

Declaration of Originality

I, Tracy Coady, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and that any external contributions to this research are acknowledged.

It is an original piece of work and has not been submitted by me or anyone else to any other educational institution.

Signed:  Date: 25 April 2018

**How is the internationalization of St.
Lawrence College changing the
student experience?**

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Abstract

To achieve its vision of being a globally recognized institution, St. Lawrence College undertook an internationalization campaign which began with substantially increased international recruiting. Partnerships and pathways to international study were developed for St. Lawrence College graduates and partner schools. Exchange agreements were signed with institutions in Europe and the Caribbean. These growth initiatives created change in a learning environment that had been static and homogenous.

This research project was undertaken to create a starting point, to describe the students' perception of their learning environment prior to an expansion of the internationalization mandate. To determine where future efforts should be focused, it was necessary to understand the current environment, to identify strengths and weaknesses and to illuminate what had been achieved.

To identify the effect internationalization had on the learning environment, studies in internationalization, intercultural skill development and the stresses and benefits of being an international student were reviewed to develop the framework of the research. The focus of the current project was to describe the current environment prior to developing new strategies and initiatives. The method of data generation was an anonymous survey that incorporated quantitative and qualitative questions that could be compared.

The research describes how students perceive their current learning environment, the internationalization initiatives to date and identified areas in which the college could improve. Open ended questions allowed students to share their challenges and desires for a culturally diverse educational experience. Analysis found that while students found internationalization to be a positive influence on their learning environment, there is broad scope for

further work to build relevant intercultural competencies and global perspectives at St. Lawrence College.

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Abbreviations

IT Institute of Technology (Ireland)

MAESD Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education &
Skill Development

N/A not applicable

SLC St. Lawrence College

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to St. Lawrence College

St. Lawrence College of Applied Arts and Technology (referred to as St. Lawrence College or SLC) was established by the Province of Ontario to serve the communities of Kingston, Brockville and Cornwall in 1967. One of 24 public colleges in Ontario, SLC is situated in southeastern Ontario along the St. Lawrence River. The communities are among the oldest in the province, settled in the early 19th century by English and French immigrants. The population has remained primarily rural and homogenous (Osborne, 2012). Kingston is the largest of the three SLC communities (metropolitan pop. 161,175) followed by Cornwall (pop. 59,699) and Brockville (pop. 38,553). By 2016, visible minorities made up only 3-7% of the population of the areas near the SLC campuses. (Statistics Canada, 2018)

SLC offers more than 100 College Diploma (2 years), Advanced College Diploma (3 years), Graduate Certificate (1-2 years) and Honours Bachelors Degree programs (4 years) across three campuses, at affiliate schools in Toronto and Vancouver, and at six partner schools in China. The affiliate schools offer SLC programs delivered by their own faculty; SLC provides curriculum material, quality assurance and credentials to the graduates. Programs delivered at the Chinese partner schools take a 2-year SLC diploma program, add 600 hours of English as a Second Language training, and spread the program over three years; students have the option of completing their final year at SLC in Canada.

St. Lawrence College offers programs in Applied Science, Computing, Business, Community Services, Health Sciences, Justice Studies, Applied Arts (including English as a Second Language), Skilled Trades and Tourism. SLC also offers apprenticeship training, Continuing Education, distance and online

learning (ontariolearn.com), and corporate training programs. SLC has a Sustainable Energy Applied Research Centre (SEARC) providing research services to the renewable energy sector in Eastern Ontario, and a Centre for Behavioural Studies - a resource for Applied Behavioural Analysis research and practice.

1.2 Internationalization – Incoming and Outgoing

Two main factors have influenced the St. Lawrence College push towards internationalization: an acknowledgement of the value of intercultural competencies in a global society and the economic advantages of internationalization.

Canada has identified itself as a multicultural society since 1971. In its largest city, more than half the population was born elsewhere before immigrating to Canada. The government recently announced plans to increase immigration numbers over the next three years. (Smith & Katem, 2018) As global markets expand, the need to be aware of and sensitive to the cultural differences of customers, colleagues and competitors becomes more obvious. Canadian students expect to learn the skills they need to be successful in the workplace in their post-secondary experience. In Ontario, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development under which SLC operates stated that “international education enriches the academic, social and cultural life of our colleges and universities, from classrooms to research laboratories, and creates stronger ties between Ontario and other global jurisdictions.” (Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, 2017, p. 6)

One of the elements of St. Lawrence College's vision statement identifies the need to be "globally connected." (St. Lawrence College, 2014) Based on that value statement and on the current growth in international enrolment, the International Education Department created a new Business Plan that set goals for increasing international enrolment and revenue, for diversifying its recruiting market for international students, and for supporting its international students. (Young, 2017) The Department was also approved for a Strategic Initiative that "will address 2 multi-year objectives: (1) Student Success: our programs and learning environment must be culturally inclusive for our students to gain global competencies and be equipped to work in a globalized workforce, and (2) Contemporary Educator: our faculty needs to gain skills to internationalize and interculturalize their teaching to ensure student success." (Chao, 2017, p. 1)

As the number of domestic secondary school applicants shrinks, inflation rises, and provincial budgets stagnate (Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2016), SLC expanded domestic recruiting to include adult learners returning to school and corporate training clients. They also set out to recruit more international students. In 2013, SLC had a student population of approximately 7,700 students; only 109 of them were on-campus international students. (St. Lawrence College, 2013-2014) Annual enrollment climbed to 8,000 students in the 2016-2017 academic year, but more than 1,200 of those students were international students from approximately 40 countries. (St. Lawrence College, 2016-2017) SLC also sought out pathways and articulation agreements for graduates to pursue continued education abroad. These initiatives contribute to St. Lawrence College's vision of innovative, job-prepared graduates able to differentiate themselves from others in a global market. (St. Lawrence College, 2014)

1.2.1 Internationalization of St. Lawrence College:

In a 2016 study commissioned by Colleges Ontario, research firm Price Waterhouse Cooper stated “Between 2008-09 and 2014-15... [there was] an increase in international student enrolment of 258%” in Ontario. (Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2016, p. 2) In the three academic years since 2014, SLC’s international student population grew from just over 100 students (approximately 1.5% of the total student body) to more than 1200 students (almost 11% of the student body) in 2017. According to Don Young, Vice President of International Education at SLC, international enrollment is predicted to reach 1,750 students by 2020, approximately 20% of the student population, which would bring SLC up to the average for international enrollment in Ontario colleges. SLC’s executive approved the International business plan as part of its overall strategic plan as this expansion addresses both the need to introduce intercultural skills into the student experience and to grow enrollment numbers in the face of diminishing domestic growth. (Young, 2017)

International admissions are limited to programs that have seats not occupied by domestic students. SLC policy dictates that priority be given to applicants first from Ontario, then from Canada, and finally to qualified international applicants. (St. Lawrence College, 2018) The most popular areas of study for international students at SLC are Business and Technology. There is a large interest in Health Sciences, but few seats available to them, as health care programs are often oversubscribed - more domestic applicants than can be accommodated in an academic intake, resulting in waiting lists.

As international enrollments grew, the International Education department expanded from a three-person department in 2013 to a department of 12 people in 2017, comprised of International Student Advisors, Recruiters

and Admissions Officers; country offices opened in Africa, Brazil, China, Ukraine, Turkey, Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, China (North and South) and India to manage applications and enquiries. Specific services for international students' on-campus include accommodation assistance, airport pickup, new student orientations, employment and tax workshops, and visa assistance (study visas, extensions, co-op/work visas, visitor visas for guests/family members). Graduate certificates such as Health Care Administration, Project Management, Business Analytics and Supply Chain Management have been developed with international student interests in mind. Popular programs such as Computer Networking and Technical Support have expanded to multiple campuses to meet the influx of new students.

1.2.2 Internationalization of St. Lawrence College Students:

St. Lawrence College actively pursues international opportunities for graduates to continue their studies abroad. Articulation and exchange agreements have been signed with institutions in the UK (Scotland and Wales), Sweden, Spain, France, Grenada, Japan and Australia. In 2011, Colleges Ontario also signed an umbrella agreement with 13 Institutes of Technology in Ireland, offering Ontario College graduates an unprecedented opportunity to further their education abroad. (Colleges Ontario, 2011) Graduates leaving school with a two-year Ontario College Diploma or a three-year Advanced Ontario College Diploma would be given one-to-one credit for their studies, entering at either level 7 or level 8 of the Irish Institute of Technology (IT) bachelor degree programs.

Complete:

Ontario College Diploma – 2 years

Enroll in Ireland:

NFQ Level 7, Ordinary Bachelors Degree

Ontario Advanced College Diploma – 3 years NFQ Level 8, Honours Bachelors Degree

Ontario Honours Bachelors Degree – 4 years NFQ Level 9, Post-Graduate Certificate or Masters Degree

Table 1 SLC-Ireland Pathways

St. Lawrence College has more than 20 specific articulation agreements under this umbrella agreement and sent more than 40 graduates to Ireland in 2015-2016 to continue their education. Students from SLC continued their studies at IT Tralee, IT Sligo, Limerick IT, Cork IT, Waterford IT, Galway-Mayo IT and Letterkenny IT in:

Sports (Sport Management, Strength and Conditioning),
Business (Marketing, Advertising),
Tourism (Hospitality, Event Management),
Culinary Arts,
Game Development, Software Development, Information Technology
Biotechnology,
Early Childhood Education,
Social Service Work
Energy Systems,
Graphic Design, Visual Arts

SLC students have begun to explore more destinations for exchanges, internships and work placements. For example, Culinary students can spend one year at SLC, one year at Barbados Community College and one year at the Institute of Technology Tralee in Ireland, and graduate with two college diplomas and an Bachelor of Culinary Arts degree, with culinary work placements in up to three countries. Students in SLC's Veterinary Assistant and Veterinary Technology programs participated in placements in Australia, Thailand and Costa Rica, working with endangered animals such as turtles; Bachelor of Science Nursing students conduct annual wellness clinics in

Tanzania and Child & Youth Care students built a playground for a rural community in Ecuador.

Options for staff and faculty to incorporate international experience into their professional development activities are under development, and funding has been added to the International department to support their participation in visiting scholar programs, research projects, faculty exchanges and international conferences. In 2016-2017, faculty from St. Lawrence College's Mechanical Technician and Computer Networking & Technical Support programs were guest lecturers at Anhui Technical College of Mechanical & Electrical Engineering in Wuhu, Anhui Province in China, and SLC regularly hosts faculty from its Chinese partner schools for training and professional development. Faculty from SLC's Hospitality and Tourism program guest-lectured in Ireland, and Irish faculty reciprocated in SLC's Fitness and Health promotion program. These endeavors all contribute to the internationalization of education at St. Lawrence College.

1.3 Context of research

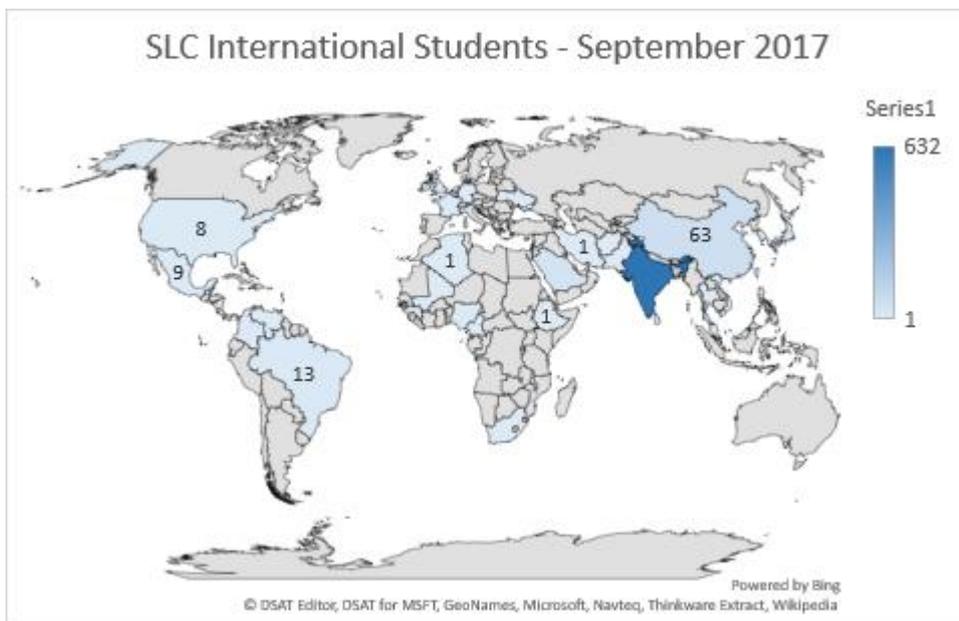


Figure 1 SLC International student population by country of origin, Fall 2017

A large number of international students at SLC come from India - more than 70% of the international student population. The second largest ethnic group is from Asia (China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Malaysia) followed by the Americas (North, Central and South), the Middle East and Africa. These groups contribute a significantly higher level of cultural diversity to the SLC student population than is found in the greater community.

St. Lawrence College International Students - Brockville, Cornwall, Kingston Winter 2018 Semester									
Origin	India	Asia	Middle East	South America	Africa	Central America	North America	Europe	TOTAL
# of students	733	115	38	25	15	15	8	7	956

Table 2 SLC Winter 2018 Semester International Enrolment by Region

In a review of relevant literature, many studies looked predominantly at stresses and opportunities experienced by international students, especially language issues, culture shock and academic teaching and learning styles. (Zhai, 2002) Interestingly, a 2008 study found that many stresses and adjustments to college life were very similar for international students and domestic students living away from home. (Väfors Fritz, et al., 2008) Research examining how domestic students perceive the growth of internationalization and expanding focus on global education is not common.

The goal of this research project is to develop a description of the interactions of domestic and international students, their perception of the impact of both increased international enrolment and the pursuit of international study opportunities on their college experience, and their awareness of intercultural perspectives. St. Lawrence College has begun an internationalization process, but further initiatives are planned to build

intercultural perspectives into the curriculum and support intercultural learning in the classrooms. (Chao, 2017) Analysis of the students' responses to the research questions may identify whether, at this juncture, there are significant differences in experiential perception between genders, age groups or programs, between first year and upper year students, and between domestic and international students. The outcome of the research could indicate gaps or successes in the internationalization thus far.

