different language, comes from different beliefs or expectations. I've seen enough international folks just shut themselves off most of the time and stay in their comfort zone forever. But I've also seen enough brave folks who dares to make effort to understand the world we all live in and share.
- *I'd like to know if international students feel hesitant or reluctant to reach out and make friends with domestic students when not doing activities related to FIUTS, like in classes or in clubs. I'd also like to know their reasons for why they feel this way, if they do feel this way
- I think it's easier to just let things happen especially by meeting in class/study groups/dorm/via other friends. I find it easier to meet such friendly people by chance through classes that I take. I have tried to go to Wed lunches and conversation groups but I lack the time to commit or the partner does.
- FIUTS friends are too naive...too unspecified...it's almost like a transit station where you know you will have a nice stay and you won't stop there. Real deep friends need to be made by doing something out of the ordinary domain...which is again...hard and trivial to define how it happens. My best friends are my american bandmates who tour and do rock shows with me in bars.
- As an international students, i felt its not easy making friends with domestic students. At initial contact, they are super friendly and helpful, but not very enthusiastic in spending quality time in doing activities together. The reason might also be that they live locally with families and hence not having much free time on their hands.
- I don't really have friends from the US
- at the beginning it was difficult to share with U.S. students, i need to be surer of my self.
- there are so many international students at UW, which is absolutely great. But on the other hand, it's not easy for me to make American friends.
- I didn't become friends with any students.

Temporary nature of international students make it difficult, Americans already have a network of friends here (2 responses):

- *It's sometimes hard to commit enough time to the international students as a domestic student. In Seattle you have your entire network of local friends/family etc. so you have to push yourself to engage with international students. It is easier to build relationships with people who are here over a quarter because with other obligations there is just not enough free time to get to know international students who are here only briefly very well.
- From remembering back home, I know that it always was very hard for me, to commit to a friendship with internationals, because they would be gone so soon. I think especially for the people staying for a full program or 1-2 years here, that is not true, and that should be communicated. Maybe it would help if there were events for people starting a full program? I think I would have been more willing to go to an event as a domestic student, if I knew I could find friends for a year or two there, not just for one quarter.

Cultural differences/ Western vs non-Western (3 responses):

- International students tend to be together with friends from same countries. This is not matter of language. Students from India and some African countries are native English speaker, but they are always hanging out with friends from the same communities. It is easy to explain the reason. I might not want to talk with people from other culture if I am in my country. This is not matter of America. It is difficult to share topics and have fun with people who have different background.
- *I think local students feel far more comfortable making friends with Western internationals than they do with internationals from other parts of the world. Local students seem to be far quicker to engage and get along with someone from Germany, for instance, than they do someone from Japan. I have hypothesized that this is because Western students share more common historical knowledge and culture that makes breaking the ice easy. Making friends from other parts of the world often requires more effort and patience to get through the cultural barriers, making it less likely to happen naturally. Also, I know this is Seattle, but there are hardly any black people at FIUTS. What is up with that?
- I think everyone has their opinions about other countries based on what they see through media. But, the thing is media represents only negative and stereotypical sides of every country most of the time. I think if everyone understood that middle east is not completely terrorist region or India is not poor dirty country, it will be better for friendship between domestic and international students.

Language and cultural barriers (16):

- I meet my American friends mainly from resident hall and from classes. Even though my English is not bad, language and culture difference are still the main barriers in our communication. But as long as both of us want to improve, it is not such a problem.
- I find it difficult since I tend to find myself in situations in which I am surrounded mostly by other international students. Additionally, I find it difficult to find common ground from which to start conversations and build friendships with domestic students.
- I am not very involved with FIUTS and have not made any US friends within it. I also do not have as much US friends, but I think that largely is contributed to the fact that I have lived in Asia all my life before coming to the UW for college.
- It was very difficult for me during my freshmen year of college to make friends with American students. Before coming to the U.S., I thought that it was going to be very easy for me to make American friends as I'm a fluent English speaker. However, boy, was I wrong! Now that I look back at my freshmen year, I would probably attribute cross-cultural misunderstandings as being one of the major reasons that prevented me from having "successful friendships" with Americans. So, during my first year of college, I spent most of my free time socializing with people that grew up in the region that I grew up in. During my sophomore year of college, I began to "assimilate" to American culture -- whatever that's supposed to mean -- and decreased the time that I spent with people that came from my region of the world. It wasn't until my junior of college that I began to "integrate" to life here in Seattle, in the sense that I've managed to maintain a healthy balance of American friends and international friends (including people that come from where I come from).

