



Strategic Plan 2023-2025

December 2025 Progress Report

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GOAL 1: Serve as a vital partner to campus and external entities to advance international engagement and advocacy

Highlight the value of the international community and advocate for their needs and concerns

- Met with staff from Senator Schiff's Office to provide an overview of the international student community and advocated for their concerns, particularly around visa issuances
- Presented to the university Board of Visitors about visa issues and their potential impact on student enrollment
- Met with Eileen Zerrudo, the new campus Associate Chancellor for Communications, to introduce her to the Berkeley International Office (BIO)
- Met with several faculty groups to provide updates on the current immigration landscape and how international students can be supported
- Presented and represented BIO at Graduate Student Assembly meetings
- Presented and represented BIO at ASUC Assembly meetings
- Served on the NAFSA Postdoc Special Interest Group Leadership Team
- Served on the NAFSA Region XII Leadership Team
- Co-Presented on "Employment-Based Hot Topics" at NAFSA Region XII Conference
- Provided review, comments, and analysis of Proposed Rule to Eliminate F/J Duration of Status and expansion of data collection on the I-17 and I-20

Collaborate with campus partners to advance international engagement at UC Berkeley

- Presented to the campus Executive Coordination Board regarding the immigration landscape
- Began regular presentations to campus leaders about emerging issues related to immigration
- Continued providing updates to campus leaders and senior staff at Provost's bi-weekly Mega meeting about the immigration landscape
- Met with Academic Senate Chair Mark Stacey and other faculty to discuss and plan for Fall arrival guidelines
- Met with Shaun Matloob, the temporary attorney advising permanent residents
- Continued presentations to the Council of Deans regarding emerging immigration issues
- Met with Haas administrators to discuss Fall arrival expectations and guidelines
- Served on the Haas International Award Selection Committee
- Attended the International Activities Coordination Group monthly meetings and provided immigration updates

- Served on the Berkeley International Group (BIG) Staff Organization Community of Practice's Leadership team and put on multiple events to advance international education
- Provide a campus-wide presentation on enrollment data and the current immigration climate
- Met with campus's Research Administration & compliance director to clarify graduate and research funding sources
- Collaborated and provided feedback for Graduate Student Conduct liaison regarding new Graduate Student Academic Conduct process
- Provided input and analysis to UC Berkeley Athletics regarding ongoing NIL legal issues
- Met with the Research Ethics and Compliance office to provide an overview of our procedures and to discuss our role in inviting and hosting international scholars
- Presented a workshop for campus staff who work with international scholars to keep them abreast of updates that may impact our international scholars and their hosting departments
- Served on the UC Berkeley Campus Committee regarding the \$100K H-1B fee
- Provided timely data on H1B employees and visiting scholars to BIO and campus leadership in response to emerging regulatory updates.

Leverage relationships with campus and external partners to meet the needs of our clients

- Met with Rayne Xue on an ongoing basis to obtain advocacy support for BIO's aim to retain existing temporary student services funding.
- Met with Graduate Division staff to discuss and plan for the proposed D/S rule
- Attended a lecture by the Indian Consul about international students needs and challenges
- Joined the Dean of the College of Natural Resources at a Meet the Dean event
- Revised International Students Tax Memo for Graduate Division
- Coordinated with GLACIER on an ITIN Drop-off event
- Partnered with Arctic International LLC and Sprintax to prepare for Spring 2026 tax filing season
- Met with KAUST scholarship representatives supporting scholarship students
- Collaborated with UC Berkeley and UCSF Directors regarding pathways to improve on-campus employment processes for cross-campus educational activities
- Collaborated with campus partners to present tailored workshops for students:
 - Prospective International Student informational sessions with Berkeley Public Health
 - Orientation sessions for Graduate Division NGSO, MBA, Mastercard Scholars Program, Berkeley Public Health, New Student Athlete Orientation
 - Graduate Division: Post-grad Planning for F1 Students
- Provided ongoing tailored liaison support and consultations with campus partners: EW MBA, International House, GenEq, Basic Needs Center, Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, Cal Student Central, CDSS Data Discovery Program

