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About CSIE

Case Studies in International Education (CSIE) is an open access, online, peer-reviewed publication that utilizes case studies for the development and advancement of the field. CSIE seeks to promote further professional development through engaging case study discussion. We offer publication opportunities for scholar-practitioners, including working professionals, faculty, and graduate students at CSIEpub.org. Each case study provides an opportunity to integrate theory and practice through interdisciplinary analysis/insight for the benefit of the field's future growth.

International education is defined by Punteney (2019) as "the profession of designing, managing, and facilitating programs and activities that help participants to appropriately, effectively, and ethically engage in interactions with culturally diverse people and ideas, often across national borders."

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Lost in the Wilderness: Managing Staff in a Hybrid Working Environment

Alyssa Nota, Ph.D.

USAC, Nevada, USA

Email: alyssa.nota@usac.edu

Tags

Education Abroad; Management and Operations; Personnel Management; University/Higher Education

Setting

Samdel College (SC) is a private, four-year college located in a suburb outside a large eastern U.S. city, with 4,500 undergraduate students. The international programs office on campus manages study abroad opportunities including:

- a direct-enroll program for French language majors;
- a sizeable portfolio of programs offered through a provider collaboration;
- and four faculty-led programs in four academic disciplines.

The international programs office is led by a full-time director who oversees one full-time assistant and two part-time student employees. The director, Dr. Paige Anderson, has twelve years of experience in international education. The office assistant, Louis, is an entry-level professional and this position is his first full-time job after graduating with a bachelor's degree. Louis is unsure about his future professional goals. As an undergraduate, he participated in a week-long faculty-led session in Mexico. His main job responsibilities pertain to faculty-led group planning support, requiring him to interact regularly with professors and students.

The two student employees, Darius and Marta, studied abroad on semester programs in England and Costa Rica, and are helpful resources for student inquiries. They assist students with the program application and available scholarships.

The office staff interacts with services across campus. As needed, they refer students and professors to relevant campus offices including financial aid, academic advising, counseling center, and human resources (HR). The office is funded partly by the college's annual budget and partly by community donors who fund two part-time student positions and two study abroad scholarships per year.

Case

The director and assistant work in the office four days per week and their employment contract permits them to work remotely one day per week, usually Friday. The student employees work 12-15 hours per week and are present in the office according to their class schedules.

On a Thursday morning in December, an art history professor called the office seeking an update from Louis regarding a faculty-led session planned for the following March spring break in Italy. The professor said there were errors regarding the session price and dates on flyers posted around campus, and delays with the hotel reservations. The professor paid some of the estimated expenses upfront (due to lack of information from Louis) and was seeking reimbursement. Paige took the phone message and then texted Louis to tell him to contact the professor as soon as possible. Paige did not hear from Louis the rest of the day, and so the next day she called him to check on the situation. Louis did not answer his phone, texts, or emails throughout the day, although it was a remote working day (Friday). Student worker Darius emailed Paige to tell her the professor and two students stopped by the office, and were frustrated not to find Louis there. One student's parent called with concerns about lack of communication from the office. The professor and students threatened to cancel their participation. Paige texted and emailed Louis again, to no avail. Paige called the professor and reassured him the office would assist him the following week, once Paige had more information from Louis.

The following Monday, Louis requested a personal day off through the campus HR online system; he gave no additional information. Paige approved the request and texted Louis asking if he was ill or needed anything but received no response. This repeated on Tuesday.

After receiving no information from Louis, Paige made the decision to take over the planning of the March faculty-led session. She accessed the shared office files, confirmed the necessary hotel reservations for the confirmed students, asked the student workers to correct the flyers on campus, and talked with the finance office to get the professor his reimbursement. They completed this work in one day, while Louis remained unresponsive and absent from the office.

Sifting through files for faculty-led session information, Paige uncovered several negative evaluations from two previous sessions from professors and students. The professors had not reported any complaints to Paige but had submitted evaluations outlining their disappointment with the poor quality of Louis's work. On their evaluations, student participants reported a 60% approval rating for the sessions, and several noted that Louis was not helpful, while they praised the two student workers in the office for their assistance. Paige was embarrassed and disappointed that she did not know this information earlier.

Two days later, Louis showed up in the office and told Paige he had gone on an impromptu camping trip and did not have wi-fi or cell service. He did not apologize for his lack of communication and blamed the professor and students for being unreasonable when Paige explained what had happened the week before. Paige asked about the past evaluations, and Louis said he did not think they were important, so he never told Paige about them. Louis told Paige his work-provided laptop (containing sensitive student data) and office keys were

missing from his car, along with his access card to campus parking. He accused the student workers of stealing his items and harming his reputation with the art history professor and students who stopped by the office, which they denied. Louis shouted these accusations at them and stormed out of the office.

Upset by the situation, Paige met with the campus HR administrator. Together they decided that a formal letter of reprimand and a performance improvement plan would be created for Louis. When presented with the information, Louis disagreed and requested one week of sick leave, citing stress. He verbally accused Paige of harassment but did not submit a formal complaint to the college. He did not return to the office after the approved week off. As a result of his erratic behavior, ongoing absences, and lack of fulfillment of job responsibilities, Paige formally terminated Louis ten days after his leave ended. Upon hearing this news, Darius, the student employee, expressed interest in the now-vacant full-time position after his graduation later that semester.

Discussion Questions

As you consider this case, discuss:

- In this case, how might Louis' actions or inactions have affected the international education office's relations with campus offices, academic departments, colleagues, students, parents, and external donors? What actions can the office take to begin to repair those relationships?
- In this case, Paige wished she had been aware of the evaluations/issues earlier. What could she do differently in the office's procedures to prevent this situation from re-occurring?
- What strategies are most effective when managing staff who work remotely or in a hybrid work environment?
- What communication strategies and methods can be used to regularly contact staff members, especially in urgent situations? Are any methods inappropriate between work colleagues?
- What forms of training and expectation-setting are most successful with staff and student workers?
- How can a supervisor determine the appropriate amount of autonomy and responsibility to give to a specific role or staff member?

A Balancing Act:

Delayed Visas Impact Institutional Finances

Omobonike Odegbami, Ed.D.

Director of International Student Services, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY, USA

Email: oodegbam@hamilton.edu

Tags

Crisis-Management; Ethics, Equity, and Social Justice; International Enrollment Management; International Student and Scholar Services; Leadership and Strategy; University/Higher Education

Setting

A small U.S. private institution is looking forward to welcoming its new students for the fall semester. It has admitted approximately 90% U.S. students and 10% international students. Weeks before the start of the semester, new U.S. federal restrictions target several countries, resulting in increased visa denials and prolonged administrative processing delays.