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- Making friends with international students is not difficult. But with domestic students there is a disconnect. Whether in casual conversation or class discussions, whenever I am having a discussion with a domestic student they tend to think much closer to home in every aspect when I am mostly thinking in terms of different countries and cultures. It's almost a micro and macro issue for me which makes it harder to connect with people.
- It's hard to make friends either way but with international students there's a language and cultural barrier everyone is afraid to encroach.
- It can be difficult since American culture is so different. It is important to get some basic understanding of communication in the US.
- It's hard making friends with students from the U.S. Since the culture's really different. It would be really weird to interrupting them all the time asking for explanations about what they're saying. And the classes we're taking are mostly huge classes. It's really hard to make friends in class.
- They are kind and friendly to me, but we can not be really close friend maybe because my English is not good enough.
- My class has some domestic students, but they tend to be together with only domestic students. I believe this is not only because I am not great at speaking English, but because we can not share topics to talk with. For example, I have no idea about TV shows, restaurants, joking and other American culture things that domestic students are often talking about.
- Sometimes people are nice and sometimes people don't care about meeting new people because they have a social circle and don't want to put effort into expanding it, which is very sad to me sometimes. Even though I try to meet people I get singled out, because I don't have the same background (such as school, hometown, inside jokes that they share).
- In my personal experience, many international students tend to group together in clusters of their own home country. This is most likely because of the language barrier, though that is not the only factor. I know a few friends of mine who are reluctant to speak English due to embarrassment. However, this prevents connections to domestic students, as they do not feel welcome entering the close-knit friend groups that are established due to nationality. I do not think that either group are unwilling to befriend the other, simply that they feel uncomfortable taking the first step out of their comfort zone.
- Sometime it is hard to communication with Domestic students since they use a lot of slang and talk too fast.
- *I feel like I can't really be myself at FIUTS, or most any activity at the University because I can't talk about who I am. There are things I want to share but am afraid I will offend someone in FIUTS or at the University. I do wish FIUTS would offer neutral talks about how to address topics that we feel uncomfortable with to get a diverse view of opinions like social issues, politics or religion. And if FIUTS chooses not to, then at least partner and find out about organizations that will support what FIUTS is about on campus and let the student see the true diversity of UW.
- I wish I could find religious friends. I thought America was religious, but it seems it is not and seems very anti religious and not respectful of religious people
- Different habits maybe.

American's do not know they are welcome in FIUTS (3 responses):

- Most of my U.S. friends didn't know that FIUTS was open to domestic students. They had the idea that FIUTS was exclusively for international students.
- The majority of domestic students I have spoken to have no idea what FIUTS is, which I think leads to a major lack in communication between international and domestic
- *FIUTS boasts its connections of international students with domestic students. It is all about fostering relationships and creating friendships. I believe FIUTs does a great job recruiting and reaching out to International students, yet has a much harder time retaining domestic students, due to ill guided/ misinformation that FIUTs is only for International students.

Americans are not interested in international students or only American with a certain personalitytype are (6 responses):

- There are many diverse people at UW, but not much a diversity in thought. Also seems American born Asian student not interested in talking with me or my friends.
- Culturally and in so many ways we are very different. So it was interesting to make friends with them but sadly not many domestic students are open to interaction
- It is difficult to find domestic (in-state) friends with similar values towards diversity. Even while UW respects cultural diversity, not all students share the same idea. Class is the best place to find US friends
- I think that a lot of American students on this campus (especially those that are not in the liberal arts/social sciences) do not want to have anything to do with international students. I also run into some international students that don't want to have anything to do with Americans. Here are some of the common cross-cultural misconceptions that I believe both American and international students hold: - A lot of American students think that Asians are "anti-social". They probably wouldn't be saying that if they knew that in a lot of Asian cultures, humility is highly valued. - A lot of European students find American conversations to be "boring and superficial". They probably wouldn't be saying that if they knew that in the U.S., Americans refrain from discussing "controversial / highly politically/relgiously-charged conversations" in the public sphere. - Due to the media, a lot of American students find Arab men to be oppressive. These stereotypes leads to catastrophic consequences, as a lot of Americans might begin treating international Arabs students in a manner that implies that those men are "backwards". Moreover a lot of international students from "developing countries" might feel ashamed/embarrassed of the actions of the governments of their countries as they might not seem to be as "developed" as the U.S. or other, mostly Western nations. And here's one more BIG one: - Many domestic AND international students do not understand that a country's government does not necessarily represent the values of its people. For example, a lot of domestic students might not like Chinese or Russian students because they see them as communists. Similarly, a lot of Middle Eastern students might not like Americans because of the U.S. foreign policy.
- It takes certain personality type for domestic students to get involved in FIUTS and make international friends. From what I've observed, these domestic students have great curiosity and patience; they are also very open-minded.
- I personally feel domestic students on UW campus are not much interested in international students.

