



# Student Affairs Information and Research Office

A department of Student Affairs

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## UCLA Graduating Senior Survey: A Briefing on International Students

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### Executive Summary

International student respondents to the UCLA 2005 Graduating Senior Survey comprised less than five percent of the total respondent pool on the 2005 Senior Survey, which is consistent with the percent of foreign students who received Bachelor's degrees in the 2004-05 academic year. Overall, more females than males responded to the 2005 Senior Survey, and the percentage of female respondents was even larger among international students. The most numerous ethnic groups of international students are Asian, specifically Chinese, Korean, and Japanese. Overwhelmingly international students enter UCLA as transfer students and they come prepared as well as domestic students as measured by SAT scores and by GPAs. During the term that the Senior Survey was administered (spring 2005), the term GPA for international and domestic students was practically identical.

International and domestic students report similar opinions about most of their academic experiences. Differences arose in a few areas, however. International students met with instructors more often and reported doing more than required work for a course because they found it to be so interesting. Domestic students reported writing more papers.

International students found the UCLA campus to be a place where political, religious, and sexual orientation issues are respected. However, these students tend not to have as much conversational engagement with students of diverse backgrounds when compared with domestic students.

More international students plan to get a career job after graduation, while domestic students tend to expect to explore their options and hold off making a career move. Consistent with this data is the fact that more international students are not sure of their plans for a professional school, while domestic students more often report plans to attend such schools.

### Introduction

This briefing, one of a series developed by the Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) is based upon the results of the UCLA 2005 Senior Survey. The purpose of these briefings is to provide special insight about certain sub-populations of UCLA students.

This report is focused upon a comparison of **international** and domestic students at the end of their undergraduate careers. Specifically, this report focuses on the co-curricular experiences, goals, and impressions of the UCLA campus culture of these two groups of students.

### Data Source

In May 2005, all seniors in the UCLA College of Letters and Science were asked to complete a survey that explored the views of students about their lives on campus, their studies, and their plans after graduating. The result was the most comprehensive survey of seniors ever accomplished at UCLA, with over 5,800 seniors responding, a response rate of at least 80%. The responses explore views about the overall UCLA experience,

student and campus life, academic majors and minors, the quality of faculty and courses, and research opportunities for undergraduates.

## Background Characteristics of Survey Respondents

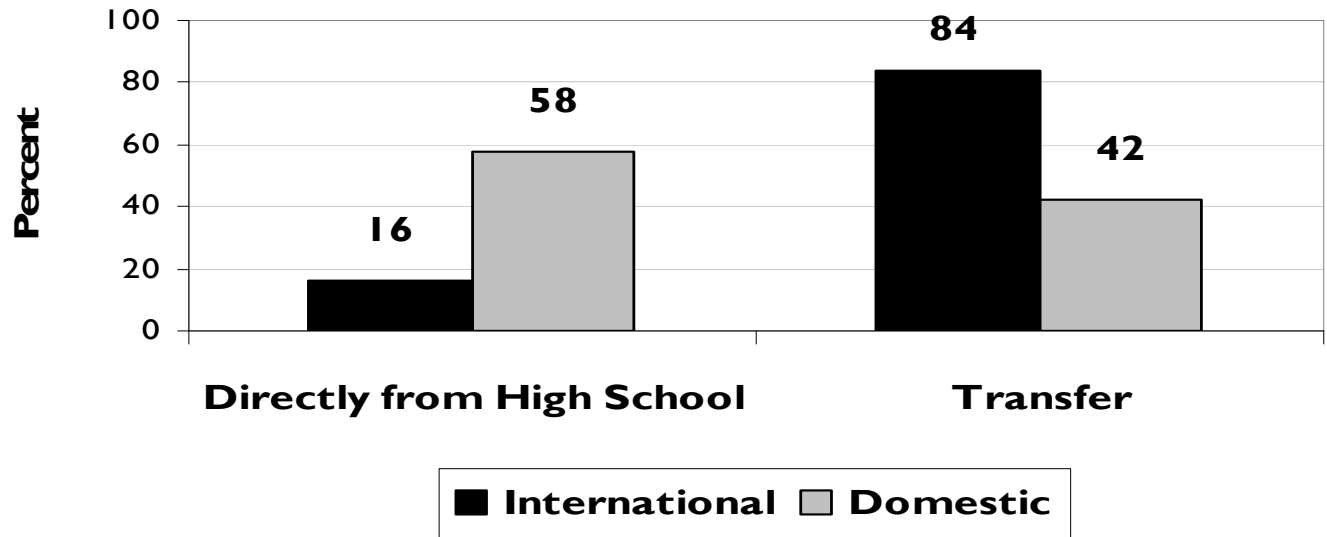
International students comprised 4.5% of total respondents (270 individuals) to the 2005 Senior Survey. This percentage is identical to the percent of foreign students who received Bachelor degrees during the 2004-2005 academic year and is believed to be representative. A comparison of the ethnic composition of international and domestic students appears in Table 1. As one might expect, the ethnic breakdowns of international and domestic students were quite different. The largest ethnic category for international students was Chinese (38%), followed by Korean and Japanese, while the largest ethnic category for domestic students was White (37%) followed by Chinese and Chicano/Mexican.

