

Making it work

PATHWAYS TO A STUDENT AFFAIRS AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS PARTNERSHIP

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CBIE Conference – November 20, 2017



Session Outline



- Introductions & Context
- Collaborative Research Project
- Building relationships
- Sharing better practices
- Questions & Discussion

Introduction



Burdett and Crossman (2012) highlight that the social and academic engagement of international students are interconnected and must be approached from a holistic perspective.

The research team was established because of a mutual desire to understand how we can work together to better support international students.

Introduction – The Research Team



- The study was undertaken by co-investigators in Student Affairs and faculty colleagues in the Departments of Economics and Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies
- The research team included faculty, staff and graduate students

Context – University of Victoria

Student enrolment (2016-2017)

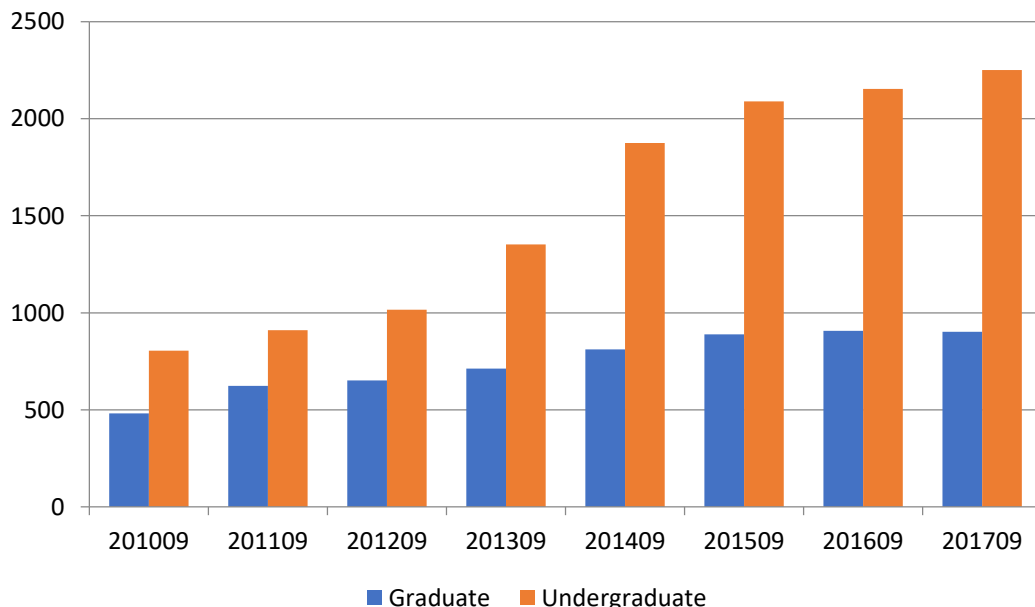
- 21,696 students (18,389 undergraduate, 3,307 graduate)
- 3,775 international students from 118 countries
- Over 300 exchange opportunities and partner agreements with organizations in over 60 countries

Faculty and Staff

- 5,156 employees, including:
- 874 faculty (44% female, 56% male)
- 651 sessional instructors
- 1,156 specialist/instructional staff
- 2,475 administrative, professional and support staff