Case

Arjun, an admitted undergraduate from Nepal, receives a notification that his visa application has been refused under administrative review with no clear timeline. In an email to the admissions office, he writes, "I have done everything required, but I do not know if I will be allowed to come. Should I still prepare to attend?"

Similar messages begin to arrive from other admitted students across affected regions. Some express confusion, others frustration, and many ask whether the institution can intervene. Families reach out seeking clarity, often from across time zones, hoping for reassurance that is difficult to provide.

Meanwhile, institutional operations continue to move forward. Enrollment projections have been finalized. Housing assignments are set. Financial aid has been distributed. Orientation programming is scheduled.

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Faculty anticipate full course rosters. The assumption of student arrival is embedded across multiple institutional systems.

The institution must now respond to a rapidly evolving situation with no clear precedent. What initially appears as an external policy shift quickly becomes an internal institutional challenge with human, operational, and ethical dimensions. At the center of the discussion is a critical decision: whether to hold spaces in courses for admitted students facing visa delays or to fill those spaces with waitlisted domestic applicants in order to stabilize enrollment numbers.

Admissions leadership expresses concern about yield rates and institutional targets. From their perspective, unfilled seats represent both lost revenue and missed enrollment goals. There is pressure to make timely decisions to ensure that the institution is fully enrolled.

International Student Services (ISS), however, advocates for deferral flexibility and continued engagement with affected students. From this perspective, the issue extends beyond enrollment metrics. It reflects the institution's stated commitment to global access and inclusion. During internal discussions, tensions begin to surface more clearly.

Enrollment management raises a direct question: How long can the institution realistically hold spaces without jeopardizing financial stability? Financial aid officers note that reassigning unused funds mid-cycle presents logistical challenges and may impact other students. At the same time, communications staff caution that a lack of public response may be interpreted as indifference, while a strong public stance could carry reputational or political implications.

Senior leadership is faced with competing priorities that do not easily align:

- Maintaining enrollment and revenue stability
- Upholding commitments to equity and global access
- Preserving institutional reputation
- Sustaining trust with admitted students and their families

As these discussions unfold, the human dimension remains present but unevenly centered. Arjun sends a follow-up message asking whether he should defer his admission or risk losing his place entirely. Other students inquire whether the institution will advocate on their behalf or provide alternatives.

The institution must also consider the consequences of its decisions beyond the current cycle. Filling seats with waitlisted applicants may provide immediate stability but risks signaling to international students that their place in the institution is conditional. Holding seats without certainty may strain financial resources and create operational gaps.

There is no clear timeline for resolution of visa delays. Federal policies remain opaque, and institutional influence over visa outcomes is severely limited. The absence of control complicates decision-making and increases pressure to act with incomplete information.

The institution's decision will become a reflection of institutional identity. How the institution responds will communicate whether or not international students are viewed as valued, integral members of the academic community.

In this moment, the institution must decide not only what is feasible, but what is consistent with its stated values.

Discussion Questions

As you consider this case, discuss:

- In this case, what are the various alternatives the institution might consider and what are the implications of each?
- How should institutions balance financial sustainability with commitments to equity in global recruitment?
- How can offices best communicate to admitted students navigating visa uncertainty without offering false reassurance?
- How can admissions, enrollment management, and International Student Services collaborate more effectively in volatile policy environments?
- What role can institutions play in national advocacy when federal policies disrupt international student mobility?

A New Angle:

Establishing English as Language of Instruction

Sebastián López Castellanos, Carmen Winkel, Anika Kettelhake

Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Email: lopez@th-brandenburg.de; winkel@th-brandenburg.de; kettelha@th-brandenburg.de

Tags

Education Policy; Internationalization and Global Learning; Leadership and Strategy; Technology; University/Higher Education

Setting

A small German university of applied sciences decided to become more international and, as part of the new internationalization strategy, to increase the number of English-taught modules in its mainly German-language degree courses. The overall aims were to increase the appeal for international exchange students, to deepen partnerships with international universities, and to offer students English-language and/or international learning experiences. Also, the increase in English teaching was expected to facilitate the future introduction of additional degree courses taught exclusively in English at the institution.

However, several challenges arose. Some German students opposed the transition to English, citing insufficient language proficiency and concerns about potential declines in their academic performance. Some professors also lacked the necessary language skills to offer their modules in English. Additionally, due to its small size, the university had only limited staff capacities and financial means to support this development. Finally, there was also a time-component involved – there was no time to teach English to those whose skills are insufficient.

The university management was therefore reluctant to set a fixed number and format for new English-taught modules. Nonetheless, the introduction of more English-taught modules remained a pressing issue, and a suitable approach needed to be found.

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Case

As part of a two-year project, a systematic concept was developed to increase the ratio of English-taught courses in the institution's curriculum across departments. Due to the challenges mentioned above, the project team proposed an incremental approach, allowing for the introduction of modules with English language at different scales and with varying degrees of international engagement. The resulting modules were named ELI, short for "English language teaching increments" (*German: Englischsprachige LehrInkremente*).

Four different ELI stages were defined:

- ELI Basic: a module still mostly in German, but with English elements, e.g. English teaching materials, an English language guest lecture, English language exercises and practices
- ELI Classic: a module fully taught in English
- ELI Digital Exchange: a module involving virtual collaboration with international partner universities
- ELI Mobility: a module including short-term physical mobility abroad, e.g. at a partner university

Once established, the ELI was expected to be offered on a regular basis and to be included in the official curricula of the respective degree courses as part of the pool of elective modules.

Especially in the case of ELI Mobility, a separate budget was made available to cover travel expenses for short-term mobilities. Professors who wanted to offer an ELI Mobility had to apply by filling out a form outlining the ELI's importance and contribution to the curriculum, as well as detailing its implementation and cooperation with an international partner.

Contrary to the expected results, after two years, the developed ELI didn't exactly match the anticipated distribution across the four stages: Basic, Classic, Digital Exchange and Mobility.

In the case of ELI Basic, it was difficult to measure their increase or final amount, since the modules were still officially labelled as "German-taught" and professors would not always promote them to prospective students. In some cases, professors might have felt an ELI Basic was not worth the effort, since it would still not be really suitable for international exchange students without German knowledge. Equally, some professors might have felt there is no point in a new label, since they already used English material in their German lectures for a long time.

The ELI Classic were less in number than expected. Even though digital tools such as DeepL (AI-based translation software) were provided by the university, only a handful of modules were fully switched to English. This might have been due to the fact that they were still part of official German-taught degree courses and, as such, mainly enrolled German-speaking students, raising the question of the direct benefit versus additional effort for students and professors alike.

