

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



CIRCLE



Latin America Mixer



Welcome Tent & Campus Tour

New leadership, unwavering commitment

In the 2023-2024 academic year, the Center of International Relations and Cultural Leadership Exchange (CIRCLE) welcomed Dr. Dan Zhu as our new Executive Director. Under her leadership, CIRCLE has remained steadfast in our commitment to supporting international students and fostering cultural exchange at the University. This year, guided by our core pillars — engage, support and advocate — we focused on easing students' transition to the UW, enhancing student communications and supporting the well-being of our international Husky community.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

7,686

International students on the UW Seattle campus

119

Countries represented

\$12K

in emergency aid awarded to students from 7 countries

100+

Events hosted by CIRCLE



Diwali

HIGHLIGHT:

New student transition support

* Virtual International Husky Welcome & Regional Connection Groups

Over the summer, we helped our 1,136 new international first-year students connect with the UW and their peers before they arrived in the U.S.

- **80.9%:** Percentage of new international students who reported feeling connected to campus before they arrived (compared to 69% of all new first-year students)
- **99%:** Percentage of students who joined RCG chats for ongoing information and support



SUMMER ENGAGEMENT TESTIMONIALS

"I found it helpful to go through graduate school myths and debunk them partially or fully — definitely gave me a more realistic view of how graduate school will be!"

"I feel more than happy with all the resources available. CIRCLE is really helpful in all matters for students."

"The fact that I have access to the information and personal experiences from the presenters is invaluable to someone far across the Pacific Ocean."

* Summer Engagement Programs for Graduate Students

This virtual workshop series was designed to help new international graduate students navigate school, discover university resources and connect with peers.

- **10:** Biweekly workshops serving over 480 new international graduates - a 14% increase from 2022-23

* International Welcome Programs

We held 12+ welcome events over 10 days to onboard 2,250+ new international undergraduate and graduate students from nearly 90 countries.

- **Post-Arrival Resource Fair:** 577 students attended this one-stop shop for resources
- **Vaccine clinic:** With our partner Husky Health Center, we offered 460 vaccines to 270 students
- **Tailored events:** CIRCLE hosted events specific to the needs and interests of undergraduates, grad students, exchange students, and international families
- **Football with the Dawg Pack:** Over 500 students purchased tickets to the Northwestern game and 350 attended the CIRCLE tailgate
- **New initiatives:** In 2023-24, we offered free transportation to IKEA (plus discount codes!) and brought the Washington Department of Licensing to campus to issue 120+ state IDs and driver's licenses

HIGHLIGHT:

Current student support



* CIRCLE of Friends

This program helps build a support system for undergraduates through twice-weekly events like cultural celebrations, sports and info sessions on topics from mental health to jobs to insurance.

56

Total number of events

2,184

Number of students who attended events

25

CIRCLE Ambassadors who lead events

* Unite UW

A 7-week cohort-based cultural exchange program that connects international and domestic students. It fosters a welcoming environment that builds deep cultural understanding and encourages students to form lasting global friendships. These friendships often extend beyond the program, as students continue to support each other and meet up both independently and through the Unite UW Alumni Association, which organizes quarterly events.

- **288 Huskies** from 12 U.S. states and 30 countries
- **50 student leaders** who developed leadership, public speaking and event planning skills
- **Biweekly events** to help students learn about different cultures and foster friendships
- **Flagship retreat** over 3 days to share stories, foster connections and build trust

* Holistic support for grad students

We held 25 workshops and events for graduate students that focused on academic enrichment, professional development, community-building and wellness, serving over 31% of international graduate students. Additionally, 60 families from 24 countries attended events designed for kids and spouses of our international graduate students.

UNITE UW STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

"Everyone has been so incredibly warm, funny, caring and sweet. I cannot put into words how extremely grateful I am that I joined Unite. I will always remember it, cherish the memories and work hard to maintain the wonderful connections I've made during my time here."

—DOMESTIC STUDENT FROM WASHINGTON

"As an international student, studying in America always made me feel lonely and isolated. Joining Unite UW is the best decision I made in my college life. I met people from all over the world and through listening to their stories, I became so close to my group members, and I love hanging out with them outside of Unite UW events."

—INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FROM CHINA



HIGHLIGHTS:

Well-being, advocacy and communication

* Success and well-being coaching

In 40-minute sessions, coach Maja Kelly helped students address challenges such as culture shock, homesickness, motivation, academic pressures, social barriers, identity exploration and more.

- **First stop for support:** This service was often the initial support contact for international students. It assessed needs and referred students requiring urgent or comprehensive help to the relevant university or community agencies.
- **High demand:** Coach Maja Kelly served 68 international students across 390 appointments, underscoring the critical need for this support. We urgently require additional resources to meet the growing demand for our coaching services and ensure we can provide timely assistance for our international students.



* Student Advisory Board (SAB)

This international student committee advocates for UW international students by consulting with the CIRCLE team, elevating pertinent issues to the student government and launching initiatives aimed at enriching the international student experience.

The 2023-24 board consisted of 6 graduate students and 11 undergraduates from 10 countries.

CIRCLE communications

To keep our international Huskies up to date on events, resources and key information, we send regular updates and communications.

- **Social media:** We have nearly 4,000 followers on Instagram!
- **Newsletters:** We sent 6 newsletters to incoming international graduate students and averaged over 70% readership. During the academic year, our "In the Loop" newsletter had a 67% average open rate.
- **Group chats:** There are over 50 chats on social media for students in Regional Connection Groups. These chats provide key updates on deadlines, resources and events and are active spaces of community and connection! For example, 95% of the students in the 2023 Taiwan chat saw tuition payment reminders and support resources shared with the group.

Follow us on Instagram!



@UWCIRCLE

SUPPORT CIRCLE

In the 2023-2024 academic year, CIRCLE supported record numbers of students and achieved remarkable success thanks to our dedicated staff, compassionate student volunteers, supportive campus partners, and generous donors. We also faced some significant challenges, including leadership transition and staff shortages. Your support has been vital to sustaining us throughout these hurdles and has enabled us to continue to enhance the Global Husky Experience. Our diverse programs that contribute so significantly to international student success and provide support for transitions, cultural celebrations, leadership development, well-being coaching, emergency aid, and career preparation would not be possible without you!

With your continued generosity, we can expand our impact in 2024-2025. Every gift helps us make a difference in the lives of our international Huskies.

Thank you for partnering with us to create a home away from home for international students at the UW!

SUPPORT CIRCLE



Football Tailgate



Thanksgiving



uwcircle@uw.edu



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