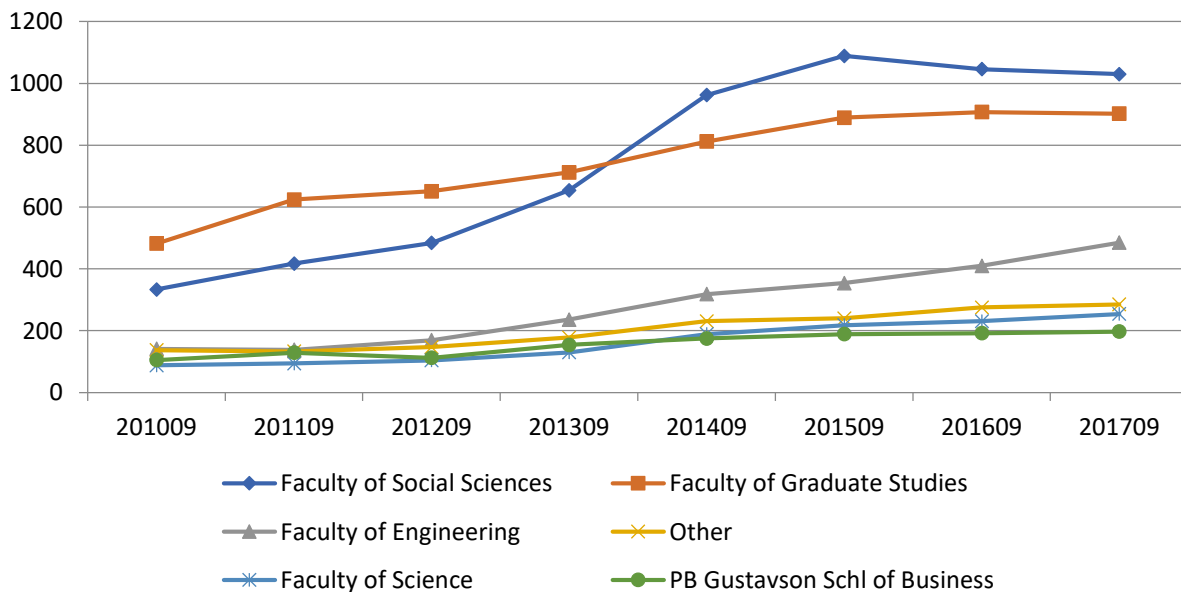
Context – The Enrolment Picture

Headcount of degree-seeking international students,
Fall 2010-2017



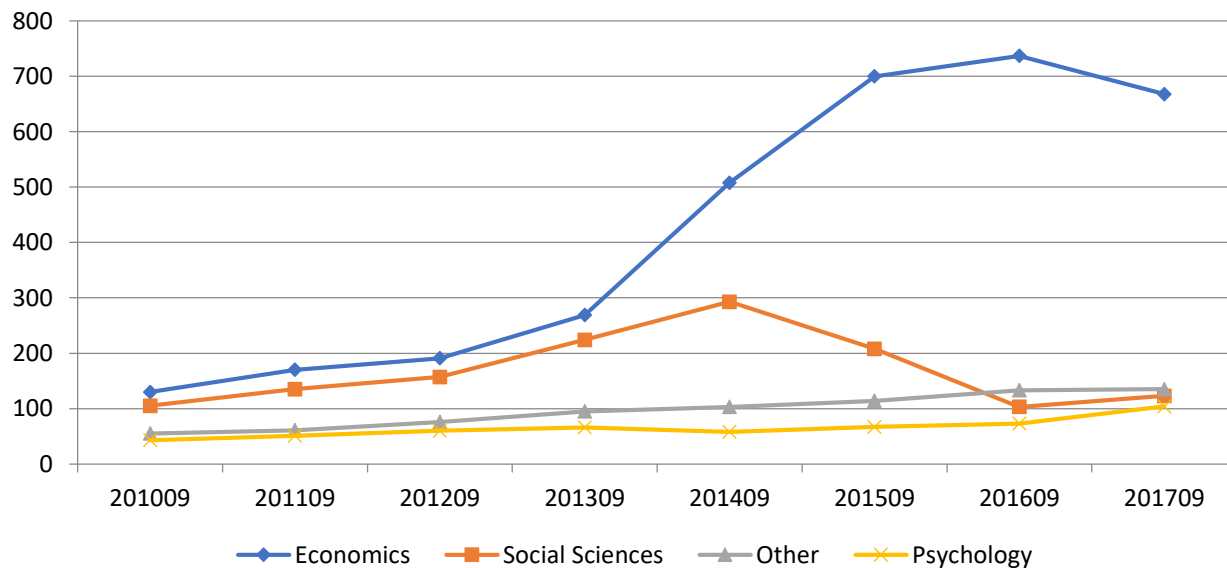
Context – The Enrolment Picture

Headcount of degree-seeking international students by faculty, Fall 2010-2017



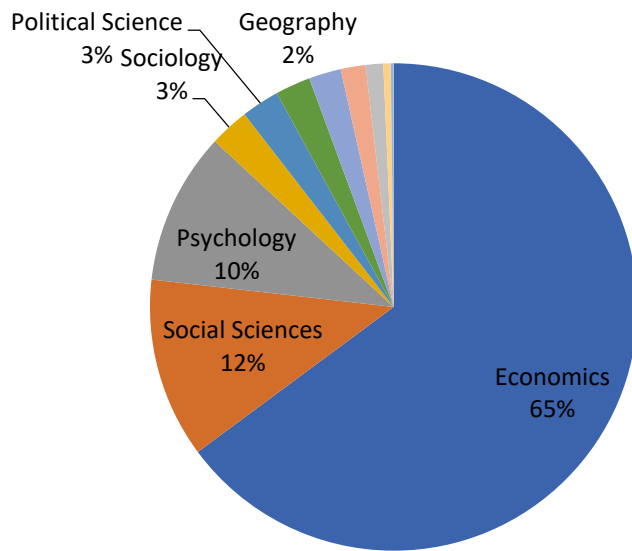
Context – The Enrolment Picture

Headcount of degree-seeking international students in the Faculty of Social Sciences by department, Fall 2010-2017



Context – The Enrolment Picture

Proportion of international degree-seeking students per
Social Sciences department, Fall 2017



Collaborative Research Project



- Rapid increase in enrolment in Economics clearly called for more resources, but also new resources
- Many of the processes and resources that need extending exist outside Economics, but without sufficient shared understanding between academic and service units.
- International students might or might not want or require qualitatively different services, programs, and supports

Collaborative Research Project

Research Questions

1. What are the challenges (e.g. academic, social, cultural, personal, etc.) that undergraduate international students in the Department of Economics at the University of Victoria face and what strategies do the students employ to address these challenges?
2. How do international students intersect with student affairs, academic units and other students to support their academic experiences?
3. What are the objectives, motivations and expectations that contribute to International Students decision to take a course(s) in the Department of Economics at the University of Victoria?

Collaborative Research Project



- 4 phases of the project: website audit, literature review, survey & interviews
- 656 email invitations sent to international students taking at least one Economics course in Spring Term 2015
- 121 respondents (18.45%)
 - 87 completed surveys (13.62%)