Probably the biggest surprise came from the discrepancy between the number of ELI Digital Exchange and ELI Mobility. While initially the aim was to reach a ratio of roughly two ELI Digital Exchange per ELI Mobility, demand for ELI Mobility was significantly higher and resulted in an inverse ratio, with ELI Mobility widely surpassing the amount of ELI Digital Exchange. The ELI Mobility format required an application process by the professors to secure financial support, significant time commitment, and very close cooperation and organization with the corresponding partner institution. It was therefore expected that the attractiveness of ELI Digital Exchange would benefit from lower organization (e.g. for travel) while still allowing for (virtual)

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international exchange. Nonetheless, the ELI Mobility format was highly attractive due to the opportunity to travel abroad and engage with international peers in person.

In conclusion, the number of English-taught modules was successfully expanded, though not exactly as anticipated. The university has continued to expand its offerings. A number of required core modules have been switched to English and are now available to exchange students as ELI Classic modules. Additionally, the university management decided to introduce the first two fully English-taught degree courses. The benefit of developing the four-pronged approach to incorporating ELI into the curriculum is that it has created a foundation for future international engagement.

Discussion Questions

As you consider this case, discuss:

- Would a fixed number and range of English-taught modules have led to more consistent results?
- Other than physical mobility, what other incentives could motivate both students and teachers to switch to English?
- In what ways could limited institutional resources be balanced with the demand for greater international engagement?
- How can resistance among students and faculty toward English-taught modules be constructively addressed?
- What could make virtual international collaboration more appealing to faculty and students?
- How might the success of ELI modules be assessed to ensure their long-term sustainability and impact?
- To what extent can the ELI model serve as a transferable framework for other universities facing similar challenges?

“I Want to Be Honest, But Also Safe”:

Social Media Disclosures for International Students

Omobonike Odegbami, Ed.D

Director of International Student Services, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY, USA

Email: oodegbam@hamilton.edu

Tags

Ethics, Equity, and Social Justice; International Student and Scholar Services; Leadership and Strategy; University/Higher Education

Setting

Recent U.S. federal visa policies require international student visa applicants to disclose social media identifiers used over the past five years. In practice, students report increased scrutiny during visa interviews, including questions about online posts, affiliations, and public commentary. Failure to disclose could have serious consequences for visa adjudication. At the same time, there is no transparent framework for how disclosed content is evaluated. Visa decisions are discretionary, and outcomes are often difficult to predict.

Case

Mariam is from Kenya and has been admitted as a graduate student to a U.S. university. As she prepares for her visa interview and reviews her digital history, she becomes increasingly uneasy. Several years earlier, during a period of civil unrest in her home country, she posted commentary expressing frustration with government actions. At the time, her posts reflected civic engagement and were widely shared among her peers. Now, in a different context, she is unsure how those same posts might be interpreted.

In an email to the International Student Services office at the U.S. university, she writes: “I answered honestly on my visa application, but I am worried. Should I delete anything? Should I make my accounts private? I don’t want to do anything wrong, but I also don’t want to lose this opportunity.”

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The advisor reviewing Mariam's message pauses before responding to consider the intersection of compliance, ethics, and institutional values.

Advising Mariam to delete posts could be interpreted as encouraging misrepresentation or concealment, even if the identifiers themselves are disclosed. Suggesting she make accounts private may be seen as reasonable precaution, yet it could also signal an institutional stance that discourages open expression. Advising her to "be mindful" risks sounding vague, offering little practical guidance while reinforcing her anxiety.

As the advisor drafts a response, internal considerations begin to surface.

Legal counsel has previously advised that staff should avoid offering guidance that could be interpreted as influencing how students present themselves to federal authorities. From this perspective, the safest approach is to reiterate compliance requirements without interpretation.

At the same time, the ethos of student services emphasizes holistic support. Ignoring the student's concern or offering a purely procedural response may undermine trust. The student is not asking about policy alone. She is asking how to navigate uncertainty.

Within the institution, perspectives are not fully aligned. Risk management emphasizes institutional liability, cautioning against providing advice that could be misinterpreted. Student affairs professionals, however, express concern about the psychological impact of these policies, noting that students may begin to self-censor in ways that conflict with academic values.

The advisor is left to navigate these competing considerations in real time.

Mariam sends a follow-up message before the advisor responds to the first, writing: "I want to be honest, but I also want to be safe. I don't know what that looks like."

The question underscores the core tension of the case. The issue is not simply about compliance with a disclosure requirement. It is about how students interpret risk in an environment where expectations are unclear and consequences are significant.

The institution must consider its role carefully. Providing overly cautious guidance may contribute to a chilling effect on student expression, reinforcing the perception that international students must limit their voices to succeed. Providing overly general guidance may leave students feeling unsupported in high-stakes situations.

There are also broader implications. If students begin to believe that participation in public discourse—particularly on political or social issues—may jeopardize their academic opportunities, the impact extends beyond individual cases. It affects campus climate, the nature of classroom engagement, and the institution's commitment to global dialogue.

The advisor must ultimately decide how to respond to Mariam in a way that is accurate, ethical, and supportive, while acknowledging the limits of institutional authority. The institution has no influence over federal policy and visa adjudication, and the absence of control complicates the ability to offer definitive guidance. There is no fully correct answer. Any response will carry implications—for the student, for the institution, and for how similar cases are approached in the future.

Discussion Questions

As you consider this case, discuss:

- How can International Student Services best advise students on digital presence?
- What are the long-term implications for U.S. higher education if international students perceive surveillance as incompatible with free expression?
- How can advisors support student expression and academic freedom and be realistic about potential consequences for the students?
- How should institutions best support international students when federal policies create psychological pressure on international students?
- Within universities, most offices have a core mission. In this case, there was tension between a division whose core mission was mitigating institutional liability and the ISSS office focused on student development. What other overarching paradigms might come into conflict, relevant to the work of ISSS?

Authority Under Pressure: An International Leadership Development Pipeline

Robert Broom, MA

Graduate, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, San Diego, California, United States
Email: rbroom@middlebury.edu

Tags

Cross-Cultural Issues; Ethics, Equity, and Social Justice; Leadership and Strategy; Partnerships; Personnel Management; Professional Training

Setting

A new military education training was developed in conjunction with NATO, called the cross-border leadership development pipeline, to enroll individuals with leadership potential. This pathway included initial language and intercultural training in the U.S., which was then reinforced through advanced, Europe-based training on coalition building, multi-national governance, and collaborative decision-making. Participants in pre-departure preparation were instructed to examine communication styles, develop intercultural awareness, and develop strategies for creating trust across multi-national teams. During the program abroad, participants explored comparative leadership frameworks across countries. These activities uncovered varying assumptions about hierarchy, consultation, and decisiveness as indicators of authority.