1.4 Questions and Objectives

To plan for a culturally inclusive learning environment, the current environment needs to be examined to determine a starting point for strategic development. At this time, no previous original research on this subject has been undertaken at St. Lawrence College. This research project will examine experiences and perceptions of international and domestic students on St. Lawrence College campuses of intercultural exposure and diversity in their learning environment. It will survey students in multi-year programs, and compare the combinations of variables in responses of 1st year and higher-year students, in experience and perceptions between identified genders, age groups and ethnic groups, and to what degree students are conscious of intercultural interactions as part of their learning experience.

The objectives of the research are:

1. To determine the impact the recent drive to internationalization has had on the learning environment for students enrolled at SLC,

2. To examine international and domestic students' level of interaction with each other,
3. To determine domestic and international students' perception of their educational experience at SLC,
4. To compare the outcomes of Objectives 1-3 between identified genders, age/ethnic groups and between first year and higher year students,
5. To make recommendations for both further study and further initiatives in internationalization based on identified divergent and convergent student perceptions of the SLC learning environment.

1.5 Summary

St. Lawrence College is a small-medium college, with campuses located in a semi-rural region with a homogenous population. The influx of international students should have an impact on local students. The local student populace should have an impact on the international students studying at the college. New insight can be gained comparing and/or contrasting how the two groups perceive their interactions, and what value they place on an intercultural learning environment. The profile generated will be a useful contribution to the understanding of internationalization in a post-secondary educational setting and a baseline measurement for additional research and further strategic initiatives.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As this research project comprises preliminary, descriptive research that will look primarily at the emerging intercultural environment as expressed by student interaction, looking at established research provides a basis of comparison. In order to explore relatively new intercultural relationships, this chapter examines previous research on international students adapting to new learning environments, what exposure to internationalization brings to domestic students' perspective, and how domestic and international students interact in the learning environment.

2.2 International Student Experience

Brunton and Jeffrey (2014) examined factors that contribute to the acculturation of international students at a Western (NZ) university. They identified these factors of adaptation to the host culture as internationalizing the academic environment (cultural distance, prior knowledge) and support, engagement and retention (belongingness, relevance, and learner empowerment). The most significant influences on acculturation were student engagement, support from the institution, the teachers and the domestic students. Recommendations for improving the outcomes for internationalization include improving the delivery of support systems to international students (beyond the orientation period), integrating international perspectives into curricula and teaching, and including domestic students in the internationalization models. The report included significant amounts of in-

depth international student feedback, and research into each of the influencers to acculturation. The inclusion of direct quotes from student interviews is a powerful demonstration of the effects of institutional decisions. For example, on the supports available from the institution during orientation, a student response was “I would like to say that the helpful attitude shown during orientation classes is not carried out in practice.” (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014, p. 329) The research emphasized the need for institutional planning to incorporate internationalization strategies into the academic arena for both faculty and students, and to create support frameworks that fulfill international and domestic student adaptive needs. (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014) It becomes clearer with each study that providing adequate assistance is crucial to the success of internationalization.

In a project commissioned by the Australian government in the wake of negative experiences in internationalization, (Nyland, et al., 2013) ISANA (professional organization representing international student support providers) produced a guide to best practices in supporting international students studying at Australian institutions. Their research produced recommendations garnered from 30 professionals involved in international education across the country. The practices include ensuring orientation materials are kept available to students as they may not absorb all the data provided to them at the beginning of their sojourn. A student in the September 2017 focus group at St. Lawrence College requested that the college “have a guidebook (hardcopy vs. app vs. Blackboard) which contains all info for students who can’t attend workshops,” (Chao, 2018) which supports the concept that the volume of information covered at orientation may hinder students’ absorption and their subsequent utilization of support services available to them. The ISANA guide also suggests facilitating interactions between international students and community organizations for volunteering or recreational activities; ensuring student have access to health care and

housing options; and assistance in transitioning from student to work life upon graduation. The implication is that there is more to be done than is currently being done to ensure that the educational experience is both academically and socially rich. (Ziguras & Harwood, 2010)

2.3 Domestic Students: Intercultural Skill Development

Klak and Martin (2003) explored the effect that a semester-long Latin-American cultural celebration had on the intercultural sensitivity of 115 1st and 3rd year students at Miami University (Ohio) in 1996. Students enrolled in 1 Geography classes that incorporated the cultural events into the curriculum, where they provided feedback via assigned reflections on 5-6 events they chose to attend out of the greater number of events available throughout the semester. Students completed a survey at the beginning of the term and again at the end, from which the researchers measured the changes on the students' responses on Barret's 8-point cultural sensitivity scale from ethno-centrism to ethno-relativism. Klak and Martin note that while the participants may have been "relatively motivated to engage in intercultural training," (Klak & Martin, 2003, p. 11) there was measurable growth toward ethno-relativism over the semester. They reflected on the advantages of providing large-scale cultural events around diversity to a student population and exploring other cultures in situ as well as the success of combining extra-curricular activities with in-class instructional activities in generating engagement. The researchers added that hosting events that engage not only the student body but also the greater community engender dialogue that contributes to a climate of broader acceptance of diversity. The outcome appears to be that developing cultural

sensitivity through exposure to diversity at home is a valid exercise in internationalization of the learning environment. (Klak & Martin, 2003)

Klak and Martin's study showed that although the students were not exposed to cultural immersion abroad, avenues to intercultural maturation are available to the institution. As technology is so ingrained in modern youth culture, creating international exchange opportunities via that technology also appears to be successful. The Stevens Initiative at the Aspen Institute supports projects at American universities that allow students in the USA to work *virtually* with peers in the Middle East and North Africa on projects, in classes and solving challenges in their fields of study. (Abdel-Kader, 2018) The virtual exchange bypasses the common barriers to developing intercultural skills: "limited resources, family obligations and curricular restrictions." (Abdel-Kader, 2018, p. 2)

Rundstrom Williams (2005) looked at the intercultural communication skills of a group of American university students who studied abroad for a semester along with a control group that remained on their campus. The measuring tools were intercultural adaptability and intercultural sensitivity, examined at the beginning of the semester and again at the end. Previous studies looked at only the difference between those who remained on campus versus those who went abroad; this project looked at the growth of adaptability and sensitivity for each group before and after a semester of university study. Demographic comparisons made on foreign language studies, previous travel, where the students were from, and previous exposure to other cultures assessed secondary contributors to the students' intercultural skills, and the research compared gender, age and university major as factors as well. As expected, those students who studied abroad scored measurably higher in the indices of intercultural adaptability and sensitivity than those who remained on campus. Notably, it was not just location, but exposure to the cultural

differences that was the major predictor of higher skills. Students had to be immersed in the destination culture, not just present in it. (Rundstrom Williams, 2005) Students who develop intercultural communication skills through study abroad could be invaluable resources to international student support services at their home institutions. They would be ideal candidates for mentoring programs, on-campus assistance to international initiatives and bridging the divide between international and other domestic students in the classroom.

2.4 Comparison: International and Domestic Student Experiences

Väfors Fritz, Chin and DeMarinis (2008) set out to discover whether international students suffered higher anxiety, irritability and stress than North American (NA) students in response to a series of stressors, and whether there were variances in experience between European and Asian international students in the same circumstances. They used three hypotheses comparing anxiety between international and NA students, comparing difficulties between international and NA students, and comparing anxieties and difficulties between sub-groups of international students.

There were no appreciable differences in stress levels expressed by either NA students or international students about academic issues, but international students rated language, social issues and ability to work at a higher level of difficulty than did NA students. Addressing student stressors jointly for international and domestic students could be a bonding exercise for them, creating some common ground. The researchers found that language

issues and making friends caused Asian students more anxiety, but that European students felt most stressed about being away from friends and family. They were unable to determine using the study's methodology whether the higher Asian anxiety was a cultural reaction, or a true representation of their experience studying abroad. (Väfors Fritz, et al., 2008)

2.5 Interaction

Creating a learning environment that enhances the experience of both international and domestic students is an area of research that is of interest to an institution with international students and the desire to incorporate global perspectives in its curriculum. Australia has been a popular destination for international students since 1986. (Moodie, 2011) Researchers there have conducted many relevant studies and created guidelines for faculty and institutions.

In her 2009 article in the *Journal of International Studies*, Betty Leask of the University of South Australia states, "simply bringing people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds together on campus did not necessarily result in the development of mutually beneficial cross-cultural understandings and friendships." (Leask, 2009, p. 207) The article outlines strategies and interventions that the university implemented to develop the necessary skills in faculty, frontline staff and both international and domestic students to interact successfully with those who are culturally other in and out of the classroom. The initiatives were based in the formal curriculum, meaning course content, faculty training, task design, etc. and informal curriculum: the university environment outside the classroom. Success was measured by surveying international students' level of satisfaction with their integration into the university community. As satisfaction levels varied from year to year, the university turned to focus groups for information and found that domestic

and international students were still not achieving satisfactory interactions. Leask concluded that the acculturation process had to be multi-pronged. The adjustment to another culture can not be solely focused on international students but must include adaptation for domestic students as well. Internationalization is a complicated operating system that includes all areas of the institution. Recognizing that change comes in small increments that should be counted as milestones in the intercultural development of formal and informal learning environments was critical to long term success. (Leask, 2009) The article captured the complexity of intervening in the learning environment, but also noted that not all changes that develop intercultural maturity had to be large – the small changes are significant too. Creating an internationalized environment in which both international and domestic students achieve and understand the value of intercultural competence requires ongoing monitoring, evaluation and commitment from all levels of the institution.

2.6 Internationalization

A study by Parsons (2010) examined whether university internationalization was effective in producing beneficial outcomes for students. At three universities in the US and Australia, more than 1000 students at the beginning (1st year) and the end of their studies (last year) in their home country to complete an extensive questionnaire comprised of questions about international content in their education, contact with international students and/or faculty and international travel for leisure or study. The results showed that courses with international content increased the metrics (language proficiency, knowledge of a specific country or region, general international knowledge, international attitudes and perceptions, cross-cultural skills and international behaviours); travel for study was more beneficial than travel for leisure, and travel to developing countries was better

than travel to developed countries. That outcome could be a starting point for institutions to explore partnership for exchange with developing countries. Students with three or more international friendships scored significantly higher, but for the score to be raised for exposure to international faculty, the student had to have more than four friendships. It seems that the social norms for young people hold true – peer interaction has greater significance to a student than authority figures such as professors or teaching assistants. It must contribute to the importance of successful social interaction to international students' perception of their study abroad experience. Parsons undertook the study to describe the “expected and desired outcomes of an education at an internationalized university,” and found the outcomes were all connected. Students with international faculty connected more with international students. Students who studied abroad had better language uptake. (Parsons, 2010) Although the author cautioned that the study came from a Western viewpoint, involving students from developed countries and might not be cross-culturally valid, the result is still a respectable assessment of the value of an internationalized education.

2.7 Summary

The process of internationalization appears organic in that new best practices evolve with experimentation and experience, requiring ongoing reflection and feedback. International students face challenges that are unique to the rest of the student population that institutions must address: language, learning styles, cultural alienation. Support for staff, faculty and students to administer, teach and learn with and from international perspectives is essential to a culturally diverse environment. Understanding the stressors that international students experience informs the measures to address them.

Barriers such as cultural attitudes, isolation and supports that evaporate after orientation are all areas that cannot be fixed in a single endeavor but should be evaluated and revisited frequently. Initiatives to support international students in experiencing a more immersive intercultural environment also enrich the learning experience of domestic students by exposing them to cultural differences and viewpoints. Studying abroad and immersion in a culture, engenders the growth of intercultural skills in communication and sensitivity beyond the single culture a student might experience. Pathways exist to developing intercultural maturity in students who lack the opportunity to leave their home country to study abroad. Institutional commitment to internationalization, cooperation between institutions and financial support appear to be the answer to intercultural maturation in both the mobile and the resident student populations.

As St. Lawrence College develops its internationalization strategy, the existing literature provides a strong foundation of knowledge to generate ideas and avenues of exploration, and validates the experiential data generated by informal focus groups. Knowledge of intercultural competency developments fuels strategies formulated with greater significance directed at both international and domestic students' educational experience. To move forward, the institution must know what the current environment looks like, to understand students' perceptions of their intercultural interactions. Research should determine how internationalization affects students' experience of St. Lawrence College.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As no research on internationalization had taken place at SLC prior to 2017, the International Education department began to accumulate data. To the present time, small focus groups were convened with small groups of faculty and international students on Cornwall and Kingston campuses. This research project will primarily be a descriptive endeavor to clarify the understanding of SLC students' perspective on their learning experience in relation to internationalization. This chapter outlines the format of the exploration, the research design and what methods will be used to identify how the students perceive their environment in relation to internationalization initiatives at SLC and how they perceive their interactions with cultures other than their own. This descriptive research will gather both qualitative and quantitative data that will allow for comparison of results. The primary research vehicle for this study will be an online survey. The results will be compared with the focus group results collected in 2017 and 2018 by the International Education department at SLC. (Chao, 2018)

3.2 Research Objectives

The main goal of this project is to describe the student perspective on internationalization at this moment in time. How do international and domestic students perceive and experience their learning environment in the wake of increased international enrollment and expanding emphasis on adding international and intercultural perspectives at St. Lawrence College? Creating a detailed view of students' feelings about their experience at the college as internationalization gains momentum will assist in placing the development of

intercultural competencies into a timeline in the internationalization strategies. If the study reveals low levels of intercultural interaction or awareness, that could lead to a recommendation to re-examine the current strategies. If the research reveals growth in awareness and/or competencies, it could be possible to establish strategic advances that build on that growth. With either result, a clearer picture of what impact the students perceive internationalization is having on their learning environment is beneficial in planning future research projects and for strategic planning purposes.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Methods of Descriptive Research

There are three types of descriptive research methods: observation, case studies and surveys. The observational method involves closely monitoring participants in their environment. This method would be intrusive and time consuming in an academic setting, and unwieldy for the numbers of participants. Case studies are also inappropriate to the objectives of this research, as they focus on individuals and look at the individual experience closely and in detail. It is time-intensive and can be costly in terms of time commitment. A case study is more appropriate to questions relating to an individual or small group hypothesis. This research project's objective is to examine a significant sample of the SLC student population, and to make general observations of their perceptions, making the survey method the least intrusive and most comprehensive method available to the researcher. A survey or questionnaire is also the most confidential and anonymous method of collecting responses from the student participants and provides the lowest risk to their participation.