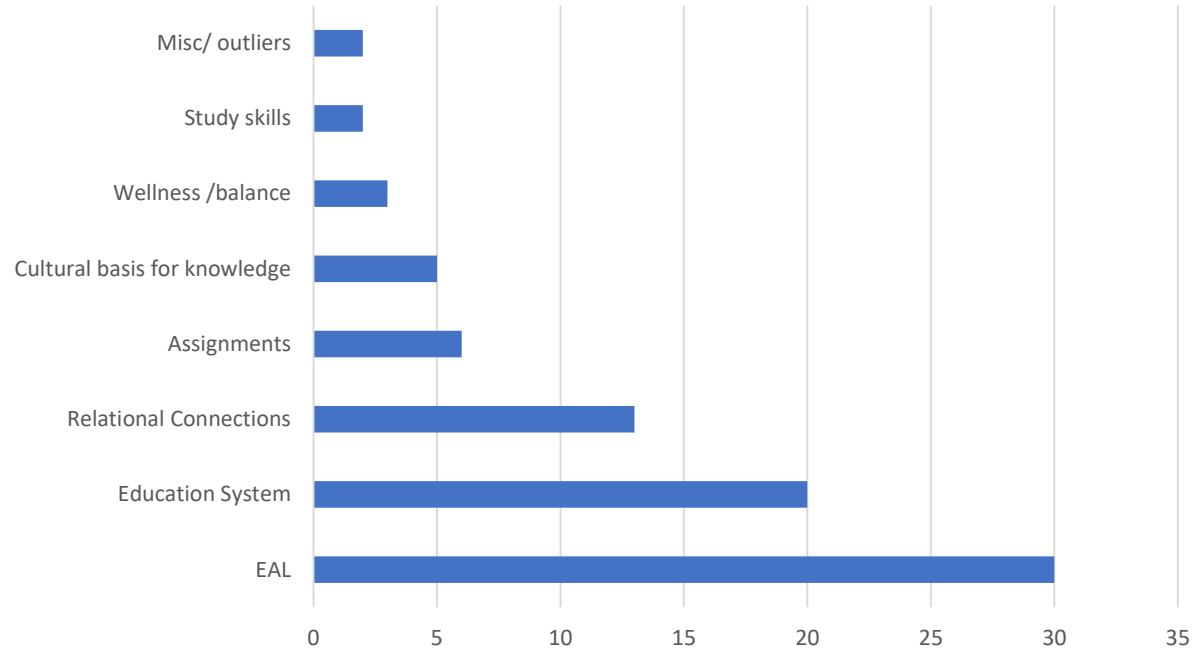
Collaborative Research Project

Using Open-ended questions and coding to better understand the student experience

1. Cultural basis for knowledge
2. Relational connections (relationship to self, other and environment)
3. Wellness/balance
4. Study skills
5. Assignments
6. English as an Additional Language
7. Education System
8. Miscellaneous/Outliers