**Table 1. Ethnic Comparison of International and Domestic Students**

	Percent		Diff
	International (n=270)	Domestic (n=5,352)	
DS (Declined to state)	0.4	0.0	0.4
BL (Black/African American)	0.4	3.8	-3.4
CA (Chinese)	37.8	13.8	24.0
EI (East Indian/Pakistani)	3.0	2.9	0.1
JA (Japanese)	18.1	2.6	15.5
KO (Korean)	20.0	7.2	12.8
LA (Latino/Other Spanish)	0.7	4.6	-3.9
MA (Chicano/Mexican)	0.7	13.0	-12.3
OT (Other)	1.9	3.3	-1.4
PI (Pacific Islander)	1.1	4.3	-3.2
PO (Pilipino/Filipino)	0.4	0.2	0.2
TH (Thai/Other Asian)	3.7	2.6	1.1
VI (Vietnamese)	1.5	4.4	-2.9
WH (White/Caucasian)	8.9	36.8	-27.9
AI (American Indian/Alaskan Native)	0.0	0.5	-0.5
Missing	1.5	0.0	1.5

International students tended to have a higher representation of female respondents (68%) than domestic student respondents (63%). One dramatic difference between international and domestic students is their mode of access to UCLA. Figure 1 illustrates that eight out of ten international students entered UCLA as a transfer student compared to only four out of ten for domestic students.

**Figure 1. Mode of Access to UCLA for International and Domestic Students (2005 Senior Survey; N = 5,871)**



Consistent with the mode of entry status, most international student respondents first registered at UCLA during the 2003-2004 academic year (74%), while the first registration for domestic students was spread out over a wider time period. The largest group of domestic students (44%) first registered at UCLA during the 2001-2002 academic year. Figure 2 shows the distribution of enrollment patterns for the two groups of respondents.