3.3.2 Sample Size

There are approximately 8000 full-time SLC students in this academic year, of which 5643 are enrolled on the main three campuses. (St. Lawrence College, 2016-2017) As the central objective of the research measures the interactions between domestic and international students, it is reasonable to exclude the student populations of the affiliate schools in Toronto and Vancouver which consist entirely of international students, and the partner schools in China comprised of only Chinese students.

Of the 5643 students based on the SLC campuses in Brockville, Cornwall and Kingston, approximately 16% are international. Based on Survey Monkey's sample size formula (Survey Monkey, 2018):

$$\frac{\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + \left(\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N}\right)}$$

Population Size = N | Margin of error = e | z-score = z

e is percentage, put into decimal form (for example, 3% = 0.03).

The z-score is the number of standard deviations a given proportion is away from the mean. To find the right z-score to use, refer to the table below:

Desired Confidence Level	z-score
80%	1.28
85%	1.44
90%	1.65
95%	1.96
99%	2.58

Figure 2 Survey Monkey Sample Size Calculator

The required sample size for a population of 5643 students, with a 95% confidence level and a 4% margin of error is 543 to generate a statistically

significant result. Of the 543 desired responders, 87 would need to be international students to fully represent the population proportionally in the sample.

3.3.3 Quantitative and Qualitative Research

To meet the research objectives, the project must collect information variables about the respondents, solicit their opinions and request open-ended input. This combination of quantitative or variable information and qualitative opinions forms the basis of the analysis of student perceptions. Basic variables used in this project are age, gender and educational status. The quantitative data allows for trend analysis of the qualitative responses, categorizing student perceptions by each variable. A “mixed-model” (Saunders & Lewis, 2009, p. 153) approach allows the researcher to determine if there are differences in student experiences for specific groups, if there is any homogeneity of qualitative perceptions.

3.4 Questionnaire

Survey Monkey has been successfully deployed for research projects at the college previously and was utilized again for this project. The Survey Monkey platform purchased by SLC allows the researcher to add a team member who can provide feedback and suggestions. The team member added to this survey is the SLC Internationalization Lead, Richard Webster. Mr. Webster is the project lead for the Internationalization Strategic Initiative project beginning in 2018.

The researcher met with various persons at St. Lawrence College to obtain input into the structure of the survey, and to determine what questions

in the survey would generate data fulfilling the research objectives. The final survey was piloted with student volunteers whose first language is not English to ensure the questions were clear and understandable and not overtly biased towards English speakers.

3.4.1 Introduction to the Survey

The introduction page to the research survey was formulated with input from the SLC Research Ethics Board. (SLC Research Ethics Board, 2018)

It provides the context of the research, what is expected of the participant and the risks and benefits of participating in the research project. It acts as the consent form for the online survey which follows it on the Survey Monkey platform. In the invitation to participate in the study, students are advised of the voluntary nature of the survey, and a random prize draw for a gift card is provided as an incentive to those who choose to supply their email address; email addresses collected for the draw are not linked to survey answers in any way, preserving anonymity. Participants are provided with an email address to contact on the “thank you” page at the end of the survey.

3.4.2 Internationalization Survey

The survey consists of four sections:

- Demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, citizenship)
- Questions for domestic students
- Questions for international students
- Opinion and feedback questions

As per the layout of the survey at Appendix B: Internationalization Survey, participants will complete three of the four sections of the survey – as participants can only register as domestic or international but not both.

3.4.3 Distribution of the Survey

To reach the greatest number of participants possible in the short time available, the online survey is distributed via email and social media to the entire student population on the three SLC campuses in April 2018. The survey will be navigable by computer, tablet or smart phone. Information booths with a laptop computer are set up at least once for one double time block (2hours) over the lunch hour on each campus to offer students the opportunity to complete the survey in person and to ask questions about the survey and their participation. The SLC International Facebook and Twitter pages have links to the survey as well; the researcher's email address is provided on social media posts so that students may ask questions regarding the survey. Reminders are posted via email and social media in the final days of the survey period.

3.5 Ethics

Participants are advised that the aggregate data collected from the research is part of a dissertation project and may be made available to the SLC community in report form only for research and planning purposes. Ownership of the research will remain with the researcher.

No students were put at risk in the collection of the data. Survey questions do not include any identifying responses. Data collected for the research is held electronically in a password protected account by the researcher. Only the final aggregate database will be retained upon completion of the research project. All survey data collected will be disposed of by deleting it from the survey platform.

Contact information provided by participants who choose to provide it for the gift card draw at the end of the survey is disposed of via secure shredding at St. Lawrence College.

All research projects are scrutinized and approved by the SLC Research Ethics Board to ensure that any research involving human subjects is conducted within the ethical framework endorsed by the college. See Appendix C: SLC REB approval # 2018-186TC.

3.6 Budget

St. Lawrence College bears the cost of the Survey Monkey membership used to create the survey and analyze the results. All other costs of this research project are borne by the researcher.

3.7 Method of Analysis

The Survey Monkey analysis tools allow the researcher to cross-tabulate the qualitative responses to the survey questions by the quantitative data collected. For example, the researcher can determine whether specific services offered to international students by the college, such as the Health Centre or Peer Tutoring are utilized more one age group over another, or if there is a gender trend in interactions with other cultures in a classroom. (Survey Monkey, 2018)

The results of the qualitative questions regarding intercultural interactions and intercultural content and the open-ended questions in the final section of the survey are to be compared between domestic and international students to determine if there are identifiable trends or perceptions in the student community.

The open-ended questions in the final section of the survey were contrasted with the focus group responses collected by the Associate Dean of International Education at SLC in 2017 and 2018 to determine if the anonymous survey results vary significantly from the responses to similar questions posed in a group setting with a college administrator. Further comparison between the open-ended questions filtered by the various demographic variables, including at which campus students attend SLC will identify opportunities for improvements and future research.

3.8 Summary

By incorporating the mixed methods quantitative data collection with qualitative, open-ended questions, the research builds a picture of the student population at St. Lawrence College that is viewable from different angles. The demographic data allows the opinion responses to be filtered by specific elements: age, gender, citizenship, and program. The opinions and suggestions collected create a pool of experiential feedback that illustrates more fully how the students feel about their current environment, and which may provide insight that fuels recommendations to the strategic initiatives of the college.

The online survey delivered via email to the student population of SLC was the most economic (for finances and time) path to data collection. Responses collected via Survey Monkey can be tabulated, analyzed and reported efficiently. The collected data then becomes information: data that has been analyzed and organized such that it has value and relevance. (Robbins, et al., 2009)

Chapter 4 Findings & Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the results of the internationalization survey (see Appendix B) distributed to St. Lawrence College students at the end of the Winter 2018 semester. The survey was distributed by email to all students of the three campuses of the College. A reminder email was sent midway through the distribution period. Responses were collected for this project over a period of nine days.

4.2 Overview of Survey

A total of 586 surveys were returned, meeting the requirement of 543 respondents out of the 5643 population to reach statistical significance, although not all respondents answered all questions. The number of respondents is noted in each section. Raw survey summary data is available upon request.

Analysis of the respondent data is discussed generally, and then organized according to the research objectives:

1. To determine the impact the recent drive to internationalization has had on the learning environment for students enrolled at SLC,
2. To examine international and domestic students' level of interaction with each other,
3. To determine domestic and international students' perception of their educational experience at SLC,
4. To compare the outcomes of Objectives 1-3 between identified genders, age/ethnic groups and between first year and higher year students,
5. To make recommendations for both further study and further initiatives in internationalization based on identified divergent and convergent student perceptions of the SLC learning environment.

The survey questions are grouped in to 4 sections:

- Demographics
- Study Abroad & Internationalization – Domestic Students
- Study Abroad & Internationalization – International Students
- Opinions

Please see Appendix B: Internationalization Survey 2018 for the full list of questions.

4.3 Demographics

4.3.1 Age

Of the 584 students who answered the age question the respondents fell primarily into the 18-29 age groups:

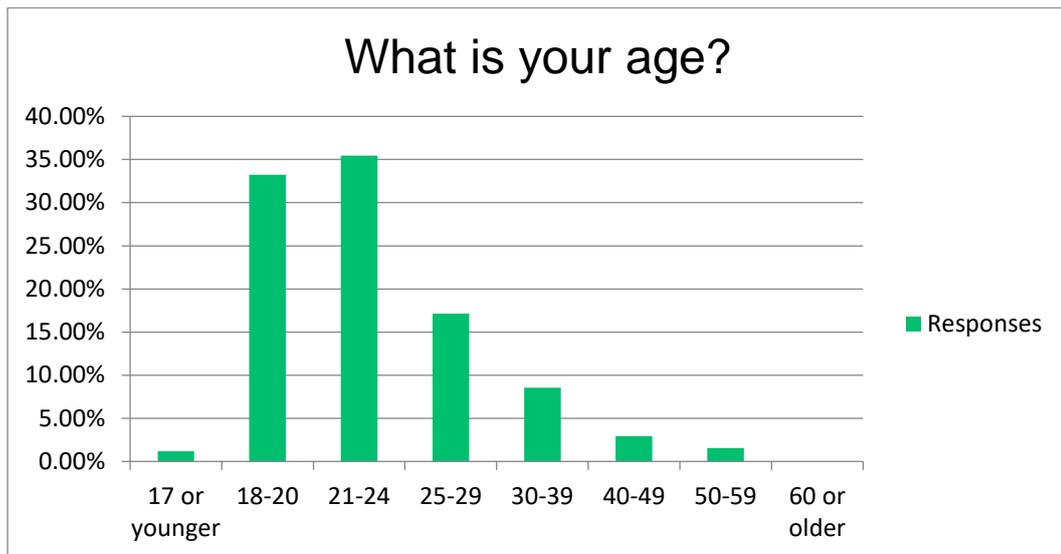


Figure 3 Question 1, Age Categories, Internationalization Survey 2018

These results are comparable to the age distribution tabulated by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development College Enrolment Statistical Reporting system (*Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development , 2016*):

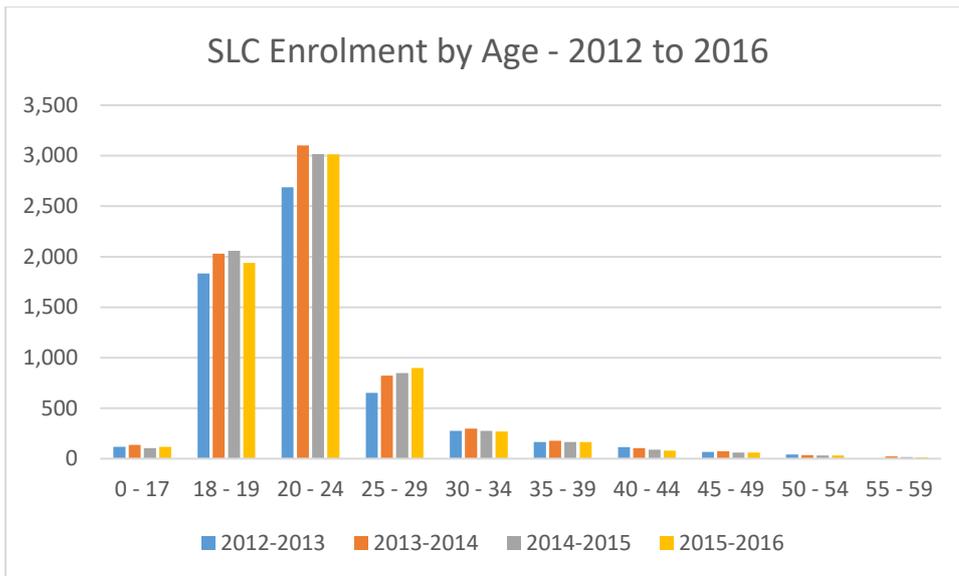


Figure 4 Enrollment by Age 2012-2016, MAESD

This comparison shows that the age group of the research sample is representative of the college population.

4.3.2 Gender

The gender distribution of the 584 responses varies from the provincial statistics by approximately 10%: 70.33% of survey respondents were female, 29.16% were male and less than 1% declined to disclose their gender. On an annual basis, the average gender distribution at SLC is closer to a 60% female and 39.5% male population. (*Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development , 2016*)

When the gender data is filtered by domestic and international status, the distribution changes significantly for the international students. There is far less disparity in distribution between male and female respondents: 54.43% male and 45.57% female. This also varies from overall international enrollment statistics for the current semester which 37% female and 63% male.

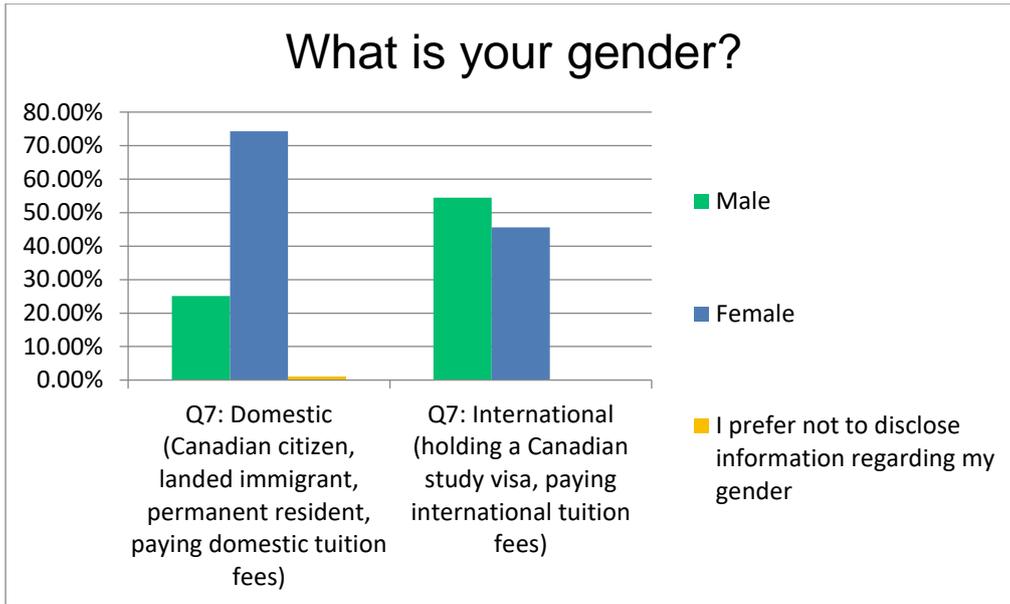


Figure 5 Question 2, Citizenship Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

4.3.3 Ethnic/Cultural Identity

The ethnic and/or cultural question on the survey did not limit the type of response the respondents could identify, and of the 566 responses, many students identified multiple ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Current enrolment of international students at St. Lawrence College only records country of origin for international students:

St. Lawrence College International Students - Brockville, Cornwall, Kingston Winter 2018 Semester									
Origin	India	Asia	Middle East	South America	Africa	Central America	North America	Europe	TOTAL
# of students	733	115	38	25	15	15	8	7	956

Figure 6 International Enrollment by Region, Winter 2018

Based on the responses the following summary identified 12 ethno-cultural categories and one null category:

CANADIAN	EUROPEAN	CAUCASIAN/ WHITE	ABORIGINAL/ FIRST NATIONS	MIDDLE EASTERN	AFRICA	BLACK	ASIAN	INDIAN	HISPANIC/ LATINO	OTHER	RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION	NONE
<i>DOMESTIC</i>												
102	46	315	30	2	5	8	23	2	6	9	12	10
<i>INTERNATIONAL</i>												
1	3	2	0	3	1	2	11	43	6	5	12	1

Figure 7 Question 3 Summary, Internationalization Survey 2018

Students identified themselves in between one and four categories, with the largest number of domestic students identifying themselves as Caucasian/White, followed by Canadian. International students who responded to the survey were predominantly Indian, many of whom also indicated their religious or cultural groups. Of the 76 international respondents, 56.6% were Indian, well below the 77% of the overall international population at SLC currently enrolled with Indian citizenship. It is not clear what influenced the difference in representation between population and survey responses.

