

International Students on their Experiences with Campus Services

by Giang Huynh, Student Research Assistant
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As Fresno State transitions from virtual instruction back to in-person instruction with precautionary measures, international students got the opportunity to experience the campus life and on-campus resources again, or for some of them, the very first time. During this transition, in addition to academics, international students have also had to navigate through many other concerns given their unique status and backgrounds. A survey was sent out to better understand this student population’s experiences with student services and whether their needs are met using campus resources. By gaining insights into international students’ experiences in the transition back to in-person instruction, student affairs professionals can evaluate and enhance their programs and services to better support and assist international students’ academic success.

An email invitation to participate in the survey was sent out to a total of **501** currently enrolled International Students in the Fall 2021 semester and collected **72** responses (**14%**). Though over half of the respondents (**51%**) have been here less than 1 year, only **31%** are new students, demonstrating that many international students have been taking virtual courses from their home countries. There were **39** females (**54%**), and **33** males (**46%**). Out of 72 respondents, there were **five** freshmen, **seven** sophomores, **nine** juniors, **14** seniors, and **37** graduate students with an age range spanning from 18 to 53.

Knowledge of Services: International students generally reported that they knew where to get help for tutoring, physical and mental health, registration, and immigration questions. Their knowledge of tutoring services was rated highest among the listed service areas (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Students’ Rate of Service Knowledge

	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Neutral	Probably Yes	Definitely Yes
Tutoring (homework/ projects/ class materials)	4%	6%	15%	26%	49%
Physical or Mental Health	6%	10%	11%	27%	46%
Registration	4%	4%	21%	25%	45%
Immigration Questions	10%	10%	11%	30%	39%
Academic Concerns or Advising		10%	18%	38%	34%

Preferences & Frequency: The majority of students preferred in-person services (**61%**) with **65%** of respondents rated that in-person services and **55%** rated virtual services were somewhat easy to very easy to navigate. Though many campus services were made available both virtually and in person, the majority of resources were never used or rarely used by international students (see Table 2). The most sought-after service was provided by the Henry Madden Library (**42%**) followed by the Fresno State Student Cupboard (**13%**) and the Tech Lending/ DISCOVERe services (**12%**). Though international students were aware of where to get help for tutoring (see Table 1), tutoring was among the least commonly used services, such as the Supplemental Instruction, SupportNet, the Learning Center, the Writing Center, and the Graduate Studio (see Table 2). In the same question, the international freshmen and sophomores reported a high percentage of “Did not use/ Does not apply or Never Used” the services across all major campus resources compared to students who had been at Fresno State longer (see Table 3). Thus, this indicated that newer students may have less awareness of resources’ benefits and locations as compared to the overall students.

Table 2. Overall Students' Frequency of Service Usage

	Did Not Use/ Does Not Apply & Never	Once Per Semester	Once Per Month	Once Per Week	A Few Times Per Week
Henry Madden Library	3%	12%	13%	30%	42%
Fresno State Student Cupboard	38%	20%	12%	17%	13%
Tech Lending/ DISCOVERe	42%	32%	9%	5%	12%
Technology Services (IT Help Center)	57%	31%	3%	1%	7%
Learning Center & Tutoring	66%	16%	6%	4%	7%
Student Recreation Center	51%	16%	15%	12%	6%
SupportNet	77%	15%	2%	2%	5%
Writing Center	75%	13%	7%		4%
Student Health & Counseling Services	37%	40%	13%	6%	3%
Supplemental Instruction	81%	10%	3%	3%	3%
International Office - Admissions	25%	50%	18%	4%	3%
Career Development Center	57%	33%	7%		3%
International Office	16%	36%	32%	13%	3%
International Office - Advising	28%	45%	16%	9%	1%
International Office - Arrival and Orientation Services	37%	50%	6%	6%	1%
Services for Student with Disabilities (SSD)	90%	4%	3%	1%	1%
Cross Cultural & Gender Center	90%	9%			1%
Graduate Studio (Writing & Statistics)	71%	14%	9%	6%	
Financial Aid	55%	36%	4%	4%	
Scholarship Office	53%	38%	6%	3%	
Advising Center (COSS, CAH,UAC, etc.)	48%	45%	6%	1%	
Other:	90%	7%	3%		
Office of the Registrar	60%	33%	4%	3%	