Evaluations rated participants on analytical rigor, relationship effectiveness, and reasoning using methods such as instructor assessment, group activities, and scenario evaluation discussions. Although the subject of decision making in uncertain, time-sensitive environments was addressed on a conceptual level, there were limited opportunities to practice rapid decision-making under sustained time pressure—conditions central to real-world operational leadership. As a result, the program had not yet been tested in conditions requiring immediate, high-stakes decision-making under operational pressure.

Despite these concerns, the program progressed and new leaders emerged. All eyes were on the first graduates to receive command appointments to see if this program gave them the skills for leadership success in a demanding intercultural context. The future of the program could depend on their success.

Case

Commander Rossi was selected to be part of this new program and, three years after completion, was chosen for a senior operational leadership role. At the time of his assumption of command, the unit was preparing for overseas deployment in support of multiple international partners. The announcement of Rossi's appointment was, for some, validation that the leadership development pipeline had produced leaders who are able to operate successfully within complex multilateral environments.

The initial reviews were very good; senior reviewers found Rossi to be a strong analytical thinker and collaborator who was an excellent fit with international collaborative environments. Earlier evaluations reflected that operational benchmarks were achieved. Nonetheless, comparative performance evaluations—which weigh leadership across competing criteria such as decisiveness versus collaboration—began to reveal an incremental, though noticeable, shift in how Rossi's decision-making confidence was perceived under time pressure. As scenarios involved visible time pressures, the evaluators began to notice that Rossi occasionally asked colleagues for affirmation of their judgment before making a final decision. The reviewers noted that even during uncertain circumstances, these elongated moments of final commitment did not result in errors or missed objectives. However, the pattern of delayed commitment became analytically significant despite successful outcomes.

A more pronounced pattern was observed during a high-pressure simulation exercise conducted as part of the organization's final training cycle. The exercise simulated compressed timelines requiring rapid decision-making in support of multinational coordination. Rossi paused briefly to verify key information before issuing authorization under time pressure. The delay lasted only moments, after which the maneuver was approved without incident. No safety violations occurred, all performance benchmarks were met, and the exercise concluded successfully.

Despite this outcome, the moment generated divergent interpretations among observers. For some evaluators, the pause reflected disciplined verification aligned with multinational operational norms, where consultation and deliberate confirmation foster shared responsibility, trust, and intergovernmental cooperation. For others, however, the same behavior conflicted with cultural expectations of command presence – the visible projection of confidence, decisiveness, and authority in high-pressure environments. Within these frameworks, even brief hesitation may be interpreted as diminished confidence, potentially introducing uncertainty regarding leadership stability and operational tempo. Some evaluators suggested that Rossi may not be fit to lead and divisions arose over the appropriate action.

Within this governance framework, a discretionary 'loss of confidence' determination refers to an administrative judgment that a leader is no longer trusted to perform effectively, even in the absence of misconduct. The standard reflects the belief that potential future risk may outweigh demonstrated performance to date. As a whole, the reviewing authority had three options before it: immediate relief (removal from leadership position); retention with continued monitoring; or relief with elaboration on the rationale for the decision.

Several contextual factors intensified the dilemma. The unit was four weeks from overseas deployment and leadership confirmation was required for upcoming multinational coordination engagements. Leadership transitions and appointments for partner institutions and alumni networks that relate to the leadership preparation pipeline have also been viewed as indicators of institutional standards and the effectiveness of training.

Rossi was not advised that he may be removed from his appointment, nor did he have the ability to review the entirety of the evaluative materials that could be the basis for a termination decision. Another layer of complexity was that Rossi was one of a limited number of leaders from a historically underrepresented population at this level, raising additional considerations regarding perception, equity, and institutional accountability. The reviewing authority also acknowledged that transitions in leadership could be interpreted in the larger context of discussions about representation and institutional inclusiveness.

Given these complexities, the reviewing authority faced a decision with implications not only for the individual, but for institutional standards, intercultural leadership expectations, and the credibility of the training pipeline itself.

Discussion Questions

While considering this case, discuss:

- While this composite case draws from a military training context, what does it have in common with higher education, international business environments, and/or international government and non-governmental collaborations?
- What does leadership look like in different cultures, such as methods of governing, delegating authority, and how quickly decisions are made?
- What does optimal leadership look like in a crisis? To what extent is it culture specific?
- According to the case, Rossi's success (or lack thereof) has implications for the leadership training program. What pressures does this put on students and on the program? What can be done to support students and to allow the program time and space to refine its curriculum?
- What can be learned from this case about personnel management?

"Can You Tell Me If I'm Doing This Right?": Confirmation-Seeking in ISSS Advising During a Period of Regulatory Uncertainty

Jinke He

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI

Email: he322@wisc.edu

Tags

International Student and Scholar Services; Management and Operations; Technology; University/Higher Education

Setting

This case takes place at a large public research university in the United States. The International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office supports F and J visa students and scholars through immigration advising and compliance with federal regulations, while also providing resources and programming to support students' academic and social transition.

In spring 2025, international students and ISSS professionals faced a period of great uncertainty when the US federal government suddenly issued a series of visa revocations and SEVIS record terminations. SEVIS, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, is the federal database used to track the legal status of international students. Although some students later had their legal status restored, the events intensified concerns about visa status. During this period, delays or errors in immigration-related requests could have severe consequences, including delayed employment authorization, disrupted travel, and threats to legal status.

This case takes place in summer 2025. Given a large student population relative to available staffing and resources, ISSS combines limited drop-in sessions with an online advising platform. The office encourages students to use a single communication channel per issue. Processing times can be lengthy, and real-time updates are limited once a request enters the review queue. For some requests, including Optional Practical Training (OPT) requests submitted through the online advising platform, institutional processing may take up to 15 business days. Recent internal discussions have emphasized the importance of avoiding over-reassuring students in advising situations where school-level processing was connected to later federal adjudication.

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Case

Jamie, an international student advisor in ISSS, was in the office on a morning in June, running the drop-in session that day. Shortly after the drop-in session began, several students were already waiting. Alvin, a graduate student from China, sat down and placed his phone face-up on the table. His first words were: “Can you tell me if I’m doing this right?”

Alvin had completed his degree in May and was in the 60-day post-completion grace period. Five days earlier, he had submitted an OPT request through the university’s online advising platform. He was waiting for ISSS to review the request and, if it met requirements, issue an updated I-20 with an OPT recommendation. Alvin needed that I-20 before submitting his employment authorization application to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Although his request was still within the normal ISSS processing window, each day of waiting felt consequential as his grace period continued to pass. The request status in the advising platform had remained “under review” with no further updates.