4.3.4 Campus

The 583 respondents to the survey when considered as a unit coincide with the historical enrollment patterns by campus according to Ministry statistics:

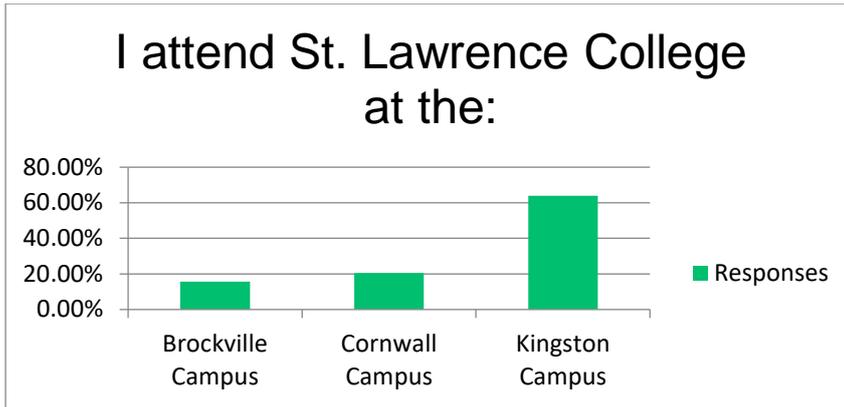


Figure 8 Question 4, Internationalization Survey 2018

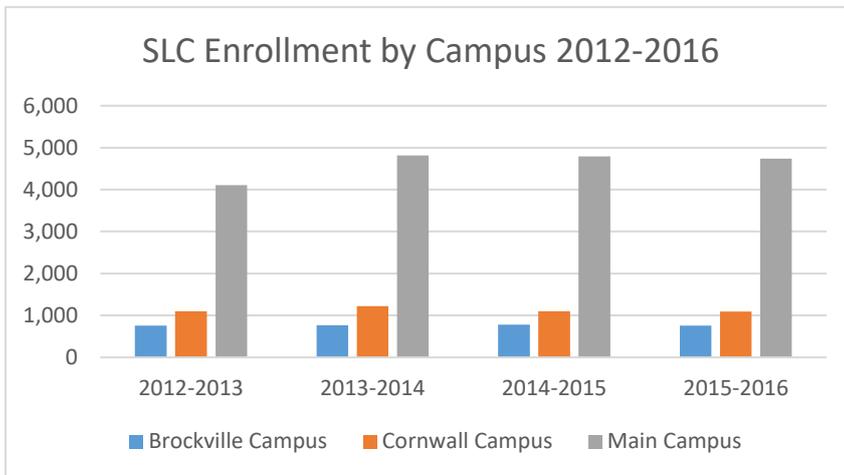


Figure 9 SLC Enrollment by Campus 2012-2016, MAESD

But when the respondents are divided into domestic and international categories, the variance changes:

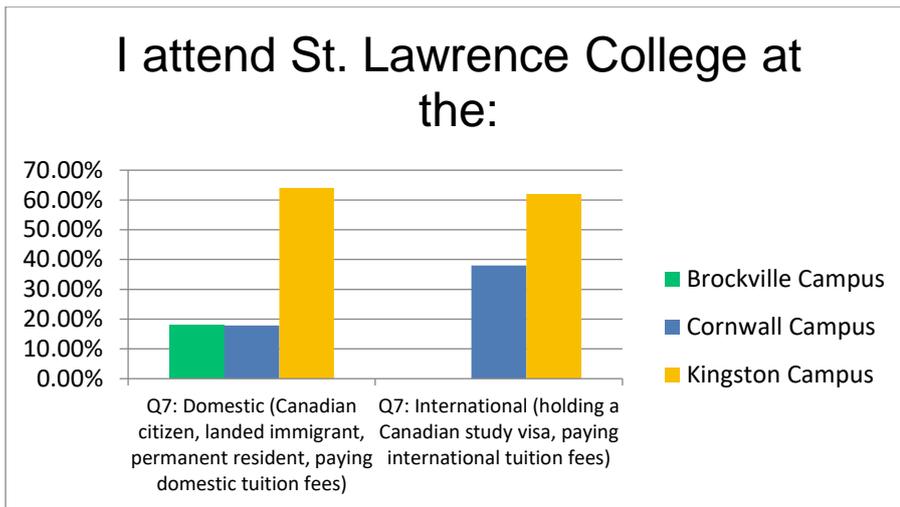


Figure 10 Question 4, Citizenship Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

There were no international responses from students enrolled on the Brockville campus; as there were only four international students enrolled on that campus in the Winter 2018 semester that result was not unexpected. International students were represented in higher proportion at Cornwall campus compared to Kingston campus, and domestic students were represented in higher proportion at Brockville campus compared to Cornwall campus.

4.3.5 School of Study

There is a significant proportion of 505 domestic respondents who identified themselves as enrolled in the Schools of Business and Health Sciences. This could be attributed to those Schools hosting undergraduate degree programs (Bachelor of Business Administration and Bachelor of Science Nursing in partnership with Laurentian University) that require student research. Students in those schools would be more frequently exposed to requests to participate in student surveys by their peers and therefore more aware of the value of their response. International students were more heavily represented from the Schools of Applied Science & Computing and Business which is reflective of the total international student population: those schools

have the largest international student populations. Due to high domestic demand, there are numerous programs in the Schools of Health Science (BSc Nursing, Practical Nursing, Pre-Health Science, Veterinary Assistant, Veterinary Technology) and Community Service (BA Behavioural Psychology, Social Worker) that have few if any international students, meaning that many domestic students have no in-class experience with international students. SLC may need to find other ways to include intercultural perspectives into their learning environments both in and out of the classroom.

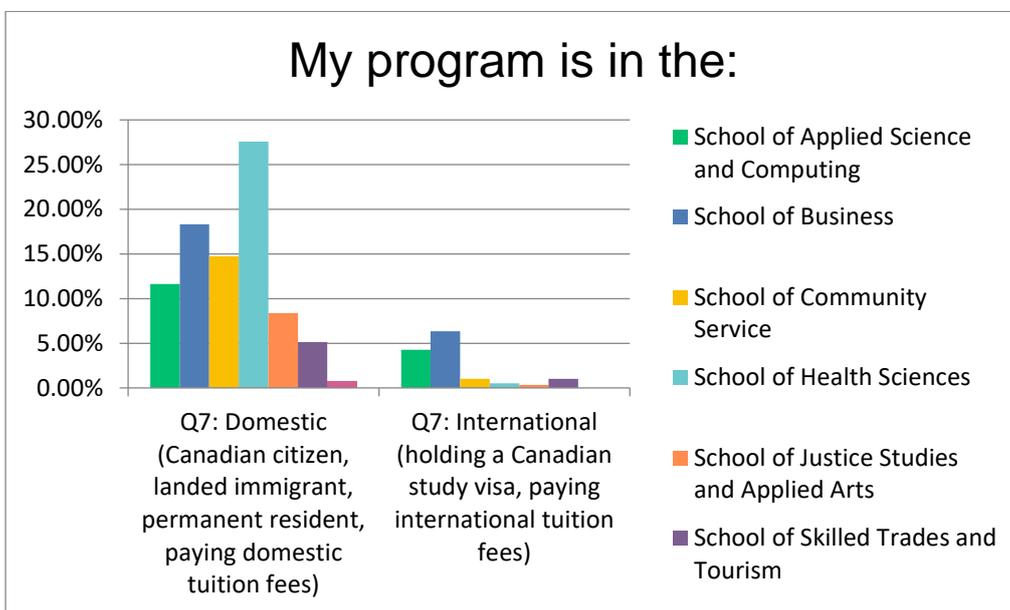


Figure 11 Question 5, Citizenship Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

4.3.6 Year of Study

The responses by year were significantly different between domestic and international students:

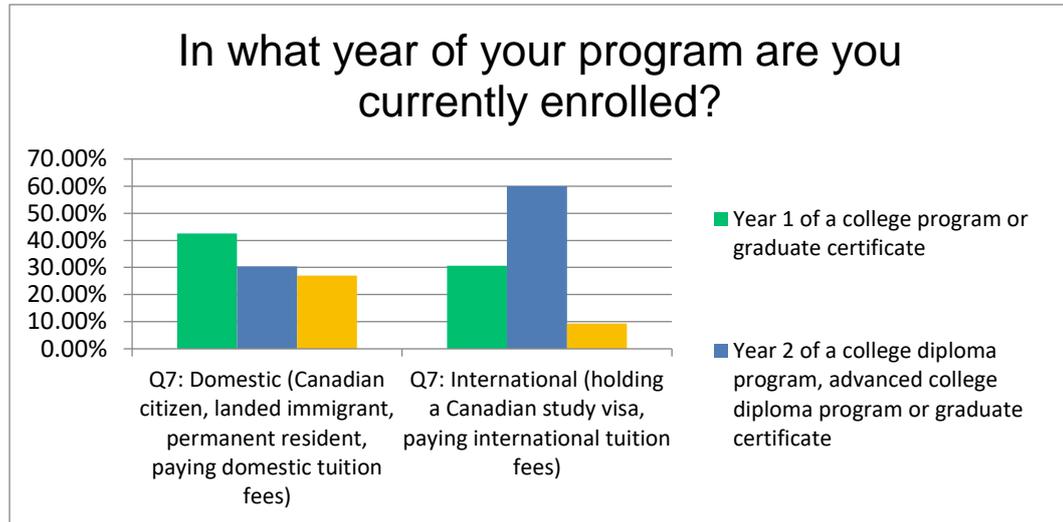


Figure 12 Question 6, Citizenship Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

The domestic students' responses corresponded to a typical enrolment trend, falling from a high in first year to lower levels in subsequent years due to attrition and program length (Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, 2016), while international student results show a significant increase in second year responses. This could be attributed to an increased confidence in language skills by the second year of their program of study.

4.4 Domestic Students

4.4.1 Studying Abroad

Of the 474 domestic students that answered this section of the survey, 77% indicated that they had heard of Study Abroad at SLC. There were a higher proportion of female respondents that had not heard of Study Abroad. This indicates that the college initiatives to inform students of the opportunities for international placements, exchange semesters and pathways to continued study after graduation have been effective, but there is still room to improve. At this point in time, less than 6% of respondents had studied abroad. Those 28 students rated their international study experience predominantly as satisfactory or very satisfactory. The overwhelming reason for not studying abroad was financial barriers, which was not unexpected. Male respondents had a higher level of disinterest, and female respondents identified the lack of availability of studying abroad in their program as an issue.