Positive experiences:

Making friends with the other group (10 responses):

- I have no problem making friends with domestic students - in fact most of my friends are American citizens, probably because they are of more abundance here. In some cases, they can be easier to approach, as many of the international students I have come across are less willing to befriend students not from their home country.
- *Many of the friends I've made here at my time at UW have been international and I love them all deeply. It's always hard seeing them go, but I look forward to knowing that I will be able to see them again in their home countries.
- Very easy. I believe U.S. students are very used to international students here at University of Washington; hence, making friends with US students is just as simple as making friends in my home country.
- *Making friends with international students has been both easy and difficult at the same time. Some students are eager to be friends with you because you're a "local" and perceived as somewhat exotic and a useful friend to them because most international students hang with other international students who are in the same social bubble. Others are not-so-eager because they want to remain with other international students usually because they are shy, not confident in their English-speaking ability or are not interested in learning about the local culture/making local friends.
- *The international friends that I have made both through FIUTS and outside of FIUTS are the majority of my close friends, it's hard because most of the time they end up leaving after 3 months to a year, but it's great being connected to others in various parts of the world, it makes it feel smaller. FIUTS has made it even easier to make friends within the international community at UW by allowing facilitators to form connections between other students, as well as themselves and international students.
- It was really great to chat with domestic students and know their culture. It's really great to get more involved in each other's society. Even though there might be some certain customs we don't know, we are trying to approach.
- Always making effort to connect with folks opens you to everything that comes at you, whether that's stranger you've never met, or friends you've talked to everyday. Every relationship is a rewarding lesson that opens your eyes some way around.
- It's been an interesting experience. Learnt about things from holiday traditions to small jokes
- *I have loved getting to make friends with international students. It has opened up my views to new areas of the world I had not previously thought of and I have already had the chance to visit many of the international students I've met while at UW creating very rewarding trips abroad through connecting with locals.
- All of them are cool. They are very open towards int'l students

Opportunity to learn American culture/practice English (19 responses):

- So that we can get to know more domestic friends, and get involved more in this society
- I need to be involved with U.S. pronunciation.
- I feel the options for Qn 9 are not complete. The reason for a low score to Qn 9 might be due to not having made any long lasting friendships and hence not in a position to rate it correctly. Explanation to answer 10 - Yes we want more domestic students to take

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international students under their wing in terms of doing fun and socially engaging activities over the weekend.

- To better understand the local culture
- I would like to learn more about American Culture from them
- It gives international students more change to learn American cultures.
- Now we don't have too many US domestic students in FIUTS, but I believe if there are more US students involve then we can learn more about US culture.
- More sharing of their culture
- It would be nice to have local students share their experiences with us.
- Having domestic students help me improve my English and learn about the US culture faster.
- Domestic students will bring in an extra touch in FIUTS. They can show international students how American culture is like, and can bring in different perspectives in thinking.
- Learn Eng from native speaker and their culture as well
- It would be nice if more domestic students were involved in taking us to places of interest in Seattle or for more activities regarding the United states. Most of the facilitators are international students.
- It would be nice if domestic students represent their country in FIUTS.
- More U.S. students involving in FIUTS would help international students to improve their English (if English is not their native language), understand the American culture better create more opportunities for FIUTS students.
- We simply need more domestic students to represent American culture.
- They will show us how domestic culture looks like. And they will help improve our oral English
- *I'm a domestic student myself, and I feel it's very important for international students to not only be involved with other international students, but with domestic students as well to learn about and understand the culture they're immersed in while studying abroad.
- *Being from the United States is helpful in FIUTS as different international students are entering a community with a different culture to what they are use to and having domestic students be apart of welcoming them and helping them adapt to the new environment giving them connections and friends to reach out to. That being said it's also important for non-domestic students to be involved in order to allow students to have a smaller community of people from their culture.