- Advised SIS and OUA on integrating visa data from UC admissions into SIS
- Worked with Flywire to disseminate helpful information/videos to international students on the topic of international payments

GOAL 2: Enhance the client experience through our services and programs

Provide a personalized client experience through clear, accurate and holistic advising

- Organized HR Panel Discussion event with Berkeley Career Engagement and external HR representatives to support international students' post-completion employment options
- In collaboration with ASUC student leaders, organized joint BIO-CAPS social mixers and information sessions to introduce key resources and services to international students
- Updated OPT tutorial with academic year 25/26 dates, changes to gender, premium processing, USCIS form fields, fraud
- Updated and presented Fall 2025 New Student Orientation immigration presentation
- Provided immigration analysis, review of EWMBA/OOMPH programs leading to sunset of BIO support
- Offered "Connect at Berkeley International Office" program to provide scholars with an opportunity to connect with BIO and with each other, and to provide them regulatory updates and travel information
- Liaised with department/ academic advisors to assist with facilitating CPT and OPT e-form processing

Maintain a flexible, hybrid service model to best serve the changing and diverse needs of our clients

- Provided updated cyclical workshops on timely topics in virtual format:
 - Hosted Virtual Travel Signature Days
 - Presented OPT and STEM OPT document check workshops
 - Presented Fall international travel & Immigration updates workshops
- Updated BIO immigration materials related to changes in visa policy and OPT processes
- Collaborated with Program Manager and Communications Coordinator on updated webinars for OPT/CPT
- Offered appointment-based advising during peak advising season; assisted with the scheduling (and cancellation) of sessions for client population
- Implemented the Avaya mobile platform to support remote phone shift operations

Utilize data to inform and evaluate our services and programs

- Utilized weekly visa issuance data for graduate and undergraduate students to inform campus leaders, campus units, and the work of BIO in preparation for Fall 2025
- Collected feedback surveys on student-facing programming to evaluate and innovate programmatic offerings
- Reviewed orientation feedback and data to make adjustments to Orientation delivery model

- Analyzed the tax survey from last year to pinpoint client demands and set up a specialized workshop led by a tax professional
- Created and enhanced reports to better obtain data to identify the needs of clients
- Collected phone call data to facilitate phone training for new AA3 and student assistants
- Analyzed BIO's financial data and updated projections to keep Director informed of current and future financial trends regarding BIO's payroll and non-payroll expenses, campus funding, recharge income, and NIFEx, OPT, STEM and new Student NIF Fee income sources

Pursue creative improvements of our services and programs to meet new challenges and identify opportunities for growth

- Held ongoing meetings with Architecture to transition the way we report the sub plans of their students.
- Held a meeting with the Graduate Division and Office of the Registrar to identify an alternative pathway to filing fee for international students.
- Collaborated with Program Manager and Communications Coordinator on updated webinars for OPT/CPT
- Provided ongoing support and leadership related to ongoing DHS/ DHS changes: visa policy, travel ban, H1-B updates, DHS EAD Automatic Extensions, enhanced enforcement
- Implemented USCIS credit card payment process
- Launched a Peer Advising service staffed by student employees, completed training, and developed general advising experience.
- Instructed student assistants on developing advising spreadsheets, sign-in forms, and queue sheets to increase operational efficiency and allow frontline staff to focus on training and daily intake processing.
- Established a singular phone line accessible from all phones in the FL area to allow staff to respond to calls at the front desk and hot desk, as needed
- Automated reminders to J Scholars about US address updates and to OPT students about unemployment day accrual, resulting in clients receiving more regular and consistent compliance reminders from BIO while reducing BIO staff manual workload.
- Continuously updated the J-2 EAD tutorial to reflect USCIS changes, a resource that is used both internally and externally for J-2 EAD applicants
- Adjusted Zoom license in order to host larger meetings, given the higher demand for Zoom webinars/workshops on immigration updates

Enrich the client experience by facilitating connections with the campus and local community