“I know it’s summer and you have a lot going on,” he said. “And I know I shouldn’t keep following up. But recently I heard that some international students had sudden problems with their legal status, and there has been a lot of discussion about it online. Every time I see that the platform still shows the same request status, I wonder if I missed something, or if I should be doing something else.”

Alvin shared that a friend had suggested that he submit the OPT request through the advising platform rather than come to drop-in hours, so he did. However, afterward, he found himself scrolling through Chinese-language social media groups where students shared their experiences. Some described waiting weeks for school processing or federal approval. Others warned that even minor issues could become serious during this period. He was not sure which accounts were accurate or whether they applied to his stage of the process, but taken together, they made waiting feel like a source of pressure. So, he came to drop-in hours to confirm whether what he had done was correct.

Jamie reviewed Alvin’s OPT request step by step. His request had followed the correct ISSS process, his materials appeared complete, and it had entered the normal ISSS review queue. Jamie explained that Alvin was still within the regular processing window because this type of request could take up to 15 business days. Jamie also reminded him that he should wait for the updated I-20 with the OPT recommendation before submitting his application to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Alvin nodded, then asked: “So I just wait? I don’t need to do anything else, right?” Jamie asked how Alvin interpreted the information from his friend and online. Alvin said he knew many posts might not apply to his situation, but he did not feel he could ignore them. The more he read, the harder it was to judge what was actually relevant to him.

Jamie acknowledged Alvin’s effort to stay informed and explained that others’ experiences did not necessarily apply to his specific OPT request or to his current stage in the process. Jamie confirmed that his submission was under ISSS review, that it appeared complete based on the information Jamie could see, and that no additional action was needed from him at that moment. Jamie also clarified the limits of what ISSS could confirm. ISSS could explain the school-level process, identify whether the request was in the review queue, and describe the normal processing window. However, ISSS could not guarantee the later federal adjudication process or the final outcome once Alvin submitted his employment authorization application to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

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Just before leaving, Alvin paused: “But if I just wait like this, will I really be okay?”

Jamie glanced at the students waiting outside, then back at Alvin. Over the course of the summer, more students had arrived with similar questions. In a period when both policy and information felt unstable, students were not only asking what step came next. They were also asking whether what they had already done was enough. Jamie had to decide how to respond to Alvin and whether to bring this pattern of student concerns into a broader conversation within the office. This interaction was not isolated. Advisors were increasingly encountering students seeking confirmation rather than new information, raising broader questions about how ISSS should communicate about uncertainty, manage expectations, and support students during periods of policy instability.

Discussion Questions

As you consider this case, discuss:

- Alvin received information from three sources: a friend, Chinese-language social media groups, and ISSS. How do these sources differ in terms of speed, credibility, applicability, and emotional impact? How might an advisor help students navigate information from informal sources without dismissing them entirely?
- In this case, Alvin sought not only guidance on next steps but reassurance that what he had already done was sufficient. In advising practice, what is the difference between a student’s need for information and their need for confirmation? How might this distinction shape how an advisor responds?
- Alvin’s request was still within the normal ISSS processing window, but the lack of real-time updates made waiting feel uncertain. What aspects of ISSS’s current service model might provide support, and what aspects might generate additional pressure for students in Alvin’s situation?
- For students who continue seeking information during a waiting period and worry about making a single misstep, how should the boundaries of ISSS advising be understood? What falls within the scope of normal advising support, and what might be referred elsewhere?
- The ISSS office has limited human resources. How should they best prioritize their time, balancing completing service requests, student advising, staff training, coordination with other campus offices, etc?

Copy and Paste:

Shifting Into a New Teaching Environment

Sheena M. Harris, PhD

Louisburg, NC, USA

Email: sheenamh10@gmail.com

Tags

Cross-Cultural Issues; Ethics, Equity, and Social Justice; Language Education; Partnerships; Personnel Management; Primary and Secondary Education; Student Learning and Development

Setting

Magambegu City High School is a mid-sized private high school in Magambegu City, Magambegu, which is located off the coast of East Africa near Tanzania. Magambegu City is the capital city of Magambegu. It has been described by numerous world aid organizations as struggling with deep poverty and it faces significant challenges, including poor infrastructure, lack of access to clean water and health care, and underdeveloped education and employment sectors. Nonetheless, the residents of Magambegu City are known for resilience, traditional arts and culture, and strong community ties.

Since 2003, Magambegu City successfully established 23 new schools and 4 community centers, including two schools which focused on vocational training. Magambegu City High School, which was established in 2010, graduated over 500 high school students in 15 years with top grades. School administrators decided to enter into a new partnership with Australians Serving Africa to invite a foreign English teacher to their school to train their teachers and teach their students. The organization Australians Serving Africa was responsible for the volunteer's basic training, providing a stipend and health coverage, and helping them connect with the school administration before departure. While the partnership was new, Australians Serving Africa had previous success with volunteers in other countries and maintained excellent ratings from former volunteers as well as from host agencies.

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Case

Gillian was a certified English teacher from Queensland, Australia with five years of experience teaching year 11 in her hometown. Wanting to step outside her comfort zone while also making a difference, she applied and was accepted to teach at Magambegu City High school for two years with a government-sponsored program called Australians Serving Africa. The program staff and the former volunteers all spoke positively of the opportunity, but Gillian would be the first person they sent to Magambegu and Gillian was a bit nervous being part of a pilot program.

Three months before her start date, Gillian participated in the Australians Serving Africa pre-departure orientation on Zoom, which covered the details of her program, information about living in Magambegu, her health insurance, how she would be paid, navigating culture shock, and how to connect with school administration. Wendy, the Australians Serving Africa coordinator, was on hand to answer any questions Gillian had and to help with medical clearance and airline arrangements. Gillian was a little concerned that Wendy seemed to not know very much about Magambegu beyond basic information that could be found online and was unable to refer her to other people or resources of information on the specific school and what it would be like working there. However, Gillian tried to put her concerns aside, remembering her study abroad experience in Nepal as a college junior, and how much fun she had volunteering at a school there. Gillian remained hopeful that her time in Magambegu would be similar.

Gillian arrived in Magambegu and began her volunteer teaching position at the high school. The orientation she was supposed to receive at the school never happened, despite Gillian asking about it several times. She was told by a school staff member to not “worry”, to “enjoy herself” and they would get around to the orientation “later.” The staff member also said that work at the school was very flexible. Gillian did not receive an introduction to the students until three months into her time in the school. She perceived the situation as disorganized in contrast to her teaching year 11 in Australia. Gillian often showed up to the school with nothing to do or was told the students were at another activity.

The difficulties with her volunteer position at the school resulted in her spending little time socializing with school staff or trying to understand school culture. Lonely and homesick, Gillian eventually met some expatriates nearby and started hanging out with them on the beach on the weekends.