**Figure 2. First Academic Year Registered at UCLA (2005 Senior Survey; N= 5,871)**

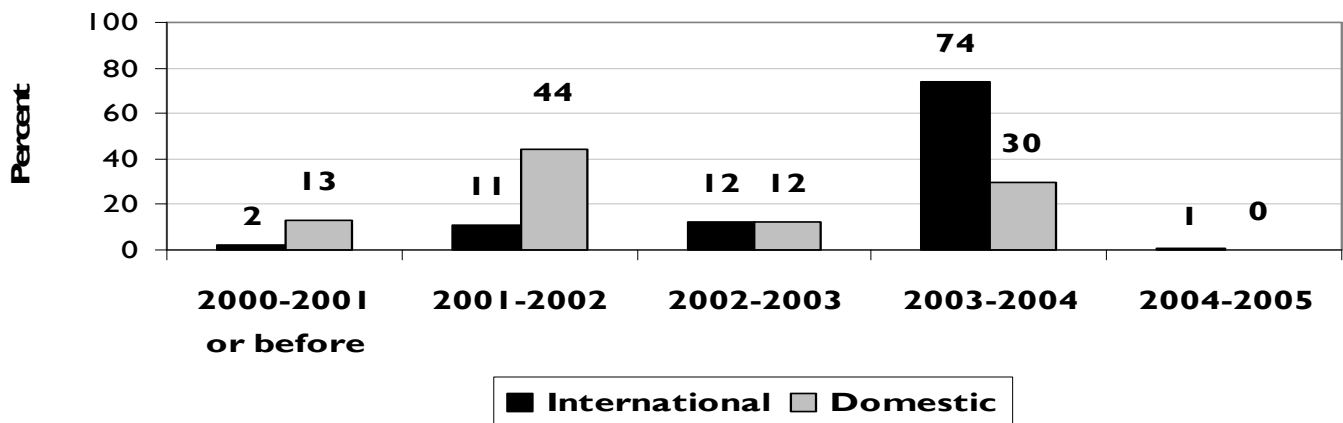


Table 2 compares international and domestic students on various measures of student performance. International students tend to have higher SAT-Math scores, slightly lower SAT-Verbal scores, and their GPAs at transfer to UCLA are higher than their domestic counterparts. Otherwise, international and domestic students had comparable high school GPAs and GPAs for the Spring of 2005 when the survey was administered.

**Table 2. Student Performance Data**

	Percent		Diff
	International (n = 270)	Domestic (n = 5352)	
Average SAT-Verbal Scores	600	615	-15
Average SAT-Math Scores	685	651	34
Average High School GPA	4.08	4.09	-0.01
Average Transfer GPA	3.65	3.49	0.16
Average GPA Spring 2005	3.20	3.21	-0.01

## Academics

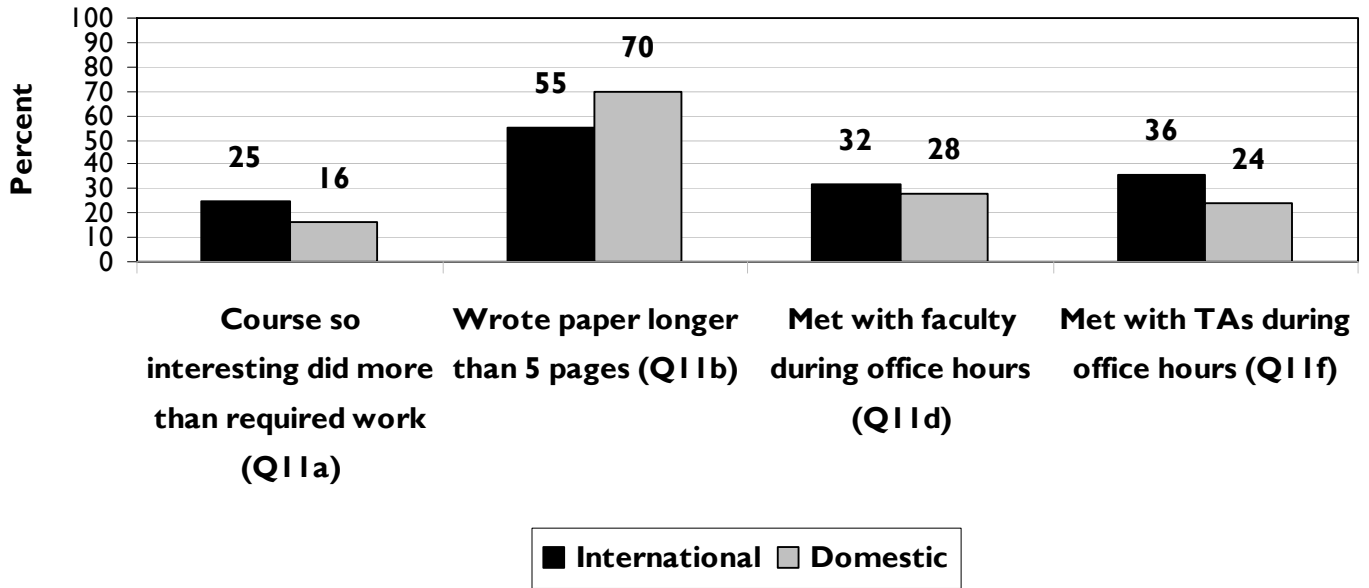
The 2005 Senior Survey contains over 60 items that measured aspects of the student academic experience. For this report SAIRO analysts selected a subset of 12 key items to analyze.