- Met with Ankita Rakhe, Associate Dean for Student Engagement, to check in on how Student Affairs is supporting international students.
- Organized and led community-building programs and events for students, including:
 - Student/Scholar Big C Hike

- Sweet Beginnings: Social Mixer
- Basic Needs Info Sessions
- ASUC/ISAB/CAPS/BIO Social Mixer and Info session
- BAMPFA Field Trip
- HR Panel Discussion
- Cultural Game Night
- Peer mentorship program
- Facilitated launch of Global Pen Pal Program with biweekly deliverables for students
- Organized and led community-building programs and events for students, including:
 - Visiting Student Researcher Community Hours to promote connections within this community and introduce scholars to local dining venues.
 - Big C hike event
 - Campus tours
 - “Bernal Hillwide Garage Sale Meetup” community activity centered around National Garage Sale day in San Francisco to provide scholars an opportunity to get to know one another, learn about the Bay Area and purchase low cost goods for their stay in the U.S.

Maintain and build on existing emergency protocols to ensure effective response to emergency situations

- Held a listening session with BIO staff to learn how we can improve our emergency response to disruptive visitors
- Held meetings with campus leaders to address campus protocols related to disruptive visitors and emergency situations
- Facilitated a discussion with managers on how to respond to emergencies during the winter holiday break
- Worked with BIO Managers and Campus counsel for training and planning related to advising service disruptions
- Developed communication protocols in the event of emergency situations that may impact operations
- Established “public access” and “restricted access” office areas to prevent trespass and FERPA violation
- Sent out urgent/timely emails with detailed information to any impacted students addressing immigration updates or changes.
- Created the BIO emergency contact form to replace the emergency email, allowing students to reach out in emergency situations while funneling them to other resources for non-emergency matters
- Worked with the property manager who reports directly to the owner of 2150 Shattuck. Communicated all building safety updates from the property manager to all BIO and GEO employees
- Met with 2150 Shattuck owner’s blinds vendor to install a window blind in the Suite 500’s conference room to prevent unauthorized filming of BIO’s activities held in the conference room

Improve the user-friendliness of client-facing materials and procedures

- Held new OPT application overview and process workshops with recordings posted on public facing website as new resources for international students
- Improved the ITIN Drop-off event procedures to make the signup and check-in process faster
- Updated the tax-related webpages to ensure all information was ready and accurate for the 2025 tax year
- Enhanced the SIM Page for incoming scholars to easily access resources.
- Collaborated with campus partners to improve employment-based forms
- Adjusted Scholar Arrival Confirmation and Contact Information e-forms to allow submission of either a US or foreign phone number in response to updated SEVIS functionality
- Added student name to the subject line of emails to e-form approvers in response to academic advisor usability feedback
- Added tagging capabilities to the Immigration Policy Updates web page, so that viewers can sort updates by topic
- Updated scholar & employment-based forms into fillable PDFs, allowing for easier access/use to clients
- Completely revised and updated the SIM Webinar video (an orientation for incoming J Scholars), modernizing the graphics and audio, updating content, and ensuring it is in line with the BIO brand.

GOAL 3: Support international student retention by utilizing a holistic approach

Offer a flexible array of programs to assist with connection, inclusion, and intercultural engagement

- Collaborated with NSS, EAP and BIO Orientation and EAP leads to improve EAP student orientation inclusion and belonging
- Hosted new student pre-arrival webinars and In-Person Welcome Day, helping new international students feel welcomed and supported
- Worked with the Graduate Diversity Department to prepare and execute a “Relocating as an International Student” webinar to prospective grad students
- Chaired bi-weekly, cross-departmental “Our Differences Workshop” Committee meetings and organized “Uses of Anger: Connecting with Ourselves and Others” workshop

Provide resources and support for international student housing and basic needs

- Organized Basic Needs Information Sessions tailored to the needs and resources for international students
- Served on the Winter Break Housing Committee and developed materials with ASUC Student Advocate’s Office to publicize and generate awareness and interest
- Prepared and delivered a webinar to ASUC Basic Needs Oversight Committee to provide information about BIO’s Financial Aid programs
- Invited Student Advocate's Office to join a BIO Financial Aid committee meeting and explore ways for collaboration/to support each other
- Coordinated with GLACIER to resolve complex funding delay issues for students

Demonstrate a helpful and caring approach when supporting students in crisis.

