New international graduate students attended a one-day pre-orientation session that explores all of the crucial knowledge graduate students must know to achieve success at UIC. Interactive panels of current UIC students and UIC faculty and administrators shared some of their tips for success. A total of 516 students attended the Pre-Orientation Sessions.

The Office of the Dean of Students offered insight into academic honesty and integrity from both a student as well as from an administrative perspective. After an explanation of concepts including plagiarism, citation, and intellectual property, students engaged in vignettes where they discussed situations based on common issues related with academic dishonesty. Vignettes also included situations based on citing sources, group work, and publications.

The Office of International Services insight about U.S. classroom culture and it affects student success in the United States. There was discussion of punctuality, dress, gestures, and formality as well as a juxtaposition of how these cultural cues differ in in-classroom and out-of-classroom situations.

UIC Campus Police also presented on safety issues in Chicago. Topics discussed included using public transportation, resources available on campus, and how to contact authorities in an emergency.
New International Student Orientation advances the Office of International Services’ mission of supporting international students at the University of Illinois at Chicago by providing a welcoming and supportive environment to new students arriving on campus. At orientation, students are introduced to the vast array of essential services and programs designed to assist them and their families in achieving their educational, professional and personal objectives. During the program, students are invited to attend a variety of orientation sessions designed specifically to address the needs of international students and their dependents.

Topics addressed during orientation include cultural adjustment, student immigration and visa regulations and the UIC academic environment. Additionally, students are given the opportunity to speak with both OIS advisors and staff from other UIC offices to learn of the various university services that are available. To assist them in adjusting to life in Chicago and the University, students are given tours of the campus and city, and offered opportunities to network with their cohort and new student orientation leaders.

Students are provided a resource fair showcasing UIC departments and student organizations, attending the fair gives the students an opportunity to learn of the different resources that UIC has to offer. A total of 1,080 new international students attended the orientation on August 18th, 2015.

The OIS orientation is a key element in facilitating the transition of international students to life at UIC and the U.S., proactively engaging them for success that will continue during their studies at the University.
New International Student Bowling Nights
Held throughout OIS Orientation, Bowling Nights offer new students a chance to relax and meet new friends that had just arrived on campus. Many students, having just traveled to Chicago from abroad, are in need of a fun social environment where they can be introduced to fellow students and campus life. Bowling Night offers such an opportunity with fun, games and refreshments. A total of 218 students attended.

Advisor Meet & Greet/Social Security Administration Visit
The Office of International Services Advisor Meet & Greet consists of a full day of open advising, giving students the opportunity and added convenience of coming to OIS throughout the day to meet with their advisor without making an appointment. This is a great resource for students at a time when they may have a multitude of questions before beginning the semester.

The on-site visit by the Social Security Administration to OIS provided new international students a convenient way to process necessary applications without having to leave campus. During their visit, Social Security accepted applications from students with on-campus employment that are required to obtain Social Security numbers.

Shopping Trip Shuttles to The Maxwell Collection
Many international students travel to the U.S., unable to pack the necessary items needed for everyday life. Furthermore, many lack the necessary transportation to travel to the stores needed to obtain such items. During the Fall 2015 Orientation Week activities, OIS took students by shuttle to the recently opened Maxwell Collection on Roosevelt so that international students could purchase items for their residence halls and apartments as well as clothing such as coats in preparation for the Chicago winter. A total of 160 students attended the shopping trip held on August 7 and August 14.
The Third Annual Dean of Students’ Barbeque was a chance for both new and returning international students to get together with one another and share a traditional summer barbeque with OIS and university staff. A total of 1,036 new and returning international students gathered together to start off the new academic year. Sparky the Dragon, players from the Men’s Basketball team, and the UIC Pep Band “fired-up” the students for a new school year and a new season.
This year, the Office of International Services piloted a Global Ambassadors program, which is made up of current and returning international and domestic UIC students who have shown outstanding leadership and participation in OIS programs. These students were recruited to assist with various OIS Orientation Week events and gave new international students campus tours, went on shuttle and trolley trips with the students, and answered any general questions new students had about life at UIC and in Chicago. There were a total of 7 students this year who were instrumental in assisting OIS staff operate a smooth and successful week of Orientation Week events and have also assisted in recruiting new students for OIS Programs.
International Student Career Week:
March 14-March 17, 2015

The Office of International Services partnered with Career Services to provide workshops designed specifically for international students at UIC. Workshops focused on internships, life after student visa status, interview and resume writing skills. The workshops prepared international students to make the most of their time as a professional in the United States. They also instructed students how best to present themselves to potential employers. A panel discussion that included former UIC international students presented individual and unique experiences as well. The week long event also featured a Career Fair where students could network and meet with potential employers.