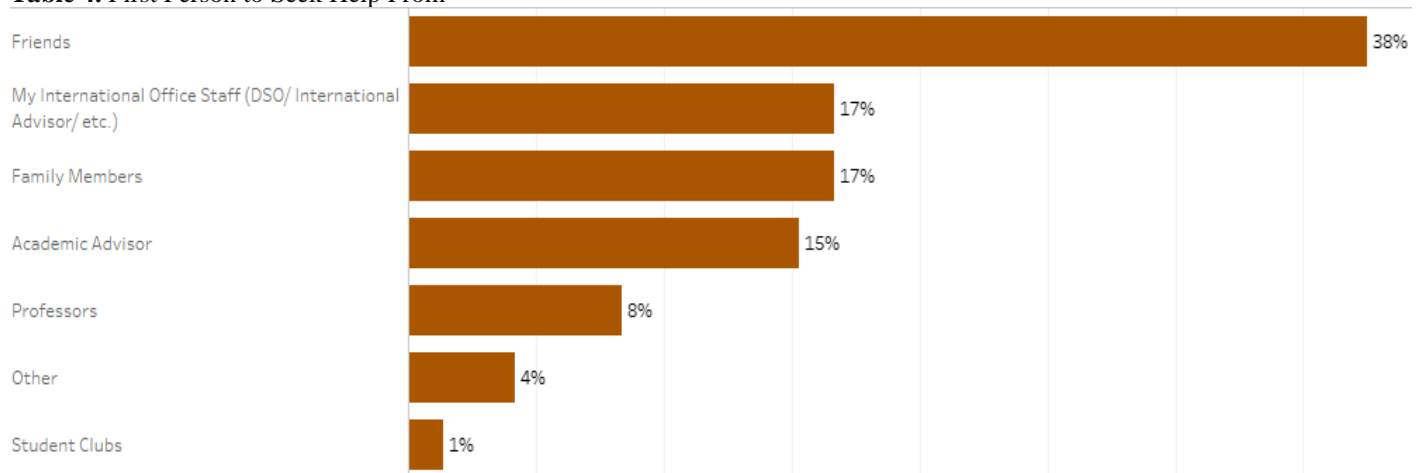
Table 3. Freshmen and Sophomore Students' Frequency of Service Usage

	Did Not Use/ Does Not Apply & Never	Once Per Semester	Once Per Month	Once Per Week	A Few Times Per Week
Henry Madden Library	8%	8%	8%	42%	33%
Fresno State Student Cupboard	42%	33%			25%
SupportNet	75%	8%			17%
Student Recreation Center	42%		17%	25%	17%
Supplemental Instruction	75%	8%		8%	8%
Learning Center & Tutoring	67%	17%		8%	8%
Tech Lending/ DISCOVERe	45%	36%	9%	9%	
Technology Services (IT Help Center)	75%	25%			
Writing Center	92%	8%			
Student Health & Counseling Services	67%	25%	8%		
International Office - Admissions	33%	50%	8%	8%	
International Office	33%	33%	25%	8%	
Career Development Center	67%	33%			
International Office - Advising	33%	50%	8%	8%	
Services for Student with Disabilities (SSD)	100%				
International Office - Arrival and Orientation Services	42%	50%		8%	
Cross Cultural & Gender Center	100%				
Graduate Studio (Writing & Statistics)	92%	8%			
Financial Aid	50%	50%			
Scholarship Office	58%	42%			
Advising Center (COSS, CAH,UAC, etc.)	50%	50%			
Other:	100%				
Office of the Registrar	83%	17%			

Interaction & Satisfaction: Many students reported having no interactions with many services, which was also consistent with the results of the service frequency students reported. In terms of service satisfaction, students rated their interactions with the library staff as excellent (43%). International service interactions were the second-highest excellent interaction (38%), while the third-highest excellent interaction was with Fresno State Student Cupboard (37%).

Seeking Help: When it came to the first person the international students often go to for help or questions, 38% of respondents reported going to “Friends” first, while 17% of respondents would see the international office staff, and 17% would go to their family (see Table 4). Open-ended responses revealed that they often sought help from friends because of their similar experiences as international students. To international students, seeking help from friends was more comfortable and often easily accessible.

Table 4. First Person to Seek Help From



Feedback: International students hoped to receive more support from the institutions during their transition back to campus amidst COVID-19, especially in financial aids and scholarships. As international students are required to be full-time students and are limited to a small number of online classes, students also hoped to see an increase in in-person classes to fulfill their requirements. International students were also concerned with the differences in guidance from different academic advisors in regard to credit transfers from other institutions. Thus, they would love assistance with more accurate credit transfer information to prevent repeating courses taken previously.