Do not differentiate between international and domestic- friends with anyone, natural process (3 responses):

- It doesn't matter where my friend come from.
- It is about attitude instead of nationalities so I prefer people who are warm
- Had no problem whatsoever, people are just people, no matter where they are from. All you need is time to connect.

Where participants met their friends:

Outside of FIUTS (16 responses):

- Most of the domestic students I got to know are my work colleagues so making friends become almost an obligation or at least a manner.

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- Almost all of my domestic friends I met were outside of FIUTS, mostly from classes, sometimes from the clubs/ student organization that I am involved in.
- Most of these friendships arise in the classroom context, from working together on projects.
- I made most of my domestic friends through high school, and some through classes at the UW. The domestic friends that I made within FIUTS are mostly staff, because most of the facilitators are international students.
- I made friends with domestic students in the lab I work . Some of my friends were introduced when I attended some fun activities with the Visiting Scholars association and the Fulbright alumni in Puget sound.
- I have only participated in FIUTS events in the beginning of autumn quarter. As for outside FIUTS, FIG groups(first year interest groups) was the best way to meet new friends. Also meeting new people in class (especially small groups such as quiz sections and lab)
- It's been easiest to become friends with coworkers and roommates for me. The FIUTS events tend to be so full of international students and quite a few of the US students stick to one/two/three other students they already know well. That's not entirely a bad thing, but it's easier to get to know people you are "stuck with", because you can't just switch to a different group if you feel a little wrong with one group.
- I am a international student. Most of my Domestic friends are make in the following ways: lived in the same dorm, met through fiuts events, attended the same class or sports events. Whether i succeed in becoming friends with them depends on what the definition of friendship is. Thus i would say we quietly became acquaintance yet mostly we fail to maintain a long-term meaningful relationship.(with 1 exception in my case)
- It happened by happenstance where we both shared the same class (one lived within same dorm).As time progressed and academics got in the way of things, we may not meet much but we try to eat out time to time and catch up. It was easier to connect during freshman year than later undergrad years.
- As an international student, I make friends with people from the United States through classes and work
- I am an international student, but moved to North America when I was 15 years old. I think that going to high school in North America prior to college helped me a lot to make many friends at UW. I haven't had actually met many international students yet, and I am hoping to make more international friends. I really encourage international students to be more involved in campus activities. Try to join somewhat small-mid sized clubs. Once you step outside of comfort zone, it gets easier to find more and more friends :)
- friends through FIUTS..is great...but however, not the best way of making deep friends. Deep friends are hard to find. I found my best friends from meeting one of them through my american classmate in class, one of them on craigslist. Unfortunately real friends are trivial... hard to find. Drinking friends are easy.
- Like I said I have only really met other international students at the FIUTS events I have participated in. Most of the friends I have made here, both international and domestic, have been through my graduate program.
- *I haven't made any close international friends exclusively through fiuts but I do have close international friends who participate in fiuts and I'll sometimes go to events with them. I met most of them through a jsis class that had thematic studies abroad students

and we just started hanging out. I met some other ones through doing the language exchange thing and then they introduced me to their friends and so on. And I also met a few who are friends of people from countries I happen to have visited and just kind of happen to be at uw. A couple of international student friends I've made I would consider to be among my best friends and just as close as my domestic student friends I've made at uw or was friends with before.

- Good ways to find friends from the US are to join a club or to find American roommates
- Most of the U.S. (domestic) friends I made was not through FIUTS but through my work as a Resident Adviser in Housing and Food services and through my department in the Earth and Space Sciences. The friends I made at FIUTS are mostly, if not all, international.