Employment Workshop Series – 2015-2016

The Office of International Services offered workshops focused on employment for international students at UIC throughout the academic year. These workshops instruct international students of which employment benefits they are eligible for and how to apply for those benefits. Additionally, OIS hosts an administrator workshop each semester. This workshop informs faculty and staff around the campus about the employment benefits and academic requirements for international students.
First Friends is a program that connects incoming international students with current international students at UIC. During the 2015-2016 academic year, over 115 new international students participated in the First Friends program, with close to 40 current international serving as their mentors.

Once a new student signs up for First Friends, the student is paired with a current student that shares similar interests, such as major of study. The current student serves as a resource to answer general questions relating to UIC and Chicago. This program allows new international students the opportunity to communicate with current international students via email before arriving to the United States. The questions asked of new international students often relate to food, culture, living arrangements, coursework, flight schedules, entertainment, transportation, etc.

“When I was in India last year, I had many doubts about the course, living, housing and what not. But my first friend helped me a lot and she is still helping me and guiding me. So, I want to lend a helping hand to someone who might be in the same condition as mine.”

**Student from India, Masters in Computer Science**

“My First Friend was very helpful to me and we became good friends ever since. I would like to help new incoming students like she did and meet more people.”

**Student from China, PhD in Biopharmaceutical Sciences**

“After getting admission from UIC, I was almost blind in regard to what should I do next. At that time, I had seen the post for First Friends, and did get a lot of help. Hence, I am willing to be a part of this program so I can carry on that legacy.”

**Student from India, Masters in Bioengineering**
The student intern program at UIC is part of the J-1 exchange visitor program facilitated by the U.S. Department of State. J-1 student interns are in degree programs outside of the U.S. and they come here to work on a component of their research and or learn new techniques that will guide them with finishing their current degree programs.

The Office of International Services had a luncheon for our J-1 student interns once each semester. All of our students interns were welcome to attend and their families. It is a great way for them to meet new people and talk about the research and work they are doing here at UIC. It is also a great environment for them to discuss their experiences here in Chicago and at UIC, and see what similarities they have with each other. It is often not a surprise to see how connected the various research projects can be, and common interests they share.
Halloween, a fun American holiday, is celebrated each year on October 31st, and, typically, ushers in the fall season in Chicago. A favorite tradition for this holiday is to carve pumpkins. In an effort to give international students and their families an opportunity to experience this unique American holiday, OIS hosted its annual Pumpkin Picking Trip to Bengston’s Pumpkin Farm on Saturday, October 17th. Students in attendance learned about the American traditions of pumpkin carving, were able to see mid-western farm animals, experience a tractor-driven hay ride and observe many of the customs associated with Halloween in the U.S. The event hosted over 165 student participants in addition to OIS staff.
International Education Week 2015

November 16 - November 20

International Education Week is an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of international education and exchange world-wide.

In recognition of the contributions that international students make in globalizing the UIC campus, OIS celebrated International Education week by hosting a series of events throughout the week. The 7th annual Photo Contest was held during the weeks leading up to the 5th Annual OIS Thanksgiving Dinner. The winners were announced at the event. This year’s theme was “Access for All”.

This year’s International Education Week also featured a Language Showcase from the Conversation Partners group. Participants in the program exhibited their newly acquired language skills through presentation. Music performances, folk stories, cooking videos, and many other cultural presentations presented in languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and Spanish were featured.

Also, for the first time the Office of International Services hosted an Acirema (“America Spelled Backwards”) simulation for the Campus Housing and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences departments. Staff members from visiting departments were able to experience first-hand the difficulties an international student faces when applying for a student visa, I-20 and arrival in the U.S.
Thanksgiving, a traditional U.S. holiday, is typically celebrated with family and friends. In an effort to give international students and their families an opportunity to experience this unique American holiday, OIS hosted its 4th annual Thanksgiving Dinner on November 19, 2015. Over 389 students in attendance enjoyed traditional Thanksgiving food and hospitality on campus while learning about the origin of the holiday and its significance in American culture. This occasion also allows students the chance to take a photograph with a special feathery guest.
Trade Winds seeks to enhance the student experience at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) by creating diverse opportunities for out-of-classroom learning, cross-cultural dialogue and personal development. An international partner program, Trade Winds is designed to enhance campus internationalization by tapping the global perspectives, knowledge and expertise of international students and utilizing them as a resource to engage U.S. students, building global competencies across campus.

In Fall 2015, 52 students were paired up for one-on-one and group activities throughout the semester. During the Spring 2016 semester, there were a total of 44 students who participated. International partners learn about UIC and the surrounding community, as well as cultural customs of the area. U.S. partners benefit by learning about other countries, cultures, values and traditions.