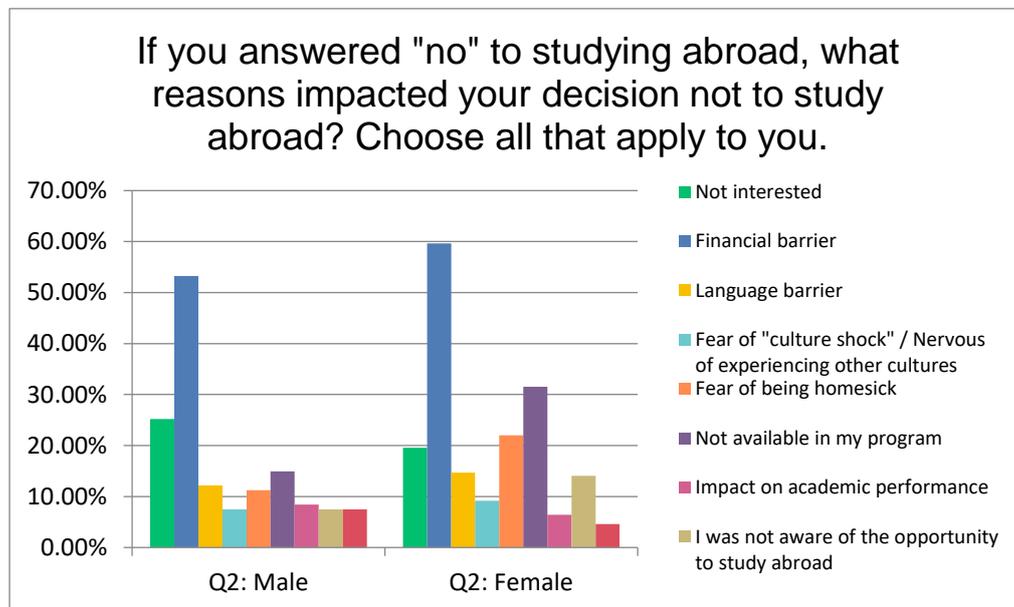


Figure 13 Question 11, Gender Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

There were significant variations in the reasons for not studying abroad when distributed by age category:

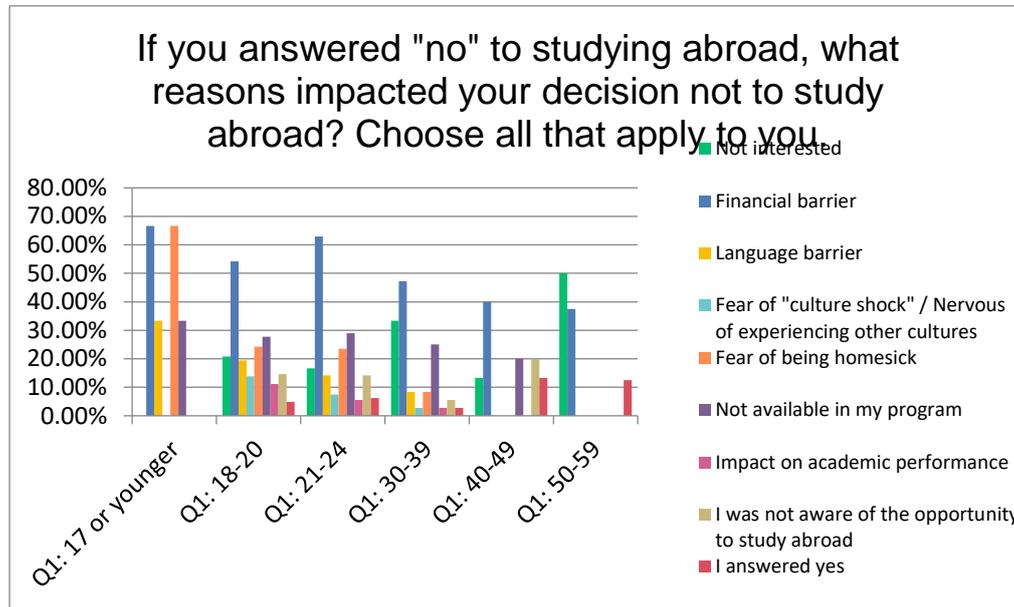


Figure 14 Question 11, Age Categories, Internationalization Survey 2018

In addition to financial barriers, younger students identified more “fear factors” (language, culture shock, homesickness) as barriers to international study. Mature students had fewer financial concerns and fewer fears, but also much lower interest in studying abroad.

The cost of studying abroad will always be a factor in student interest in international study opportunities. The financial burden of post-secondary study can be burden enough for many students. At IT Sligo, the tuition for 2017/2018 in a Level 8 Honours Degree (non-engineering) program was €3,819 plus the €3,000 student contribution fee. (Institute of Technology Sligo, 2017-2018) The cost range for a non-EU international student to enroll in an undergraduate degree in Business was €9,750 - €18,000. (Education in Ireland, 2017-2018) At St. Lawrence College, domestic tuition for the Bachelor of Business Administration for 2017-2018 was \$8,061.65. For an

international student to study in the same program, the cost was \$20,426.15. (St. Lawrence College, 2017-2018)

SLC plans to develop resources to support study abroad opportunities such as international placements and exchange semesters. (Young, 2017) But it appears that more could be done to address the fears that may stop students from pursuing those opportunities.

4.4.2 Agree or Disagree Statements

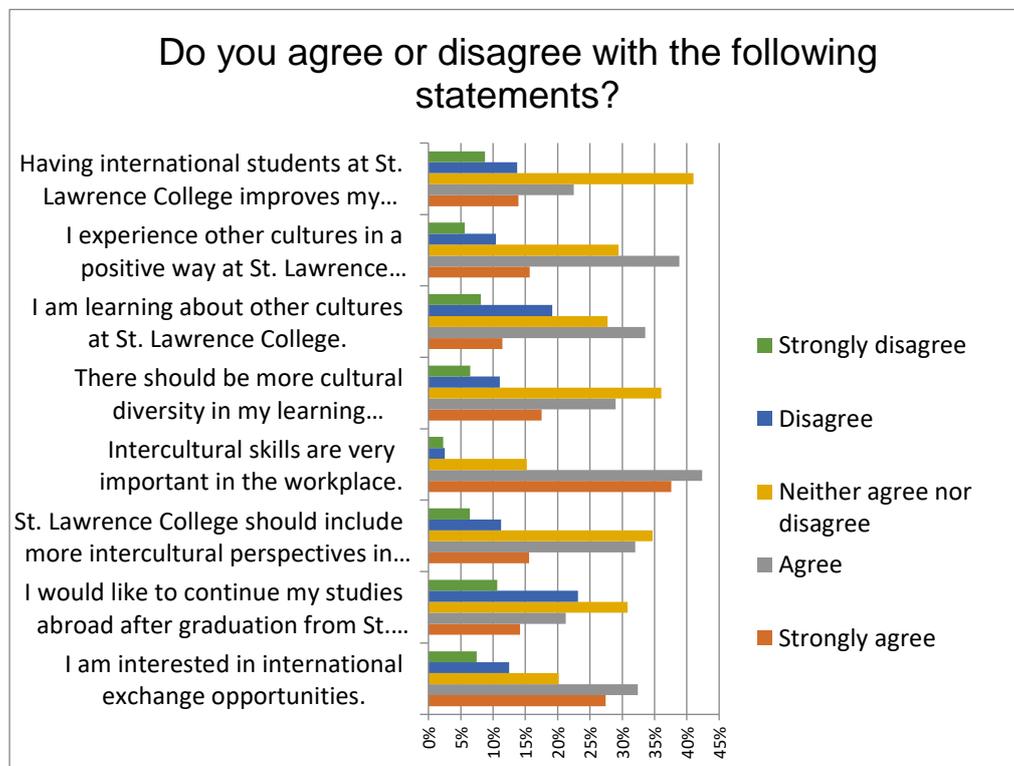


Figure 15 Question 12, Internationalization Survey 2018

The statements polled in this portion of the survey aimed at domestic students are:

- Having international students at St. Lawrence College improves my learning environment.

- I experience other cultures in a positive way at St. Lawrence College.
- I am learning about other cultures at St. Lawrence College.
- There should be more cultural diversity in my learning experience at St. Lawrence College.
- Intercultural skills are very important in the workplace.
- St. Lawrence College should include more intercultural perspectives in my courses.
- I would like to continue my studies abroad after graduation from St. Lawrence College.
- I am interested in international exchange opportunities.

Students were asked to rate their agreement with the statements.

All responses skew to agreement (positive) rather than disagreement, indicating a relatively positive attitude toward internationalization. Students appear to agree that intercultural skills are important to the workplace but are ambivalent regarding the value of having international students at the college. Male responses have a higher disagreement with the presence of international students, and female responses are more non-committal.

The high rate of return of “neither agree nor disagree” answers to the statements about intercultural skills and content make the results less conclusive; it is not clear whether the responses indicate true ambivalence or a lack of understanding of the terminology. Incorporating the language components of internationalization into the general lexicon through program content and communication could increase comprehension and subsequent support.

4.4.3 Domestic student perception of international student presence.

This question was included to attempt to measure how aware domestic students may be of international students in their program. As previously stated, some programs have either very few or no international students, and others have a much higher concentration. It is also possible that students who have Canadian citizenship but belong to a visible minority could be mistaken for international students.

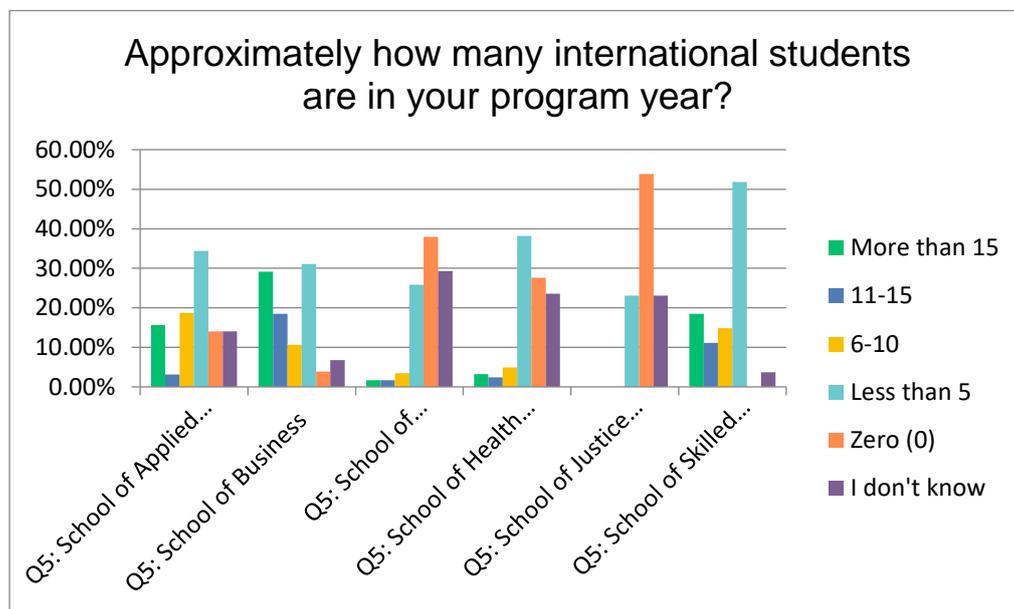


Figure 16 Question 13, School of Study Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

4.5 International Students

4.5.1 Agree or Disagree Statements

A total of 79 international students started the survey, but none of the questions aimed solely at international students were answered by all the respondents.

The statements polled in this question of the survey aimed at international students are:

- If I had the opportunity, I would choose to study abroad again
- I am interested in International exchange opportunities
- I would like to continue my studies abroad after graduation from SLC
- St. Lawrence College curriculum should include more intercultural perspectives.
- Intercultural skills are very important in the workplace
- There should be more cultural diversity in my learning experience at St. Lawrence College
- I am learning about different cultures at St. Lawrence College
- I experience other cultures in a positive way at St. Lawrence College

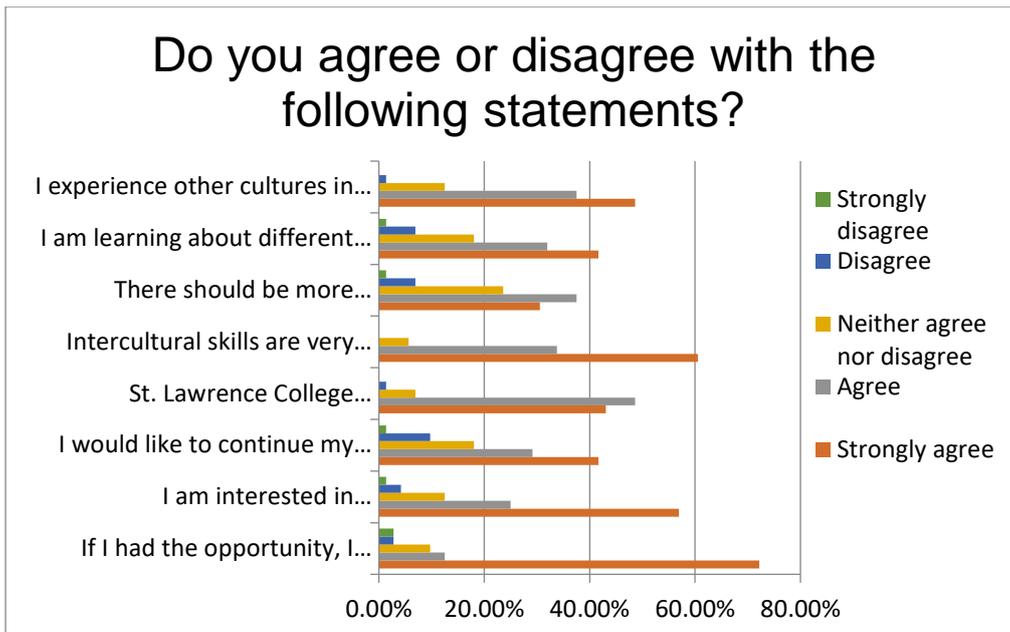


Figure 17 Question 14, Internationalization Survey 2018

Seven of the eight statements are the same as those posed to domestic students. The 72 responses to this series of agreement statements is significantly more heavily weighted to “strongly agree,” to a greater degree than a similar series of statements posed to domestic students (there were no statements that garnered greater than 40% of “strongly agree” response by domestic respondents). This may be influenced by cultural norms that emphasize courtesy, but it does show some indication that the international students at SLC are finding value in their educational endeavors at the college. It could also reflect the supports and services that are provided to international students through orientation presentations and workshops that assist them in acclimating to the culture of Canada and St. Lawrence College. International students are given information verbally and in hard copy by the International Education department to assist them in navigating a new learning environment. Currently, orientation activities do not include instructional opportunities for domestic students that build intercultural sensitivity. That lack could reflect in their less positive responses.

Female international respondents appear to feel strongly that their exposure to other cultures is positive but are less certain than male respondents that they would choose to study abroad again. More than 80% of male respondents strongly agreed that they would choose to study abroad again. Of the 32 female responses, there were two “strongly disagree” responses that caused downward pressure on the response average. Those responses could be culturally rooted, based on gender roles or female international students may feel less comfortable overall in their international experience.

4.5.2 International Student Support Services

The International Education office provides many support services to international students to promote successful academic experiences.