After three months, Gillian finally began working with year 9 students with no syllabus, materials, or information provided by the school as there were limited resources available for teaching. Gillian set out to develop her own lessons for the students, beginning by assessing their English with a series of exams. She was dumbfounded to learn that most students in the class were not at the level she expected based on what little information she had been given by Wendy about English levels in the country. Based on the tests, she set about creating appropriate lessons and homework assignments.

One day, after giving the class a writing assignment to create a short story of no more than three paragraphs using the vocabulary and grammar from the previous two lessons, Gillian collected their assignments. That evening while reading their stories, Gillian noticed a pattern—nearly every short story out of 17 was the same and written in flawless English. Only two of the stories were unique and contained errors that Gillian would expect of non-native English speakers. After entering parts of the text from the stories into Grammarly, Gillian

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found that the students copied the stories from an Internet source called Free Short Stories. The following week at school, she confronted the class, upset at their copying from the Internet. The students stared at her, not understanding what they did wrong. One of the students said “Teacher, we always copy so we can memorize.” Puzzled, Gillian asked him to explain further. “We have to memorize to pass the test. That’s how we did it last year, teacher. We can just copy-paste”, he said. She explained that they must not copy and needed to do their own work. She informed them that they would have one more chance to do their work responsibly. She decided to let them do the assignment again after she taught them what plagiarism was and how to avoid it.

The following week the students turned in their assignment again but Gillian found that they copied from the Internet again. Gillian told the class that they would fail the assignment and she would be speaking to the school administrator. The school administrator seemed receptive to Gillian’s concerns about the class but also stressed to her that the students must “pass.” She continued, “Gillian, the parents pay a lot of money for their children to go to school here. They expect them to pass so they can go to university. Please teach them again and do not count the previous assignment in their grades.” Gillian was stunned by the school administrator’s suggestion that she ignore the issue by dropping the assignment from their grades but did not want to cause problems for the school or Australians Serving Africa.

When she contacted Wendy, Gillian was reminded that the organization’s role is to support volunteers with basic training, a stipend, and health insurance, not be involved in teaching or local school administrative matters. Gillian taught the lesson on plagiarism again and then gave the students another writing assignment to do at home. She hoped they would not copy from the Internet this time. However, when reviewing these third assignments, she found that they copied again.

At the end of the quarter, Gillian submitted final grades for the class giving all but two students failing grades. The following day the school administration informed her that she was fired citing her inability to teach the class to pass the assignments as the reason for her termination. The school administrator also told Gillian that the students informed her that they were not learning anything from their new teacher. Gillian contacted Wendy repeatedly but was told that Australians Serving Africa cannot be involved in this situation but could give Gillian a new placement in nearby Tanzania. Gillian declined and returned home frustrated. She later heard from an expat she met in Magambegu that students are used to learning how to memorize and usually copy down information verbatim, something Gillian was unaware of until her volunteer role at the school.

Discussion Questions

As you consider this case, discuss:

- What responsibility did Australians Serving Africa have in providing Gillian with information and support before, during, and after this experience?
- How could the situation impact the relationship between Australians Serving Africa and the staff at the high school?

- Gillian did not speak Maga, the local language, and was unfamiliar with the culture in Magambegu. How do you think this may have contributed to the issues with teaching in the high school?
- How could Gillian have better handled the situation with the students' assignments? What recommendations do you have for Gillian regarding her role and expectations?
- Consider Gillian's failing of the students and her termination from both her perspective and that of the school members. How do you think Gillian, the students, and the administrators differently interpreted the situation?
- To what extent might Gillian's approach reflect the imposition of her own educational values, and how might greater contextual adaptation have altered the outcome?
- Have you experienced or observed in your professional life any time when different international education systems or values have come into conflict? If so, how?

First Things First: Navigating Immigration Compliance During Acute Psychological Distress

Omobonike Odegbami, Ed.D.

Director of International Student Services, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY, USA

Email: oodegbam@hamilton.edu

Tags

Crisis-Management; Cross-Cultural Issues; International Student and Scholar Services; Student Services; University/Higher Education

Setting

Lina is an undergraduate F-1 international student from South Korea, studying in the United States. She is in her second year of studies, working towards a bachelor's degree at a small, private college in a rural area.

Case

Lina begins experiencing severe anxiety and depression midway through the semester. She struggles academically and socially but hesitates to seek help, influenced in part by stigma surrounding mental health in her home culture.

After missing several classes, Lina remains after lecture one afternoon and quietly tells her professor that she feels overwhelmed. Her voice trembles as she admits she has been thinking about harming herself. She quickly follows this disclosure with concern about her academic standing, asking whether she is already too far behind.

The faculty member pauses, recognizing both the urgency of the situation and the weight of what has just been shared. After expressing empathy, the professor contacts Counseling Services and International Student Services (ISS).

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Lina agrees to attend counseling and during her initial session, Lina expresses fear not only about her mental health, but about the consequences of stepping away from her coursework. When a temporary medical leave is suggested, she becomes visibly distressed. She asks whether withdrawing from classes will cancel her visa and whether her family will be notified. She shares that returning home without completing the semester would be seen as failure. Lina's situation reflects a complex intersection of emotional crisis, cultural expectations, and immigration consequences.

Given the visa concerns expressed, Counseling Services reaches out to ISS to coordinate recommendations. The International Student Services office must now advise on a situation where timeliness, clarity, and sensitivity are critical.

U.S. immigration regulations require full-time enrollment unless a student is authorized for a Reduced Course Load (RCL). RCL authorization for medical reasons allows a student to remain in the U.S. while enrolled less than full-time or not enrolled. It requires documentation from a doctor and is limited to a maximum of 12 months in duration. Alternatively, a student could withdraw from courses and leave the U.S. to obtain medical treatment. However, this would put their immigration record into inactive status and require additional steps for return.

As coordination begins across offices, differing perspectives emerge.

Counseling strongly recommends immediate separation from academic stressors, emphasizing Lina's safety and stabilization. International Student Services considers whether a temporary Reduced Course Load, allowing Lina to remain enrolled while receiving care, would be a supportive solution. Academic Affairs raises concerns about her ability to complete coursework meaningfully given her current condition. Risk Management, while not directly involved in student care, underscores institutional responsibility should the situation escalate.

At the same time, Lina continues to ask about visa consequences, whether or not she is required to return home, and the circumstances under which her family would be notified about the situation. ISS wants to answer these questions with clarity while also reassuring Lina without increasing distress.

The institution must determine their recommendation while weighing different priorities. A Reduced Course Load may preserve Lina's immigration status but may not sufficiently address the severity of her mental health needs. A full medical leave and return home may prioritize her well-being but introduce emotional consequences tied to family expectations and uncertainty regarding her ability to resume study in the U.S.