The program provides students the unique opportunity to interact and educate each other about their cultures, countries, perspectives and their life experiences. Additionally, it gives students the opportunity for involvement and leadership in a meaningful extracurricular activity. Students in the program also participate in a day of service during their semester, allowing students to be civically engaged with their partners. Students in the Spring 2016 semester program also got to help volunteer at the IMD Guest House on west campus, preparing goody bags for patients and family members of patients staying in temporary housing.
Conversation Partners is a semester long program designed to facilitate language exchange between international and U.S. students at UIC. International students practice their English language skills with a U.S. student, while U.S. students are able to improve their foreign language skills with a native speaker. Both are able to improve their cultural competencies and gain first-hand language skills by connecting with their peers in an out-of-the classroom learning environment. Conversation Partners is a great program for students who may be getting ready to depart the U.S. for a study abroad experience or for those who may just be returning and want to continue practicing that language. Additionally, the program affords international students at UIC an opportunity to improve their English language skills through peer interaction and facilitated conversation.

The program has grown over the past 3 years and during the Fall 2015 semester, the program welcomed a total of 66 students (33 pairings) and a total of 11 different languages were represented. The Spring 2016 term had a total of 24 students in the program (12 pairings) and a total of 7 different languages were spoken. Students are asked to meet a minimum of five times with each other throughout the semester and keep a record of when they met and what they discussed. Throughout the semester, the Office of International Services facilitates opportunities for the partners to meet, but participants are also encouraged to meet on their own time when available. Partners can use the program’s flexibility to design a calendar for the semester that works best according to individual schedules. Students are able to gain the opportunity to improve cultural competency and practice a language with a native speaker by engaging in out-of-the classroom discussions. Some of the opportunities hosted by OIS for these students this past year have included attendance at a Chicago White Sox game, as well as a celebration of Italian culture at Navy Pier.
The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago is one of the 12 regional Reserve Banks across the United States that, together with the Board of Governors in Washington, D.C., serve as the nation's central bank. The Office of International Service's trip to the Federal Reserve of Chicago's Money Museum provides UIC international students, scholars, and their families an interactive opportunity to learn about this important federal institution, its role in managing the U.S. and global economies, its responsibility to keep U.S. currency secure, and its commitment to safe banking practices. Many international students come to UIC specifically to study U.S. business, economy, and the financial sector. This trip is of particular interest to them, along with any student interested in exploring the great museums that Chicago has to offer.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago trip was a new program for the Office of International Services during the 2015-2016 academic year and was offered twice - in October and again in April. For the trip on October 7, 2015 there were a total of 15 students in attendance and on April 6, 2016 there were 10.
First staged in 1901, the Chicago Auto Show is the largest auto show in North America and has been held more times than any other auto exposition on the continent. This year marked the 107th edition of the Chicago Auto Show. Engineering is one of the largest academic programs at UIC, therefore this event has quickly become one of the most attended events the Office of International Services sponsors. On Monday, February 15th, 2016 nearly 60 students attended this highlight event. Students get to see both current models of vehicles available for purchase on today’s market as well as concept vehicles being considered for production by some of the biggest names in auto manufacturing. Both U.S. and international automakers are exhibited.
This year the Office of International Services hosted its second annual International Student Graduate Reception for those students graduating at the end of the Spring 2016 semester. This was a great opportunity for family, friends and staff to gather together and celebrate the achievements of international students finishing their degree programs. The reception also provided OIS the opportunity to thank those students who contributed significantly to the collection of voices, cultures, identities, and perspectives that is UIC. There were over 100 graduating international students and their family members who attended this year’s celebration.

Students had the opportunity to provide feedback and commentary about their experiences as an international student at UIC, share memories and take photographs with their peers. Students in attendance at the reception were also given pins from the Office of International Services to wear at their graduation ceremonies and proudly display their affiliation with the international community at UIC.

Overall, some of the things students at the reception had to say about UIC and Chicago were:

“Get out of your comfort zone! Don’t just hang out with people from the same country you’re from, but try to meet and make new friends! The friends that I made in my 1st year are still my best friends!”

“You will get chances to do things which could have never been done back in your country. If you find such chances, go for it, make yourself a better person.”
2015 - 2016 Events and Activities

UIC Flames Men’s Basketball Game

The Office of International Services coordinated with UIC Athletics to select one home game during the UIC Flames basketball season for international students and scholars to receive recognition. This year, those international students who were in attendance at the game on Thursday, February 19th had the opportunity to walk onto the court at half-time and join Sparky for a group photo. A total of 76 students attended the game.

Coffee Hours September - April

Throughout the academic year, OIS hosts a Coffee Hour once a month for students to stop in and meet with an advisor. Students are also able to socialize with their peers while enjoying coffee, hot tea and sweet treats. On average, the attendance at Coffee Hours was 88 students each month.

Speaker Series Workshops

OIS Speaker Series Workshops are held on the last Tuesday of every month throughout the academic year. The workshops are held over the lunch period, so students and scholars are encouraged to bring their lunches while listening to speakers present on various subjects that have to do with U.S. Culture and adjustment to life in Chicago. Topics ranged from workplace etiquette to healthcare and insurance. A total of 45 students attended.