International students are happy with their academic life at UCLA as evidenced by 89 percent reporting they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their overall academic experience, and domestic students report the same levels of satisfaction. These two groups of students also are similar in their satisfaction with the item: “Ability of faculty in your major to challenge you intellectually,” with just over 90% of each group being either satisfied or very satisfied. Additionally, there were no statistically significant differences between international and domestic students in how they viewed academic advising by faculty (78% satisfied) and advising by department counselors (85% satisfied).

Although there was no difference in the percent of international and domestic students who assisted faculty in research for pay without course credit, a significantly lower percentage of international students received scholarships on the basis of their undergraduate research (3%) compared with domestic students (10%).

International students showed significant differences from domestic students in the frequency with which they participated in several academic activities. More international students found a course so interesting that they did more work than was required and more international students met with faculty and TAs during office hours than their domestic counterparts. Domestic students more often wrote papers longer than five pages. Figure 3 illustrates these differential distributions across the four survey items.

**Figure 3. Percent Often or Very Often  
(2005 Senior Survey; N = 5,871)**

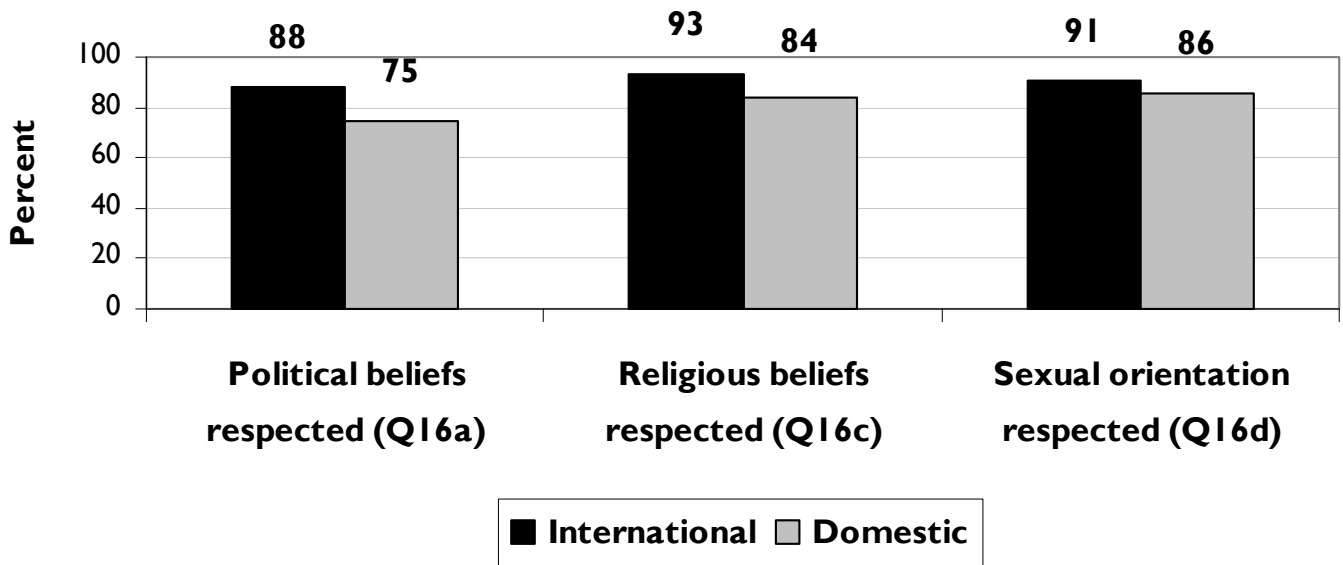


Finally, no statistically significant differences were found in the frequency of email exchanges with faculty or with TAs between international and domestic students.