The situation is further complicated by privacy considerations under FERPA and HIPAA, limiting communication between institutional units and students' families and, thus, hindering collaborative planning.

The stakes are immediate and significant. Incorrect or unclear advising may jeopardize her immigration status. A lack of coordinated response may expose the institution to legal and ethical concerns. The institution must navigate not only regulatory compliance, but also the lived reality of a student in crisis. The tension between compliance and care is no longer abstract. It is unfolding in real time, requiring decisions that will shape both the student's immediate well-being and immigration status.

Discussion Questions

As you consider this case, discuss:

- How should International Student Services balance immigration regulations with compassionate care in cases of acute psychological distress?
- How can International Student Services help make Counseling Services feel approachable to international students?
- What institutional systems can be developed to identify and support international students before crises escalate?
- How can advisors communicate visa implications in a manner that informs without increasing fear?
- How should institutions respond when regulatory requirements may conflict with a student's immediate well-being?
- What ethical, legal, and reputational risks do institutions face when navigating cases at the intersection of mental health and immigration compliance?

The Long and Short of It:

Operationalizing Short Term International Mobility at the Institution Level

Dr. (Prof.) Naveen Babu

Pro Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Chitkara University, Punjab, India

Email: Naveen.babu@chitkara.edu.in

Ms. Hazel Siromoni

Pro Vice Chancellor, Strategic Initiatives, Chitkara University, Punjab, India

Email: hazel.siromoni@chitkara.edu.in

Tags

Education Abroad; Education Policy; Leadership and Strategy; Management and Operations; Partnerships; Student Services; University/Higher Education

Setting

At a large research-based university in India, the Director of Global Initiatives learned from her students that a few weeks abroad can spark a lifetime of change, leaving a deep and lasting impact¹. She became convinced that the value of short-term mobility lies not in its duration, but in the transformation it inspires and shared the evidence of learning that she collected from students with the Vice President for Academics. The Director asserted that short-term programs should be viewed as an academically legitimate, credit-bearing component of a student's educational journey rather than treating short-term mobility as a peripheral enrichment activity, which had been the previous situation at the university. The Vice President tasked the Director to explore how

¹ See case "A Lifetime of Change: The Transformative Value of Short-Term International Mobility" in Case Studies in International Education, Issue 6(2) <https://csiepub.org/index.php/csie/article/view/211>

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the institution could responsibly, equitably, and credibly integrate these experiences into its formal academic structures.

Case

Very early on, the Director realized that implementing this change required engaging a broad range of stakeholders including the Office of Academic Affairs, the Office of International Affairs, Deans, Heads of Departments, and the Examination Office. The Director arranged a series of meetings to discuss the topic and gather feedback. Faculty members played a critical role in defining academic and transfer equivalency standards, while administrative teams addressed procedural feasibility and compliance with national regulations.

In the initial stages of conversations, there was some opposition to the idea of a policy change. Concerns were raised around academic dilution, potentially uneven learning outcomes, and assessment integrity from short-term mobility. Questions arose about scalability and whether such experiences could be standardized across disciplines. The Director realized that to make the changes she envisioned, she would have to take into account all the feedback and work with colleagues across the institution through multiple discussions to develop a plan that would be agreeable to all stakeholders.

Establishing a Credit Framework for Short-Term Mobility

As the Director probed in the conversations to understand the sources of resistance, she came to realize that one of the core issues was that there are many types of short-term international programs and that they should not each earn the same amount of credit. Some perhaps should not earn credit at all. Once that was made explicit and agreed upon, a solution could be developed. The Director and stakeholders collaborated to articulate Academic Regulations and Ordinances for Outbound Student Mobility, a framework that explicitly defined multiple forms of international engagement including short-term programs, summer programs, semester exchanges, and international internships. One important point was ensuring there was a clear understanding of the difference between credit-bearing and non-credit bearing experiences while providing pathways for both to be acknowledged meaningfully.

For short-term mobility in particular, transparent credit calculation models became an important consideration. It was decided that credits would be awarded based on verifiable learning effort measured through contact hours, duration, assessments, and documented learning outcomes. Programs involving 30 to 60 hours of academic engagement would be eligible for one credit, with proportional increases for longer or more intensive experiences. When host institutions explicitly awarded credits, an equivalency formula was applied. The framework would also be periodically reviewed so that it could be updated as needed.

By co-designing this approach with stakeholders, the Director was able to reassure all faculty and administrators that the credit allocation was consistent, fair, and defensible, while remaining flexible enough to accommodate diverse international program structures.

Integrating Mobility into Degree Curricula and Advising

The Director was excited to have a framework in place for awarding credit, but wanted more than that. It was essential to her vision, and that of her allies, that short-term mobility would not be positioned as an “extra” but as an intentional component within degree pathways. She also wanted to focus on curricular integration and Learning Agreements became central to this process. The vision was that students would work closely with their faculty advisors and academic coordinators before their departure for their international mobility to map host institution coursework or internships to their home curriculum with the support of the Office of International Affairs.

The Director was pleased that the Office of International Affairs was willing to take on this additional advising and had the capacity for it. However, the advising demands on faculty and academic coordinators would also increase, and more coordination would be required. As a proactive measure, the Director worked with Academic Affairs to recalibrate how students considering short-term international mobility were advised. Based on the systems they developed together, students considering international internships or short-term programs were guided through structured counseling sessions that addressed their academic readiness, program competitiveness, financial planning, and career alignment. The university had to increase and improve communication between the academic departments, the Office of International Affairs and Office of Academic Affairs. Important steps which were adopted included: mandatory documentation of advising sessions; pre-departure orientations; and post-program feedback mechanisms. These measures further strengthened quality assurance. Students remained registered with the University during mobility, reinforcing academic continuity and institutional oversight.

Measuring Impact and Enhancing Global Standing

Having implemented the logistical and organizational changes necessary for this policy shift, the Director realized that there were still a few more important steps she could take to shift organizational culture and ensure that short-term international mobility programs were respected. The most important ingredient for success in this process was the recognition by the home university that there was institutional value in structured international mobility beyond the students’ own personal and academic journey.

The Director found that she could reinforce this idea by facilitating opportunities for faculty to learn first-hand about the positive impacts of internationalization. The alumni placement office shared compelling stories that short-term mobility contributed to enhanced graduate profiles which led to boost international collaborations and stronger global visibility. At the Director’s prompting, alumni outcomes, international partnerships, and participation data became part of institutional analytics supporting global ranking indicators related to internationalization, student diversity, and employability. Further, the formal documentation of credits through the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) framework in the Indian Education system ensured national and international portability, reinforcing the credibility of these experiences.