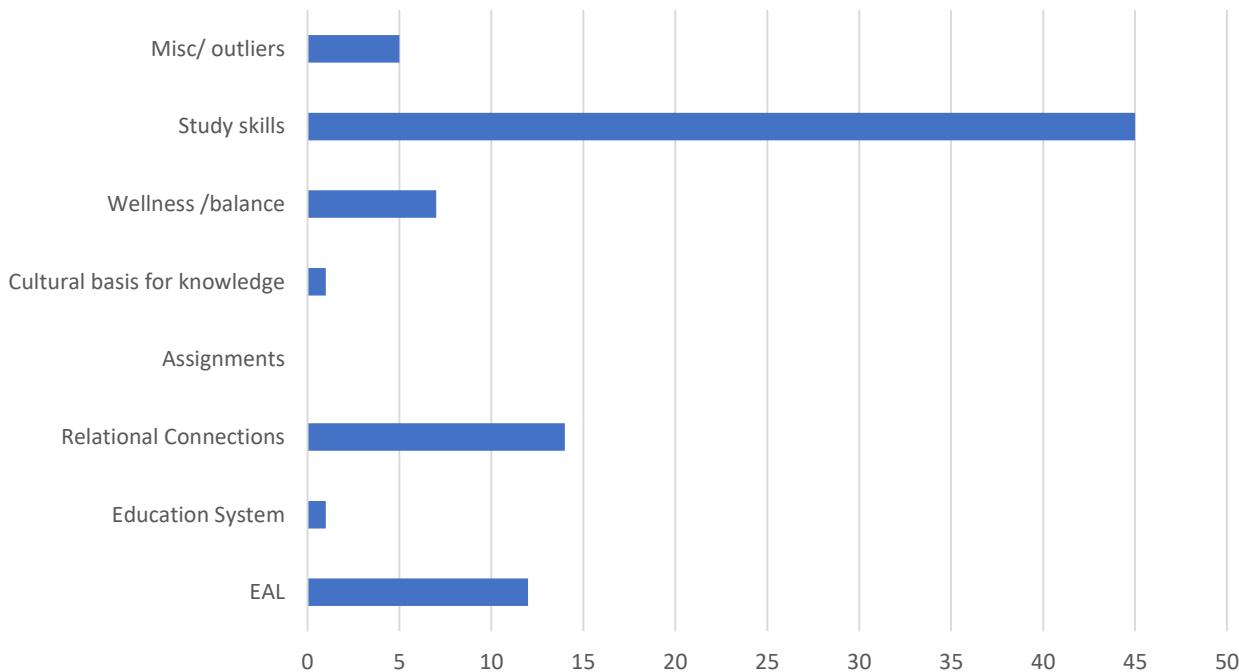
Collaborative Research Project

Challenging Situations Related to Academic Study

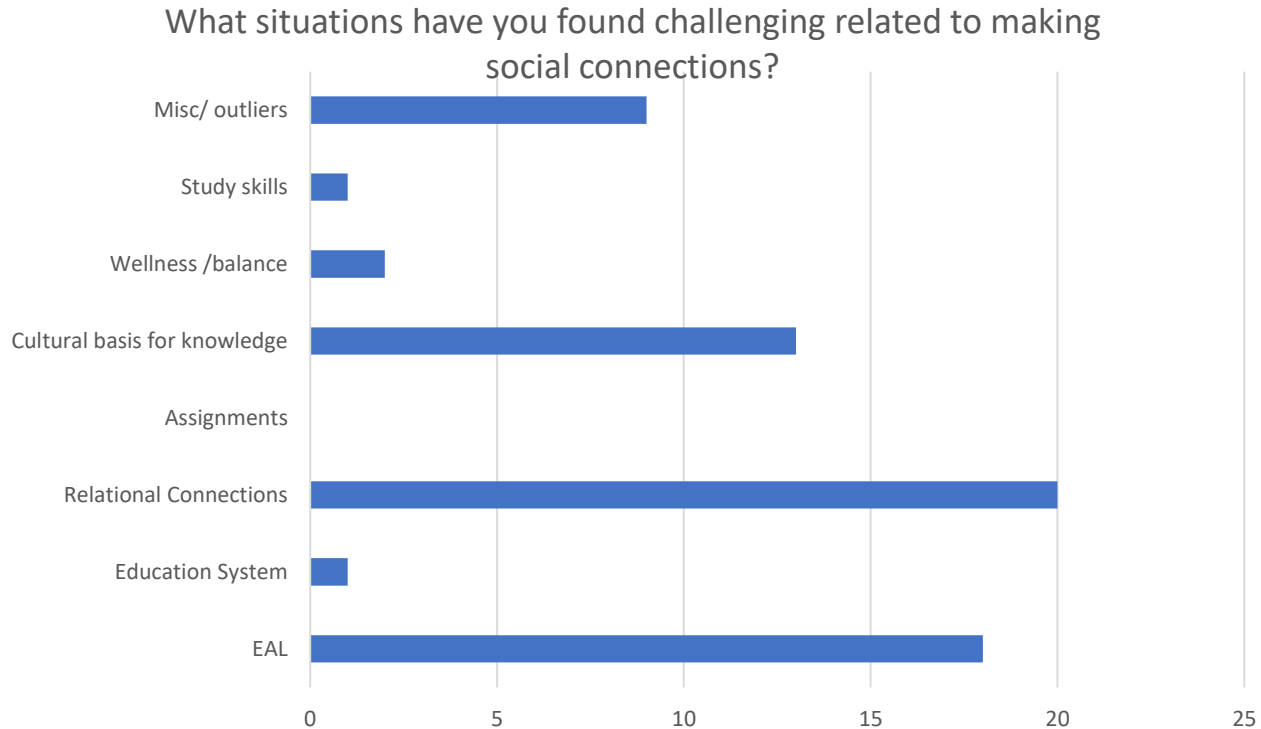


Collaborative Research Project

What strategies have you used to address academic challenges?