### Campus Life

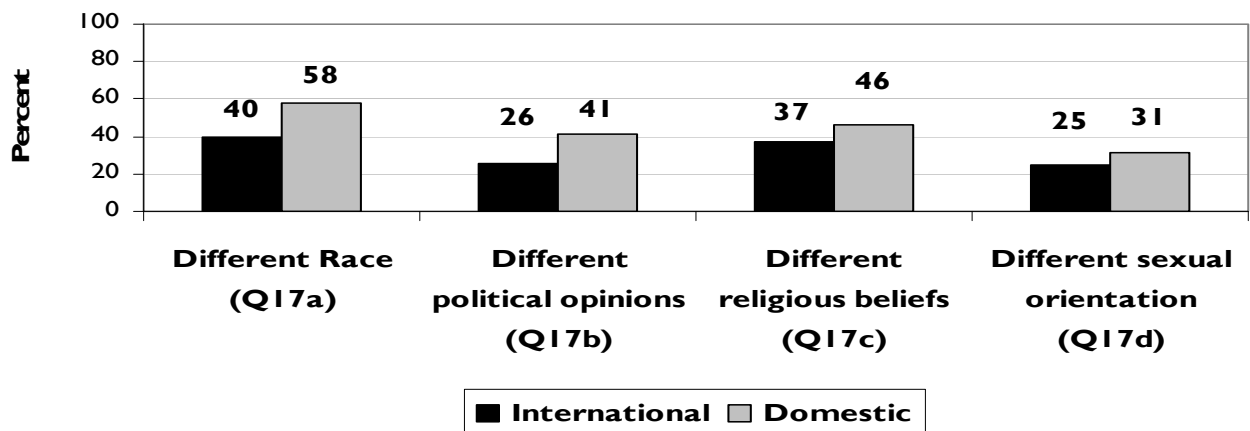
Items where students rated the openness, equality, and diversity of the campus were analyzed to note any statistically significant differences between international students and their domestic counterparts. The items that asked students to rate their UCLA experiences holistically (overall UCLA student and campus life, and overall UCLA experience) showed no significant differences between the two groups. However, international students showed significantly greater agreement with the items “students of different political beliefs are equally respected here,” “students of different religious beliefs are equally respected here,” and “students of all sexual orientations are equally respected here.” The comparative distributions for these items are shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4. Agreement with the following statements:  
(2005 Senior Survey; N=5,871)**



Although international students felt strongly that political and religious beliefs are respected on campus, international students tended not to engage in conversations with diverse groups as often as domestic students. Four survey items that demonstrated statistically significant differences in frequency of engagement are shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 5. Conversated Often or Very Often with these Groups  
(2005 Senior Survey; N = 5,871)**



## Plans after UCLA

When students were asked to select their primary plan for the year after they graduate, significant differences arose between international and domestic respondents. More international students plan to take on a career position while more domestic students plan to find a temporary job while exploring long term options. These results are illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3. What is your primary plan for the year after graduation (Q19)**

	Percent		Diff
	International (n = 270)	Domestic (n = 5,52)	
Find a temporary job while exploring long term options	25	35	-10
Take a career position	33	17	16
Join a service organization	1	2	-1
Accept an internship or fellowship related to career	7	6	1
Begin graduate or professional school	21	25	-4
Travel or live abroad	4	7	-2
Other	4	4	0
Do not know	4	5	-1

When asked whether they plan to attend a professional school after college, 30% of international students were unsure whether they would enroll. Overall, when compared to international students, more domestic students plan to attend professional school. Professional school plans for the two groups are illustrated in Table 4.

**Table 4. Do you plan to attend a Professional School? (Q20)**

	Percent		Diff
	International (n = 270)	Domestic (n = 5352)	
Next year	16	22	-6
Within 2 years	27	33	-6
Within 5 years	16	13	3
Do not know	29	22	7
Never	12	11	2