With these changes, the Director began to feel that the most significant outcome of the policy change at the institution level was cultural rather than procedural. Short-term international mobility began to be seen not as an exception, but an accessible entry point into global learning. As hoped, the Director observed that students who participated returned with renewed confidence, clearer academic direction, and an openness to further international engagement.

Discussion Questions

As you consider this case, discuss:

- In this case, what were the key concerns raised by stakeholders, when the proposed model was presented and how did it shape the final mobility framework?
- Did formalizing short-term international mobility as a credit-bearing academic component change its perceived value for students and faculty? How can you cultivate buy-in around the value of short-term international mobility?
- What are common issues with credit transfer and equivalency for international mobility programs? How can these issues be addressed?
- If you were developing a system to award credit for short-term international mobility programs, what criteria would you use to determine how much credit to award? How would you measure each criteria?
- What can be done to support the integration of international mobility into degree requirements? What are good practices for advising students on their options for international mobility within their degrees?
- How has the culture around international mobility evolved at your university?

Overwhelmed and In Retreat: Expectation, Preparation, and Realized Experiences Clash on an Exchange Program

Rose Kimu

Graduate Research Assistant, Carnegie Mellon University-Africa,

Email: rkimu@andrew.cmu.edu

Oluwatobi Sunday Malomo

University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria

Email: oluwatobis.malomo@gmail.com

Muhammad Aliyu

Kigali, Rwanda

Email: maliyu@andrew.cmu.edu

Tags

Cross-Cultural Issues; Education Abroad; Ethics, Equity, and Social Justice; International Student and Scholar Services; Internationalization and Global Learning; Student Learning and Development; University/Higher Education

Setting

This case examines the dynamics of a semester exchange program between two campuses of a prominent technological university: its main campus in a major northeastern U.S. city and its branch campus in an East African capital. While both campuses share institutional branding, degree requirements, and English as the medium of instruction, they operate in vastly different contexts. The East Africa campus has approximately 300

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students, which allows for a close-knit community. In contrast, the main campus serves over 15,000 students; it is a large, decentralized institution where students mostly navigate administrative systems autonomously.

Students in the exchange program were assigned a program contact and an academic mentor and received guidance to support their transition. Even with this support, some real-world experiences, especially new or unexpected ones, were still difficult to navigate.

Case

Amara was a female Master's student specializing in Human-Computer Interaction and AI ethics who undertook a four-month exchange to the U.S. campus. Amara stepped off the bus in her new city, convinced she was ready. She had attended every pre-departure orientation at the Africa Campus, secured her visa without complications, and had even traveled to Europe recently to practice adapting to new environments. The Office of International Education had been thorough, sending automated updates on immigration and logistics for weeks. Theoretically, she was prepared to transition from her role as a student leader in East Africa to a visiting student in the United States.

The first three weeks shattered this confidence. What followed was not a single disruption, but a series of challenges that revealed gaps between preparation and the realities of navigating a new environment.

It began with her leg. Severe inflammation made walking to class agonizing. At nearly the same time, a water bottle leaked in her backpack and destroyed her laptop, her primary tool for coursework and communication. Back home, Amara's student insurance covered everything, and navigating the healthcare system was straightforward. In the U.S., she encountered a fragmented system of copays, deductibles, and out-of-network restrictions that no orientation had explained. She did not know where to begin or how much care would cost upfront, and the fear of unexpected bills made her hesitate to seek help at all. Without a student job and surviving on a fixed stipend, the potential costs sent her into a spiral. She called the program director in tears: "Please book me a ticket back home. I want to go home."

The isolation compounded in ways she had not anticipated. In her home city, a bus ride was often social. Passengers acknowledged one another, struck up conversations about the weather or politics. In this particular case, Amara's attempts to greet fellow passengers were met with silence or confusion. "Twenty years of my life growing up doing that," she later reflected, "and then I got here, and it just didn't happen like I was used to."

These experiences extended into the classroom, where the challenges were less visible but equally impactful. Coming from a culture where professors are addressed by title and viewed as superiors, Amara found the U.S. insistence on first names and peer-like debate disorienting. Her discomfort peaked during a lecture when she asked a question. Her pronunciation differed from local norms, and the professor struggled to understand her. The class stopped. All eyes turned to her, the only Black African student in the room. "Do they judge African people based on their experience with me?" she wondered afterward. The incident made her hesitant to speak for weeks.

Academically, Amara had come specifically to take courses on AI ethics and human-computer interaction that were unavailable at her home campus. Yet she quickly perceived that "global" often meant powerful, influential countries. Classroom discussions about AI governance focused on U.S. innovation frameworks, EU

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protectionism, and Chinese sovereignty models. When she raised concerns about low-resource African languages in AI systems, or the risks of machine translation errors in multilingual contexts, she felt her points were acknowledged but not absorbed. “I found myself constantly speaking up for Africa,” she said. “I learned about every other country other than my own.”

What unsettled Amara was not one isolated problem, but the cumulative weight of these experiences, each revealing gaps that her preparation had not fully accounted for.

These challenges began to converge. Three weeks into the semester, Amara sat in her apartment. Her leg was still painful. Her laptop remained broken. She was hesitant to ask a question in class since the pronunciation incident. Her faculty mentor had offered to drive over and talk. A domestic classmate had noticed her fatigue and suggested she might have Vitamin D deficiency, something Amara had never considered. Former exchange students had reached out, urging her not to give up. The program director had not yet booked that ticket home. Amara must decide what to do next.

Discussion Questions

As you consider this case, discuss:

- Amara is a graduate student and a campus leader in her home country. Then, Amara struggles with many of the tasks she encounters in daily life in her first weeks in the U.S. What is she likely to be feeling emotionally?
- The faculty mentor has arrived to talk to Amara, who requested to go home. What topics or talking points should the mentor cover during their conversation? If Amara stays, what actions could help shift her from "survival mode" to meaningful engagement with her academic goals?
- How can international offices teach international students about the health care system of the country they will be studying in? What additional topics are often missed in pre-departure orientations?
- Amara's support came primarily through informal channels: a mentor who drove to her apartment, a classmate who recognized vitamin D deficiency, former exchange students who reached out. Is there a way that formal support structures could be put in place for students in need?
- Amara felt the burden of being the “representative voice” for an entire continent because the curriculum lacked African perspectives. How can faculty design global course content without placing the educational labor on international students to teach about their countries?
- How should exchange programs acknowledge and leverage the professional expertise that international graduate students bring, rather than positioning them solely as learners?
- Learning theory tells us that optimal learning happens when there is some level of challenge, complemented by support structures. Learning is hindered by too little or too much challenge, and too little or too much support. In this case, are the levels of challenge and support that Amara is facing appropriate for her intercultural learning?

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CASE STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

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