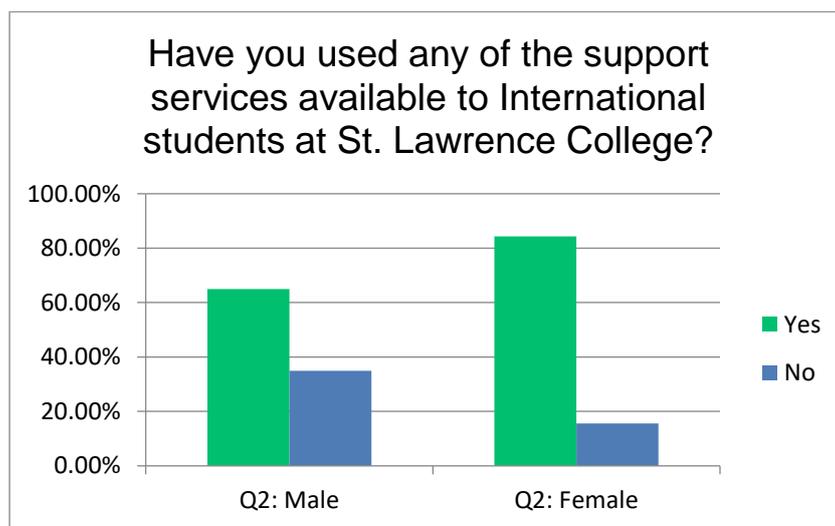


Figure 18 Question 15, Gender Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

Have you used any of the support services available to International students at St. Lawrence College?						
	Yes		No		Total	
Q1: 17 or younger	100.00%	3	0.00%	0	4.00%	3
Q1: 18-20	76.92%	20	23.08%	6	34.67%	26
Q1: 21-24	66.67%	20	33.33%	10	40.00%	30
Q1: 25-29	76.92%	10	23.08%	3	17.33%	13
Q1: 30-39	100.00%	3	0.00%	0	4.00%	3
Q1: 40-49	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0
Q1: 50-59	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0
Total	74.67%	56	25.33%	19	100.00%	75
				Answered		75

Table 3 Question 15, Age Categories, Internationalization Survey 2018

Of the 75 students who answered this question, 74.67% said yes to having used the support services provided. A third of the students in the 21-24 age category did not access services; based on age and gender divisions, it appears that most of the group not accessing services is male. The college could focus efforts to promote support services to that group.

Students were asked to rate support services on a Likert scale that offered responses ranging from excellent to poor and included a “did not use” response.

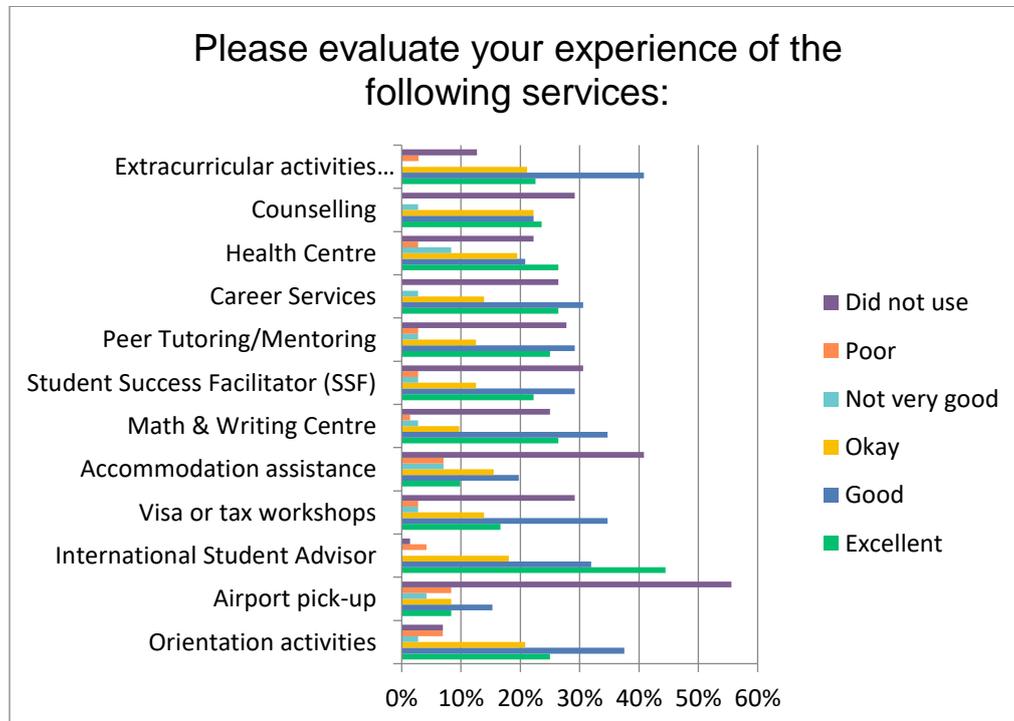


Figure 19 Question 16, Internationalization Survey 2018

The International Student Advisor, orientation and extracurricular activities were the services most used by the 72 respondents, all of which received positive ratings. The airport pick-up service had the lowest usage, with more than 55% not accessing it. This service should be reviewed, and comparisons made between recent student intakes to determine if the lack of usage is anomalous or consistent. If consistent, the funding for this service could be redirected to other services that students value more. If the service is deemed valuable, the department should explore further how to meet the students' needs. Accommodation assistance was underutilized and was rated excellent less than 10% of the time by those who did access it. It is unclear what inhibited use or why it scored lower than other assistance services, but further investigation may provide avenues to improvement. Overall, the "did not use" response chosen between 22% and 55% of the time. As those who did use them gave generally positive ratings (other than the services noted previously), it is not likely that the services are not needed.

4.6 Intercultural Interaction

All survey respondents were asked how frequently they interact with students from other cultures in and out of the classroom, to which 512 responses were returned.

Male respondents reported in-class intercultural interactions daily more than 10% more frequently than female respondents; female respondents reported never interacting with students from other cultures in class 7% more frequently than male respondents. Both male and female respondents chose "sometimes" or "rarely" most frequently for how often they interacted with other cultures outside of class. As noted by Colleen Ward in her 2001 study at the University of Victoria (New Zealand), interventive interaction measures must be directed by the institution to facilitate interactions between domestic

and international students, as the skills to build intercultural relationships are not inherent but learned. (Ward, 2001)

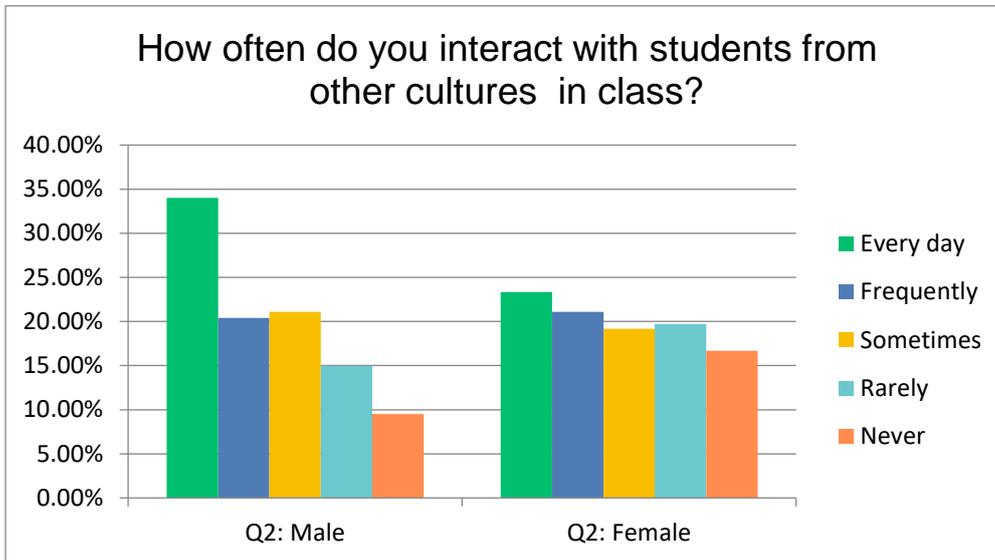


Figure 20 Question 17, Gender Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

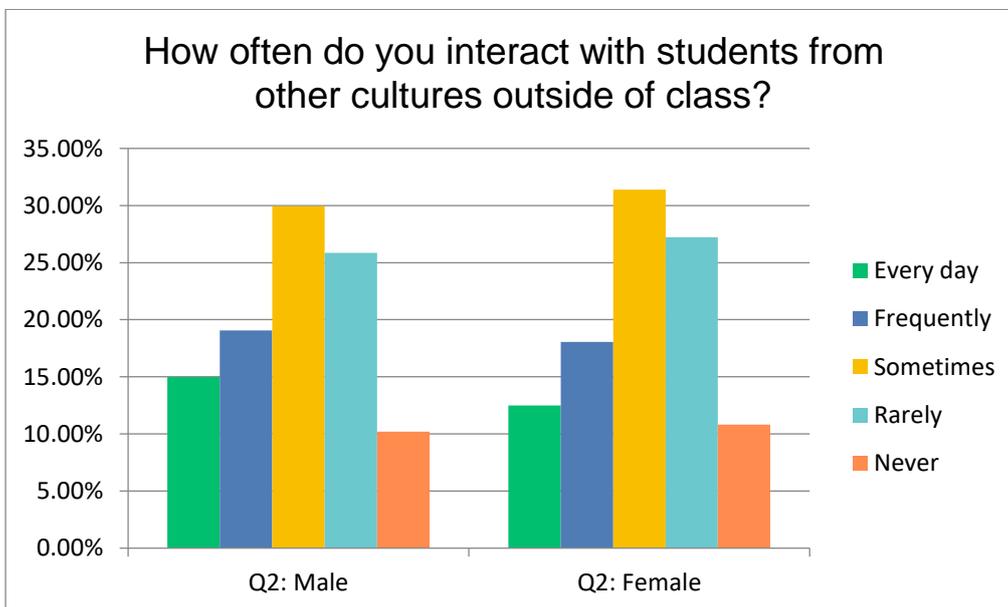


Figure 21 Question 18, Gender Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

When the results are compared between domestic and international students, contact in class and out of class is reported almost twice as often by international respondents as occurring every day. This could be attributed to the multicultural nature of Canadian society. Although the St. Lawrence College student body is derived of a relatively homogenous ethnic population, Canadians as a society are accustomed to regarding themselves as multicultural and may not automatically assume someone who is visibly different is culturally other. (Parkin & Mendelsohn, 2003)

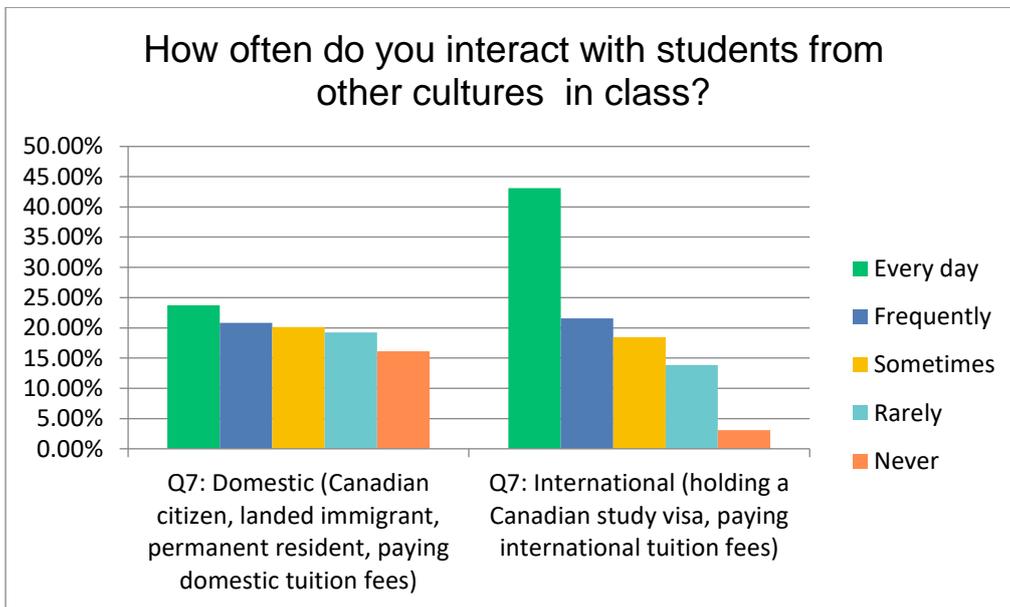


Figure 22 Question 17, Citizenship Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

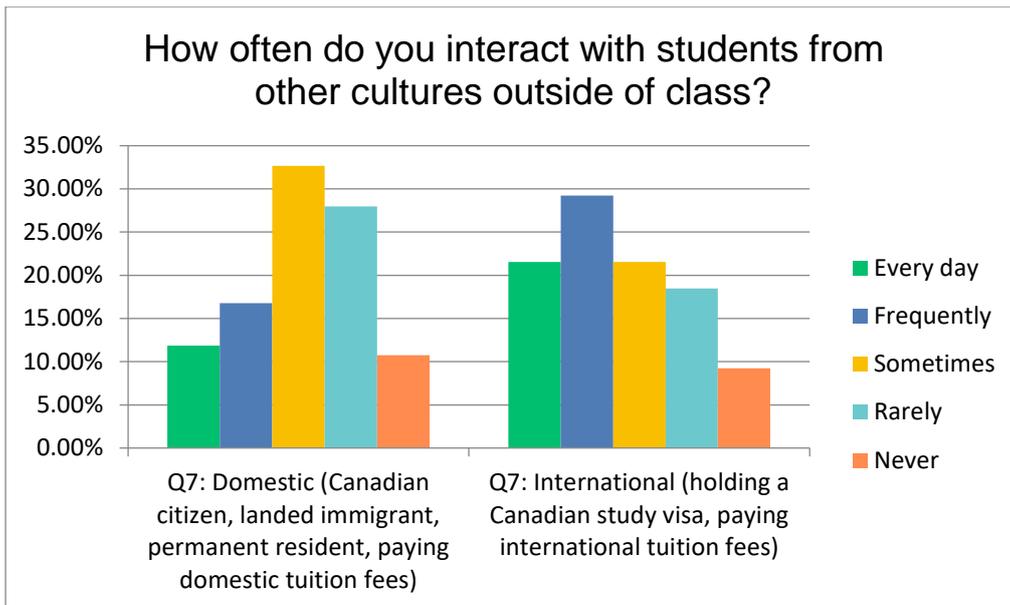


Figure 23 Question 18, Citizenship Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

International students valued intercultural interactions approximately 10% more highly than domestic students. International students must be more aware of the impact another culture has on their education experience because they are immersed in a culture other than their own. Domestic SLC students may be much less aware of how other cultures impact them as international students only make up 16% of the total student population at St. Lawrence College.