- Developed deferral procedures to assist students who were impacted by the visa ban and were not able to arrive to campus on time
- Worked with students who were under-enrolled or facing enrollment issues that jeopardized their immigration status. Provided resources, guidance, support and continuous outreach to ensure no students’ SEVIS records were terminated due to enrollment issues.
- Took a more empathetic and hands-on approach for students in financial crisis. Worked with them to navigate complex campus resources to get them the specific support they needed.
- Acted as a translator and assisted student families seeking support for their children in crisis while ensuring compliance with FERPA regulations

Strengthen academic retention through the creation of new academic tools, promotion of resources, and collaborating with key campus partners

- None

Support students' mental health at varying levels of need through collaboration and outreach

- Consulted with campus partners (CSI, CAPS, Med WD Committee, academic advisors) on complex medical withdrawal and high risk casework relating to mental health, academics/enrollment, and personal safety
- In collaboration with colleagues in CAPS and Center for Teaching and Learning, organized "Uses of Anger: Connecting With Yourself and Others" workshop to support clients mental health
- Collaborated with student leaders in ASUC to put on Paws for Mental Health events for international students
- Assisted in organizing the Coping Skills and CAPS Services workshops for BIO Peer Mentors in collaboration with CAPS

Assist students by providing them with the tools they need to succeed on campus and post graduation

- Presented OPT/CPT workshops to student organizations and departments
- Improved new international student communication by hosting previous pre-arrival bulletins on the website, allowing new students to easily access past information

Provide training for campus staff to understand and improve the campus experience of international students

- Began monthly Faculty/Staff Office hours for the campus community
- Provided the following staff trainings for supporting international students
 - MPS Scholars Program Peer Mentors: Supporting International Student Needs
 - L&S Advising new BIO liaison
 - CAPS: Needs and Concerns of International students
 - CAPS Career Seminar: providing guidance and resources to interns who advise international students
 - Supporting International Students workshop at UC Berkeley Graduate Education Summit
 - BIO Fall 2025 Immigration Updates for Faculty/Staff
 - Advising support for Student Advising Team & campus community regarding Fall 2025 late arrivals

GOAL 4: Optimize staff, financial, and space resources to strengthen organizational effectiveness

Ensure that staff have the necessary tools, technologies, and training to support their work

- Held staff listening sessions in response to disruptive visitors intruding on BIO's operations
- Held AI Workshop to increase familiarity with AI tools and encourage staff to feel comfortable utilizing it in their daily work
- Deployed new desktop and laptop computers to all BIO staff
- The Professional Development Committee organized multiple workshops for BIO colleagues
- Collaborated with BIO IT to improve our CalCentral balance report for need-based Financial Aid award analysis
- Created DocuSign templates for BIO staff reimbursement request forms, streamlining the process of collecting reimbursement form signatures
- Transitioned the BIO phone line voicemail to the updated web-based voicemail platform to improve usability.
- Worked with the Financial Aid team and SIS to revise a Campus Solutions report to eliminate manual tuition and fee calculations that financial aid team members had previously been doing for each student.
- Enhanced Mercury form functionality to allow for more complex routing logic
- Updated Mailchimp process to always ensure managers receive a copy of all emails sent to the populations they manage/serve
- Purchased two desk extenders for two student services advisors
- Provided financial expertise and support to enable staff to make purchases, request reimbursements, provide payroll to a student assistant, reimburse medical aid requests, and host events.
- Completed UCB Controller's Office's annual certification requirements in Aug 2025, allowing BIO to continue using the Cybersource platform for its NIF and OPT/STEM OPT international student services

Align staffing levels and address staff workload based on bandwidth across the organization