Within FIUTS (8 responses):

- Within FIUTS, I have met amazing domestic students! But outside FIUTS, the experience has been mixed. Some people were very friendly and welcoming, but others not so much. Domestic students call us 'FOBs', which I find very disrespectful.
- We met at the FIUTS events and activities. They are nice and kind.
- FIUTS is a good platform for you to know more US domestic students and also make friends more quickly. It provides opportunity to get to know US domestic students. However out of FIUTS, I mainly know US domestic students by classes and dormitory.
- By being a facilitator, I get to know other facilitators, both domestic and international. We keep facilitate together and strengthen the friendship. We also gather for other activities. It is pretty hard to make close friends who are my classmates because we don't have enough time to know more about each other. Most of the time we meet is in class for a group meeting for a project. FIUTS has provides a great environment for cultural exchange and international friendship.
- *Helping out at Wednesday lunch was a great way to get in touch with international students in a casual and relaxed way. This makes it easy to reach out and make friends, all while having a good time.
- *FIUTS was the best environment to meet international students and build friendships. As a domestic student, even though there may international students in our classes, there is hardly any interaction and it is not the same as having a more casual environment to do activities and makes friends. FIUTS allowed for international and domestic student interaction.
- *I've grown up in a multicultural and multilingual household. I had some friends from different cultures, too. But due to the places I've lived and the activities I did, I did not have a significant multicultural friend group. I did not realize what I was missing until I participated in CulturalFest in 2013 and found myself surrounded by people like me. Living multiculturally and bringing the beauty of their culture, language, attitude, world view, art, etc. to everyone they meet. I wish I had become part of the multicultural culture, so to speak, sooner. As it is, most of my closest friends are either international students or other multicultural domestic students. I absolutely love it.
- *Outside of FIUTS, making international friends was never really a big concern of mine. They seemed happy enough on their own and I was find with the friends that came naturally (usually local ones with a few European exceptions). FIUTS makes the process of meeting international students and developing friendships super easy and straight

forward. However, I find that if a local student wants to sustain a friendship with an international student outside of FIUTS, they need to take the initiative to invite them out and do things.

The appeal of FIUTS is it's for international students (5 responses):

- International students are easier to get along with and more genuine.
- FIUTS is a place where we meet other international students with similar struggles. It sometimes hard to meet international people outside FIUTS. If all domestic students, who are majority, are involved, then there might not be any difference in FIUTS and other student organizations. But, on the other hand, domestic students who are curious and not ignorant should be welcome in FIUTS. I have experienced stereotyping and ignorance about my home country from domestic students a lot.
- I like how FIUTS has been a platform for international students to meet other international students so I think having too many domestic students involved in FIUTS will kind of destroy the "personality" of FIUTS. Just a few will be alright. Since students pretty much have a lot of opportunities to meet with domestic during their stay at UW. If they are reluctant to meet domestic students in their daily school lives since it is out of their comfort zones, having domestic students at FIUTS wont do much to help and it might leave the domestic students at an awkward situation somehow.
- As helpful as it may be for some to form connections to domestic students in order to assimilate, FIUTS for me has been more of an experience to get to know the rest of the world. It's a small community where we as a minority can feel like we belong together. Though I do not feel that the presence of domestic students to be harmful to my involvement, it some senses, they can be rather intimidating, as if we internationals are stepping into their territory.
- *I joined fiuts to meet international students to gain a better understanding of different cultures.

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW THEME TABLES

Table 10. *Barriers to international and U.S. national student integration referenced by interviewees*

Barriers to integration	Number & percentage of interview participants that referenced barrier
Language	15 (100%)
Domestic students don't know about FIUTS	8 (53 %)
Americans are in their own world/don't think about international students	7 (47%)
Culture/norms	6 (40%)
No time	5 (33%)
Competing interests/other organizations	5 (33%)
International students pairing up makes them unapproachable	4 (27%)
Domestic students don't have a motivation to get involved	4 (27%)
Can't relate to international students/no common interests	3 (20%)
It doesn't seem like a place for domestic students	3 (20%)
E Asians are conservative	3 (20%)
International students don't enter the university with a group of friends like local students do	2 (13%)
Local students don't feel equipped with adequate cross-cultural skills	2 (13%)
Negative association with international students	1 (7%)

Table 11. *Advertising platforms suggested by interviewees*

Advertising platform	Number of interview participants that recommended advertising platform
Friends/word of mouth	6 (40%)
Campus Wide E-mail	3 (20%)
Red Square	3 (20%)
Facebook	3 (20%)
Posters by food	2 (13%)
UW student directory	2 (13%)
Orientation	2 (13%)
Posters in on-campus housing	1 (7%)
Posters in Library	1 (7%)