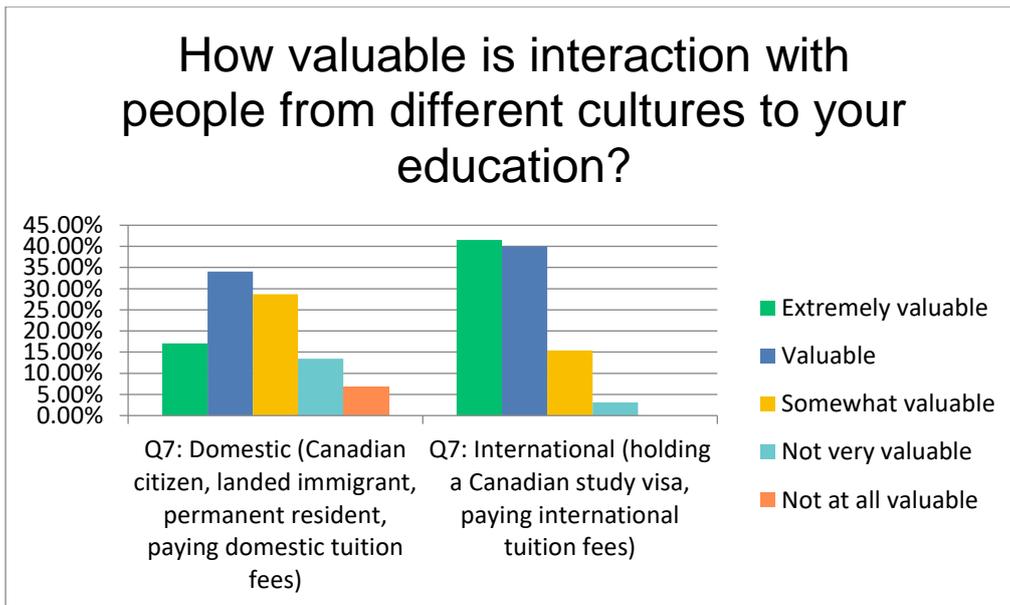


Figure 24 Question 19, Citizenship Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

4.7 Student Feedback

Respondents were asked how SLC should improve intercultural skills in the learning environment. Domestic students returned 373 comments, and international students returned 59 comments. Null answers (don't know, no answer, blank, N/A) made up 15% of the total responses. International responses contained a greater level of satisfaction in current intercultural skill levels than evinced by domestic responses: 17.8% of international responses reported satisfaction, either stating “*the college is doing enough,*” or “*it's good now,*” compared to 7.2% of domestic respondents.

Less than 5% of domestic student responses were identifiably negative to the concept of intercultural skills or to international students in general. There were very specific statements by domestic students who appear to believe that international students are held to a different standard for academic

integrity, such as: *“If an international student cheats on an exam they should have the same consequences as domestic students. They shouldn't be allowed to continue just because they pay more money for tuition.”* Respondents tended more to concern rather than hostility over international students’ ability to cope with course content due to language barriers and too many international students in proportion to domestic students in a class.

From both groups, most responses fell into one of the following categories:

- Education
- Communication
- Social Events

4.7.1 Education

This category of responses returned suggestions for incorporating intercultural skills into existing courses and programs and expanding the multicultural perspectives and of courses and programs. For example, students suggested that the Nursing curriculum incorporate medical practices from other cultures. Other responses suggested workshops, guest speakers and course projects that require research into other cultures. Bringing in faculty on academic exchange, bilingual faculty and developing relationships with similar institutions in other countries were also suggested. A frequent response was that faculty manage group work by assigning students to groups rather than allowing them to choose their own, some noting that students gravitate to their cultural peer groups rather than mixing domestic and international students. Betty Leask, a leader in internationalizing curriculum, acknowledges that faculty require training and support to facilitate intercultural interaction in the classroom; she states that “group work must be managed carefully and

both international and home students will require guidance and support to interact effectively in class.” (Leask, 2009, p. 211)

Domestic responses also included requests for the college to find more opportunities for study abroad, through placement, exchange or post-graduate pathways to further study. Preparing international students for the learning environment at SLC was a recurring theme. Better orientation content that introduces incoming students to intercultural competencies were requested by both international and domestic students. Balancing class enrollment so that courses are not predominantly international or domestic was suggested. One respondent noted that in a course where domestic students only made up one in five students of the class, more time was spent tutoring the international students on how group work is accomplished than on completing the work. Both groups of students mentioned classroom participation by international students as a priority to develop intercultural awareness. Participation exposes domestic students to new perspectives, but it is a learning behaviour that is not always encouraged in other cultures so international students often struggle with it unless they are coached or mentored.

With more than 25% of all responses being suggestions for classroom or educational approaches to intercultural skills, SLC students, domestic and international, understand the need for those skills in their learning environment.

4.7.2 Communication

Both international and domestic respondents suggested various methods of communicating intercultural context in the learning environment. Some responses were simply “Responses included a newsletter that profiled international students and their experiences as a student in Canada, posters

depicting cultural sensitivity issues, art displays and dedicated spaces to cultural groups. Buddy or mentor relationships were also suggested by both international and domestic students as a means of developing intercultural skills in participants.

4.7.3 Social Events

International respondents overwhelmingly suggested social interactions such as festivals, parties, sports, games and meals; 50% (28 of 56) responses suggested cultural events or activities to improve intercultural skills. Domestic respondents suggested “cultural events” or out-of-class activities that facilitate social integration between the groups in 15.5% of their answers. It is noted that sport as a cultural, intercultural or social endeavor is not mentioned in any response. Respondents used general terms such as “events,” “programs” and “activities”. Activities that involve food were frequently suggested as were multicultural festivals, clubs and mixers. The common theme appears to be a desire for activity that facilitates personal interaction and conversation.

4.8 Challenges in Cultural Diversity

Respondents were asked to describe their biggest challenge in relation to cultural diversity at SLC. Of the 443 responses, 386 were domestic and 57 were international. The language barrier was the largest single response, chosen by 26.3% of international respondents and 23.1% of domestic respondents. Slightly more than one fifth of respondents (22.1%) answered that they are not challenged by cultural diversity, and 10.4% of respondents chose a lack of cultural diversity as their biggest challenge.

There were many answer variations on feeling inhibited or hesitant to approach those who were culturally other. Some indicated they felt they lacked the social skill to interact with others. One respondent stated, “*groups and cliques are prevalent in the school and often it is difficult to penetrate that barrier as people feel comfortable with their groups.*” Many respondents felt that their diversity challenge was that cultural groups only “*hang out in groups of people like themselves.*”

The responses to this question revealed some frictions in the student populace. Domestic respondents made three accusations of cheating against international students, two declarations that Canadians/Caucasians were in the minority and 28 varied negative descriptions of cultural or minority groups. These opinions may be changed by increasing cultural diversity and internationalization, or they could be exacerbated. International students made two accusations of racism (one against faculty) and one negative description of other cultures.

Comparing the international student responses to the focus groups conducted in 2017 and 2018 by the Associate Dean of SLC’s International Education department, there is a marked difference in the frequency with which the students expressed financial concerns as their most pressing concern in the focus groups. Only two of the 57 responses to the survey noted financial concerns.

4.9 Cultural Experience and Inclusivity

Asked to share a comment or experience about cultural interactions at SLC, 418 responses were returned; 362 domestic and 56 international. Responses to this question resembled those in the previous section. Positive

responses were more prevalent by a factor of 2:1 for domestic students and 5:1 for international students.

There were 507 responses to the question of whether SLC provides a culturally inclusive environment; there little difference in the response rates of domestic and international students and virtually no difference when filtered by gender.

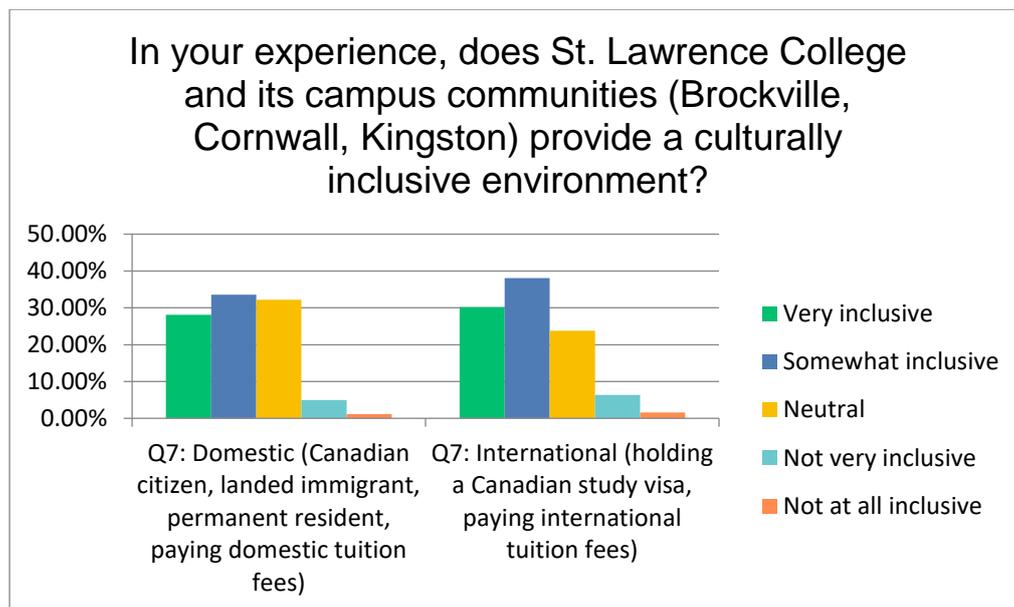


Figure 25 Question 23, Citizenship Filter, Internationalization Survey 2018

Variation in response values appear when examined by age category. Older respondents rated inclusivity “neutral” more frequently than those in younger age groups; the percentage of “very inclusive” responses drop from 40% at the 17 or younger category to 0% in the 50-59 category. Inclusivity is a subjective measure, and may be comprehended differently between generations, as the largest variance occurs at a generational divide: *Gen x and Baby Boomers* versus *Gen Y, Gen Z and Millennials*.

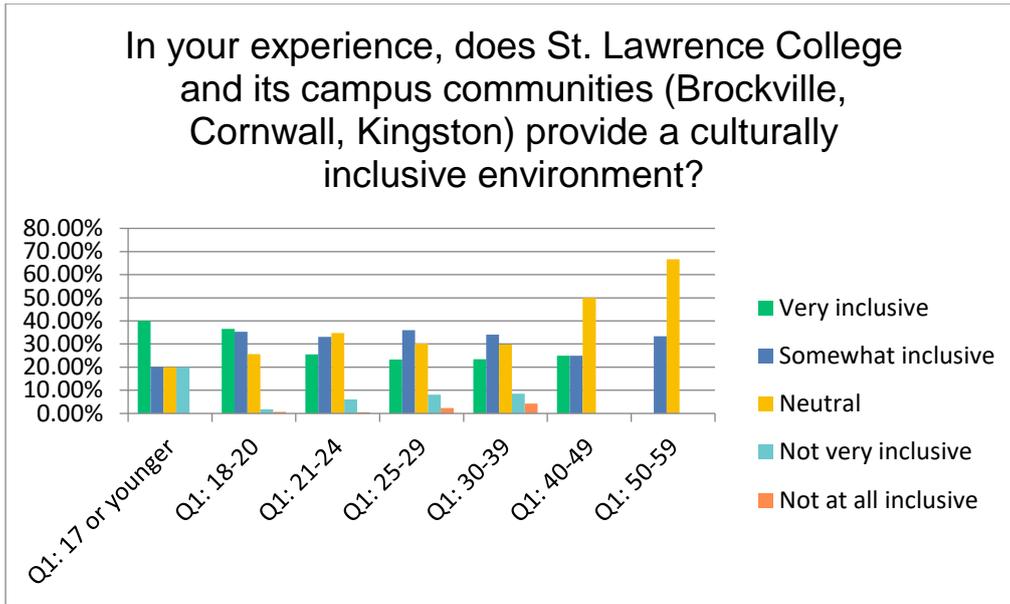


Figure 26 Question 23, Age Categories, Internationalization Survey 2018

4.10 Summary

The survey responses examined in this project describe a representative sample of St. Lawrence College students' perception of internationalization initiatives, cultural diversity and interaction between international and domestic students; their opinions about those topics were tabulated and compared by demographic categories of age, gender and status. The accumulated data shows that domestic students are aware of opportunities to study abroad although few have taken advantage of the opportunities, and that they would like to see more information from the College on this topic.

Chapter 5 Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This research project was undertaken with the premise that internationalization must have an impact on how students perceive their educational environment at St. Lawrence College. As further internationalization initiatives were about to begin under the aegis of the International Education Strategic Initiative, the researcher concluded that in order to measure the success of future internationalization strategies, a base point needed to be established from which to make those measurements. Using the research data assembled here, comparisons can be made with future assessments to inform the control feedback process.

This section will examine the results of the internationalization survey in the context of the research objectives.

5.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.2.1 Objective 1

To determine the impact the recent drive to internationalization has had on the learning environment for students enrolled at SLC:

International students appear find the SLC learning environment positive, but do not feel that course content reflects international perspectives. As internationalization initiatives for curriculum are still in the preliminary phase, that result was not unexpected. They make use of most of the support

services available to them, although there is still a portion of the population who do appear to access services such as accommodation and academic assistance. Whether this is due to lack of need, lack of knowledge or lack of perceived value is not clear from the data. Further efforts by the International Education department and the academic schools to encourage student uptake of supports may improve this result in the future.

Domestic students were aware of the College's campaign to inform them of study abroad opportunities, although few have pursued the opportunity as yet. The respondents expressed a desire for more information and more program specific opportunities. It will be possible to build upon the current level of awareness with future campaigns, and to tailor institutional efforts to establish additional placement and exchange agreements abroad. There are some frictional issues emerging that may negatively influence domestic students' perception of the value of internationalization. Education, transparent policies and consistent and equitable standards may mitigate these concerns.

5.2.2 Objective 2

To examine international and domestic students' level of interaction with each other:

Both international and domestic students expressed frustration in regard to intercultural interaction. Language barriers and, as one student identified as a challenge, the "self- isolation" of cultural groups were the most prevalent roadblocks to interaction. From the secondary research undertaken for this project, facilitating this type of integration will take training and commitment for staff and faculty, as students lack the intercultural skill to create social cohesion on their own. Careful monitoring of interactive initiatives will be required to measure success.

Both groups felt that SLC should provide a greater number of opportunities for social encounters that would allow conversation and the

development of friendships. Many students felt that interactions outside of class were as important if not more so than classroom tasks requiring working together. It was interesting to note that participation in or attendance at sporting events was not specifically returned as a desirable interactive activity by any respondent. Sports could offer benefits such as team-building, trust and mutual interest.