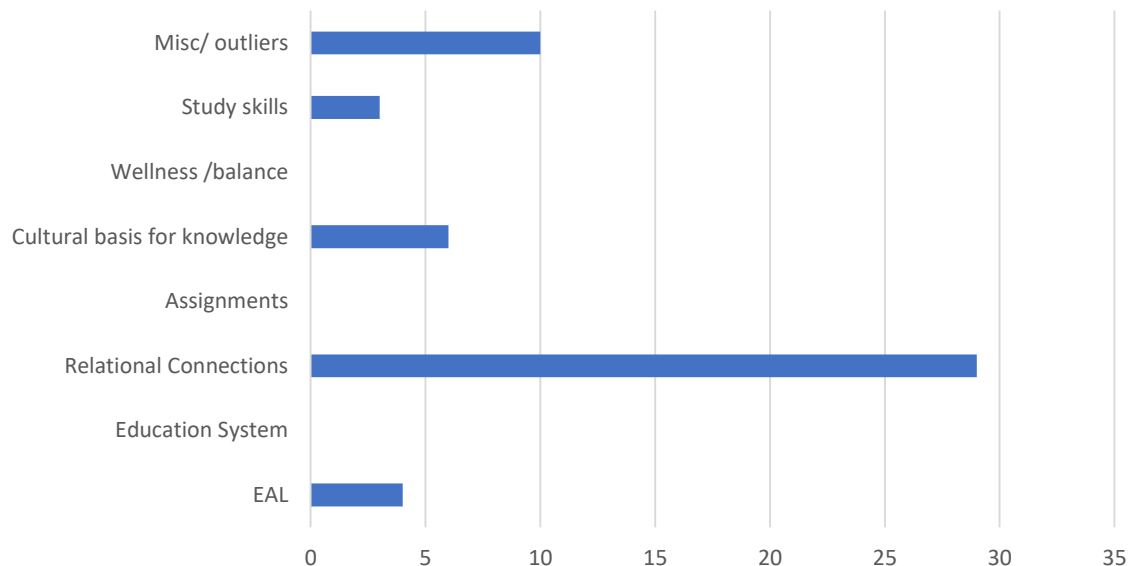


Collaborative Research Project



Collaborative Research Project

What strategies have you used to address social connection challenges?



Collaborative Research Project

Phase 2 Interviews

Recruitment

- Follow-up survey question in Phase One
- Recruitment posters on UVic bulletin boards
- Electronic recruitment poster through Economics
- Classroom recruitment presentations
- Snowball sampling

Method

- Semi-structured interviews
- Thematic data analysis

Interview Participants

- 23 participants
- 19 female; 4 male
- 14 participants from China
- 19 – 27 years old
- 1st to 4th year undergrad

Collaborative Research Project



THEME 1: MOTIVATIONS/REASONS TO STUDY

**THEME 2: ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES IN
ECONOMICS**

THEME 3: ECONOMICS SUPPORTS

Collaborative Research Project

THEME 1: MOTIVATIONS/REASONS TO STUDY

1. “It (Economics) was my second choice” (77%)
2. “To Get a Job”: Career/Job Opportunities (46%)
3. Personal Interest/Skills (46%)
4. Influence of Family/Friends (23%)

Building Relationships



Realization of benefits offered by entering into a research partnership

- Developing a deeper understanding of faculty and Student Affairs staff experiences
- Framework for relationship building
- Streamlining administrative processes
- Sharing of reports, research, literature review

Building Relationships - Process



Completing the ethics application and literature review were key components of this project as it built a shared foundation for the research team (in place of research proposal)

New synergies as relationships have developed between Student Affairs and academic units

Building Relationships – Sharing the Data

- Data confirmed some of our experience – challenges with social connections and academic experiences – data shared with university community
- Student Affairs partnerships with Faculties highlights the importance of data collection to confirm experience across the institution. Avoid assumptions.
- May not need new resources just better ways of connecting students with the existing resources

Building Relationships – Continuing the Dialogue



- International Student Working group formed to continue discussion
- Creation of International Officer position in Social Sciences supported research project and is supporting development of new programs for international students in partnership with Student Affairs
- Working group with Associate Deans of Humanities, Science and Social Sciences and Academic Advising exploring academic advising and exchange program

Building Relationships – New Initiatives

- ISS supporting participation of international student in new research projects
- More analysis of the student experience within Economics through interview data
- Collaborative strategies for connecting students with resources (e.g. ISS and Economics piloting an academic peer program in January 2018)

Building Relationships – New Initiatives



- Developing questions with Faculties and identifying how technology and online systems can provide data for decision making
- Developing a rubric to assess student learning during the exchange credit process (from pre-departure to return to UVic)

Questions?



Sharing Practices Activity



1. How does your campus share information between international affairs units and faculties/academic units?
2. Are there areas you would like to see relationships develop?
3. Do you have practices that work well that you can share?

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