- Made the decision to hire an additional student advisor to augment existing advising resources
- Hired, onboard, trained 3 new Student Advisors, completed final advising training topics for Summer student advising hire
- Trained new Financial Aid team member on Fall cycle UG award processes
- Hired, onboarded and trained a new Scholar Analyst

- Hired, onboarded, and trained new Frontline team member in all aspects of Frontline work
- Hired, onboarded, and trained 4 new student assistants to provide counter, phone, and intake processing support
- Trained 5 new BIO staff members in IT and SEVIS systems
- Trained 2 Student Assistants to check I-94s during Fall SEVIS registration season
- Extended a temporary level 3 administrative assistant's contract a second time, due to the departure of a full-time administrative assistant.
- Re-hired a temporary level 3 administrative assistant for a fourth spring season. Met campus requirements in Fall 2025 to re-hire the temporary administrative assistant for Spring 2026.
- Hired one student assistant for a student services advisor, who organizes and hosts several BIO events year-round

Prioritize a diverse and versatile staff who can provide the highest level of service

- Recent hires represent a cross-section of educational and professional experiences, adding to the depth of knowledge within the student advising team.

Use a holistic approach when focusing on staff retention, addressing their financial, personal, professional development, and career growth needs

- Met with student advisors in a listening session to learn how BIO can better support them to boost morale and improve retention
- Submitted reclassification requests for the entire student team to classify all members into the Project Policy Analysts series
- Sent several staff members to attend NAFSA's Region XII Conference
- Addressed salary equity needs across the entire student advising team
- Nominated several staff for campus awards
- Developed and implemented a parental leave coverage plan, including training 2 new International Student Advisors on processing STEM Validations and OPT Early Completion reports.
- Attended workshops
 - Monthly Manager's forums
 - Updated Know Your Rights: In Light of Potential Increased Enforcement
 - NAFSA Live Web Event: International Student Employment: Considerations for Institutional Policy for CPT & NIL
- Resumed regularly scheduled IT/NIF team check-ins to better facilitate NIF bug fixes/enhancement requests
- Met campus requirements to reclassify two supervisors who are level 4 student services advisors to level 4 project policy analysts in Aug 2025.
- Enabled an employee to meet with a specialist in Parental Leaves

Ensure continuity of services through cross-training, documentation of shared knowledge, and transparency of staff responsibilities

- Involved entire staff in strategic planning process to develop a new mission, core values, and strategic plan for 2026-2028 that reflect the goals of the entire office and guide them in their work
- Updated Employment-Based Team wiki processes
- Updated Student Team wiki by adding new templates on honoraria payments, stimulus payments, ITIN status, and educational tax credit.
- Transferred transaction override duties for student-facing service fees to FL, allowing for a straightforward and timely response to payment issues
- Cross-trained an international scholar advisor
- Cross-trained frontline staff member on Cybersource AVS override process so they can directly/more efficiently take action to fix this common type of reported credit card payment failure.
- Updated travel reservation instructions that explain campus travel and reimbursement policies

Maintain a strong financial footing to address short and long-term economic challenges

- Strategized on BIO's approach to our sponsorship efforts
- Gave a presentation to CACSSF to request extension of the temporary funding allocated to BIO by Chancellor Christ
- Developed and submitted a CACSSF Fee Proposal as an alternative to seeking extension of the Chancellor's temporary funding of BIO
- Calculated the cost of payroll for the Director's CACSSF Fee Proposal by using UCPath salary figures, the UC Composite Benefit Rates schedule, and the UC schedules for mandatory payroll fees, over a five-year period with applied raises
- Worked with the Division Finance Leader on several FY25 fiscal close duties that occurred in July 2025

Adapt the use of space to address evolving needs

- Created and implemented office sharing model to support new Student Advising staff
- Assisted with identifying aged and disused IT equipment to surplus
- Communicated with UC Surplus to receive clear instructions on which aging technology items should be routed to UC Surplus (includes Excess & Surplus), and which aging computer items need to be decommissioned by campus IT. Shared info with BIO IT and worked with BIO IT to clear a large number of aging items