5.2.3 Objective 3

To determine domestic and international students' perception of their educational experience at SLC:

All students expressed overall satisfaction with their SLC learning experience. Students expressed acknowledgement of value and desire to have intercultural skills and multicultural or global perspective incorporated into their education through curriculum, workshops and information tools such as newsletters and mentoring programs. Domestic students expressed concern over a perceived lack of respect for or knowledge of academic integrity on the part of some international students, and of international students' lack of knowledge of expected behaviour in places such as libraries, study halls and during exams. International students identified racism in only responses, but many professed discomfort with attempting to breach the perceived barrier of established ethnic or cultural social groups. While these negative responses were in the minority, they should be flagged as potential threats to effective internationalization management.

5.2.4 Objective 4

To compare the outcomes of Objectives 1-3 between identified genders, age/ethnic groups and between first year and higher year students:

A greater number of female domestic students participated in the survey than is reflective of the SLC student population. During the collection of data, a reminder emailed to participants that identified the smaller return of responses by male students generated an influx of male participation that narrowed the percentage spread from 75% female responses to 70.3%. While many of the responses were fairly homogenous between demographic groupings, there were a few points that stood out. Female domestic respondents identified greater fear-based factors as barriers to international study, which may indicate that SLC is not adequately addressing those topics in the information shared with students on study abroad opportunities.

International students valued intercultural interactions more than domestic students, which could be inferred by their having chosen to study abroad. Continuing the internationalization process by including intercultural content or context into program curriculum may build domestic students' awareness and valuation of intercultural interaction.

Understanding intercultural skill and inclusivity as concepts appears to vary between older students (over 40 years of age) and younger students (under 39 years of age). Generational diversity could be developed from a potential weakness to a strength by creating a learning opportunity that examines the progression of global influence, cultural mobility and societal norms.

Fewer male international students accessed support services, especially in the 21-24 age group, indicating that the International Department needs to communicate more effectively with that group to encourage student success. Ethnicity in this research format was not a useful comparative mechanism as domestic students self-identified multiple ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Differentiation between international and domestic responses was the closest measurable variant.

5.2.5 Objective 5

To make recommendations for both further study and further initiatives in internationalization based on identified divergent and convergent student perceptions of the SLC learning environment:

As the current research was undertaken to describe where internationalization is now at St. Lawrence College, it will generate greater value in the future as a comparable for future study. Periodic examination of student perceptions of the evolving educational environment should be part of the control cycle of internationalization, to provide the feedback to measure the effectiveness of initiatives and strategies.

The secondary research in this project generated information developed by other institutions that may be examined for cultural fit and effectiveness at SLC. Technology-based international learning connections that mitigate the cost of international study, mentoring programs that pair domestic and international students and faculty training programs could be adapted to SLC purposes for intercultural development and internationalization initiatives.

As detailed in the previous chapter, ongoing communication with students is essential to keep students aware of study abroad opportunities, support services and out-of-class intercultural events. Students responded in every open question that solicited feedback that they want to attend intercultural events. Cooperation between the internationalization team and other SLC departments such as the Student Association and Marketing could generate effective communication strategies.

The interest in intercultural interaction in both domestic and international students should be capitalized on with training for faculty and staff on how to facilitate cross-cultural communication and to design curriculum strategies that build intercultural maturation.

5.3 Research Limitations

The primary limitation of this research project is the limited scope of the enquiry. Internationalization is a complex process that must be informed by ongoing feedback from the affected student population. Further research into classroom dynamics, curricular content, faculty feedback and best practices are all topics of study required to build effective internationalization strategies.

A secondary limitation was the open-ended questions about ethnicity. Due to the breadth of data returned as students self-identified with up to four different ethnicities, using the demographic data to compare responses was unwieldy and ultimately too diluted to generate usable information.

The final limitation was the timeframe in which responses were generated. Response rates may have been inhibited the target population receiving the survey as the academic semester was ending and exams were beginning. Releasing the survey earlier in the semester may have generated greater interest and would have allowed for a longer collection period.

5.4 Dissemination of Results

The results of the research will be available to IT Sligo as part of the dissertation completed by the researcher. Permission from the appropriate SLC authority must be obtained before any dissemination of information can be shared as feedback to the participants. The researcher, in cooperation with the SLC International Education department will determine the best way to

provide feedback to the student participants, given that the project will conclude after the end of their academic semester.

The researcher was approached by members of the SLC faculty and the internationalization team with an interest in the project to present the results after the academic submission of the project to IT Sligo. Permission will be obtained from the appropriate SLC authority prior to agreeing to this request.

5.5 Summary

The conclusions reached in this chapter were based on the findings and analysis in Chapter 4 and on the secondary research reviewed in Chapter 2. Recommendations for potential research projects and internationalization initiatives were based on feedback data generated by the survey described in Chapter 3. This section also outlined the limitations of the current research and how the project may be shared with the St. Lawrence College community.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Introduction Page



April 2018

Research Project: *“How is internationalization changing the student experience at St. Lawrence College?”*

Researcher: Tracy Coady

Supervisors: Ann Higgins, Institute of Technology, Sligo

Ining Chao, St. Lawrence College

Invitation:

You are invited to take part in a research study for a Level 7 dissertation project by Tracy Coady at the Institute of Technology, Ireland. Following is a brief survey that should take you approximately 7 minutes to complete.

Before you decide to participate, it’s important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. You may contact TCoady@sl.on.ca if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the study about?

St. Lawrence College has made some big changes. Students from around the world have come to study at SLC, and pathways to study abroad mean more students than ever will continue their education in other countries. This project will examine how internationalization is changing your experience at St. Lawrence College. The goal is to find out what you think about studying abroad, about your learning environment in relation to intercultural perspectives and about studying at SLC and to develop a snapshot of the intercultural, learning, and international perspectives of St. Lawrence College students.

Do I have to participate?

The information you provide is **completely voluntary** – it's up to you whether you participate or not. If you do agree to participate, you can change your mind before you're finished - all you have to do is close your browser to exit the questionnaire. However, once you submit your answers, you will not be able to take them back because all the information collected is anonymous.

Are there risks or benefits?

This is your opportunity to speak your mind. Your input increases what is known about internationalization and what that means to both international and domestic students at SLC. This project is somewhat unique in that it looks at both groups – most studies in this field look at either international student experience or study abroad experiences. There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

Will my information be kept confidential?

Your survey questionnaire is **completely anonymous** –the questions in the survey do not ask for information that could identify you. The receiving institution does not publish Level 7 dissertations, and the final report will not include individual survey results, only aggregate data. You will not be identifiable in any report or presentation resulting from this study.

Will I be compensated for participating in this study?

At the end of the questionnaire, there is an email address where you can submit your contact info to enter a **draw to win a \$100 Amazon gift card**. One randomly selected contact will be drawn on May 1, 2018 at SLC Kingston. Once the winner of the draw is contacted, all entries will be disposed of by secure shredding at SLC.

Who do I contact for more information?

If you have questions about the survey or the research project, please contact the researcher at tcoady@sl.on.ca. If you have any concerns about how this research was conducted or about your rights as a participant, please contact the St. Lawrence College Research Ethics Board at reb@sl.on.ca.

Consent:

“I understand what I am being asked to do and by completing this questionnaire, I agree to take part in this study.”

Appendix B: Internationalization Survey

Internationalization Survey

Part 1 – Demographics

These questions are completely anonymous and confidential. St. Lawrence College strives to be inclusive of everyone and respectful of their person. This information is collected to obtain greater insight into the experience of all students.

1. What is your age?

17 or younger

30-39

18-20

40-49

21-24

50-59

25-29

60 or older

2. What is your gender?

Female

Male

Other

I prefer not to disclose information concerning my gender

3. With which ethnic or cultural group(s) do you most identify?

4. I attend St. Lawrence College at the:

- Brockville Campus
- Cornwall Campus
- Kingston Campus

5. My program is in:

- School of Applied Science & Computing
- School of Business
- School of Community Service
- School of Health Sciences
- School of Justice Studies & Applied Arts
- School of Skilled Trades & Tourism

6. In what year of your program are you currently enrolled?

- Year 1 of a college program or graduate certificate
- Year 2 of a college program, advanced college diploma program or graduate certificate
- Year 3 or higher in an advanced college diploma or bachelors degree
- Other (please specify)

Domestic (Canadian citizen, landed immigrant, permanent resident)

International (holding a passport from a country other than Canada, paying international student fees)

IF ANSWER "DOMESTIC," GO TO QUESTION 8

IF ANSWER "INTERNATIONAL," GO TO QUESTION 15

Part 2i – Domestic Students

Your answers to these questions will assist in the development of internationalization strategies and supports for all students at St. Lawrence College.

DOMESTIC:

7. Have you heard of Study Abroad at SLC?

Yes No

8. Have you studied abroad?

Yes No

9. If you answered "yes" to studying abroad, how satisfied were you with the experience?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Very satisfied | <input type="radio"/> Dissatisfied |
| <input type="radio"/> Satisfied | <input type="radio"/> Very dissatisfied |
| <input type="radio"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | <input type="radio"/> I answered no |

10. If you answered “no” to studying abroad, what reasons impacted your decision not to study abroad? Choose all that apply to you.

- Not interested
- Financial barrier
- Language barrier
- Fear of culture shock/nervous of experiencing other cultures
- Fear of being homesick
- Not available to my program
- I was not aware of the opportunity to study abroad
- I answered yes

Other:

please specify

11. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I am interested in International exchange opportunities

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree or disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

I would like to continue my studies abroad after graduation from SLC

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

SLC curriculum should include intercultural perspectives.

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

Intercultural skills are very important in today’s workplace

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

There should be more cultural diversity in my learning experience at SLC

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

I am learning about other cultures at SLC.

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

I experience other cultures in a positive way at SLC:

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

Having international students at SLC improves my learning experience.

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

12. Approximately how many international students are in your program year?

More than 15

Less than 5

11-15

Zero (0)

6-10

I don't know

SKIP TO QUESTION 17

Part 2ii: International

This is your opportunity to let St. Lawrence College know how you feel about studying here. Your answers will help the college develop strategies and supports for all students.

INTERNATIONAL

h

13. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

If I had the opportunity, I would choose to study abroad again

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree or disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

I am interested in International exchange opportunities

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree or disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

I would like to continue my studies abroad after graduation from SLC

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

SLC curriculum should include more intercultural perspectives.

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

Intercultural skills are very important in today's workplace

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

There should be more cultural diversity in my learning experience at SLC

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

I am learning about different cultures at SLC.

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

I experience other cultures in a positive way at SLC:

[Strongly agree – Agree – Neither agree nor disagree - Disagree – Strongly Disagree]

14. Have you used any support services available to International Students at St. Lawrence College?

Yes

No

15. Please evaluate your experience of the following services:

Orientation activities

[Excellent – Good – Okay – Not very good – Poor – Did not use]

Airport pickup

[Excellent – Good – Okay – Not very good – Poor – Did not use]

International Student Advisor

[Excellent – Good – Okay – Not very good – Poor – Did not use]

Visa or Tax workshops

[Excellent – Good – Okay – Not very good – Poor – Did not use]

Accommodation assistance

[Excellent – Good – Okay – Not very good – Poor – Did not use]

Math & Writing Centre

[Excellent – Good – Okay – Not very good – Poor – Did not use]

Student Success Facilitator

[Excellent – Good – Okay – Not very good – Poor – Did not use]

Peer Tutoring/Mentoring

[Excellent – Good – Okay – Not very good – Poor – Did not use]

Career Services

[Excellent – Good – Okay – Not very good – Poor – Did not use]

Health Centre

[Excellent – Good – Okay – Not very good – Poor – Did not use]

Counselling

[Excellent – Good – Okay – Not very good – Poor – Did not use]

Extracurricular activities (i.e. sports, clubs, trips to Ottawa or Montreal)

[Excellent – Good – Okay – Not very good – Poor – Did not use]

Part 3 – Your opinions matter

Please answer each question as fully as you can.

16. How often do you interact with students from other cultures **in class**?

Every day

Rarely

Frequently

Never

Sometimes

17. How often do you interact with students from different cultures **outside of class**?

Every day

Rarely

Frequently

Never

Sometimes

18. How valuable is interaction with people from different cultures to your education?

Extremely valuable

Not very valuable

Valuable

Not at all valuable

Somewhat valuable

19. How do you think St. Lawrence College should improve intercultural skills in the learning environment?

20. What is your biggest challenge in relation to cultural diversity at St. Lawrence College?

21. Please share a comment or experience about your interactions with other cultures at St. Lawrence College.

22. In your experience, does St. Lawrence College and its campus communities (Brockville, Cornwall, Kingston) provide a culturally inclusive environment?

- Very inclusive Not very inclusive
 Somewhat inclusive Not at all inclusive
 Neutral

23. Would you recommend SLC to your friends or family?

- Yes No

Please explain.

Appendix C: SLC REB approval

Research Ethics Board Members
James Morris-Pocock (Chair)
Lori Cullen
Rajni Dogra
Lavinia Inbar
Marie-Line Jobin
Andrea Ruzick
Misha Chaman
Matthew Varnata



April 6, 2018

Principal Investigator: Tracy Coady
Research Study: How is the internationalization of St. Lawrence College Changing the Student Experience?

SLC-REB #: 2018-186TC

This application was subject to:

Full Board Review Delegated Review

Dear Tracy Coady,

I am writing to advise you that the St. Lawrence College Research Ethics Board (SLC-REB) has granted **Ethics Clearance** to the above-named research study. For future communications with the SLC Research Services Office or in communications with SLC faculty, staff or students, please include the **SLC-REB file # 2018-186TC**.

You have one year to complete the project from the time of approval: **April 6, 2018**. Should you require more time to complete your project, you will be required to submit a [Request for Renewal of an Approved Project Form](#). In order to obtain ongoing ethics approval for your project, this should be submitted **one month prior to the anniversary date of [April 6]**.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Both a [Request for Amendment of an Approved Project form](#) and a revised SLC-REB application must be submitted to the Research Services Office for review by the SLC-REB.

Any adverse or unanticipated events should be reported to the SLC-REB as soon as possible. The SLC-REB reserves the right to review your file at any time to ensure that research is being conducted in accordance with all SLC policies.

Once your project is complete, you are required to complete a [Project Termination form](#). This form must be submitted as a final report about your research to the SLC-REB.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Morris-Pocock".

James Morris-Pocock
Chair, Research Ethics Board

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