

# University of Houston Clear Lake

Office of Global Learning and Strategy,  
Education Abroad and Scholar Services,  
International Admissions and Programs

# ANNUAL REPORT



**2020 UHCL  
International Admissions & Programs  
(OIAP)  
Annual Report**

(Created 10/2020)



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*Table of Contents*

Mission Statement and Executive Summary	3
Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Report	4
The COVID – 19 Pandemic Outcome	5-6
Fast Facts Infographic	7
Fall 2020 Enrollment Summary	8
International Immigration Advising Based on Visa Type	9
Distribution by Level of Study	10
Enrollment of Non-Immigrant by College	10
Distribution by Geographic Region	11
Top Sending Countries to U.S. by Enrollment	12
F-1 Employment Statistics: Optional Practical Training (OPT)	13
Student Ambassador Program	14



### **Mission Statement**

International Admissions & Programs (OIAP) mission is to enhance the experience of international students and exchange visitor population through comprehensive services related to recruitment, international admissions, and advising of students' immigration status during pre and post arrival to the United States. Our mission extends through aiding international students in cultural adaptation, compliance reporting, and academic support, with university departments, community relations, government entities.

### **Executive Summary**

This report serves as a resource about UHCL on behalf of international degree-seeking students. All non-immigrant visa-holding students must be tracked and reported and receive specialized services through the Office of International Admissions & Programs (OIAP).

While UHCL anticipated growth of our international community, the COVID -19 pandemic altered the growth and development of our international student population for the Fall 2020 semester, causing our international population at UHCL to decline and resulting in an increase of defer attendance application for the Spring 2021 semester. OIAP provided services, advising, and guidance not only to our current population of 331 international students, but OPT Alumni students of 535, and F2 dependents of 35 as well as 1,265+ prospective student for the Fall 2020 term all while facing evolving challenges do to the pandemic and immigration regulations. Do to the pandemic both spring and summer terms brought frequent conflicting immigration changes, the July 6<sup>th</sup> guidance issued by the DHS/ICE yielded a variety of concerns from our international students and UHCL departments and community, along government closures, flight cancellations and delays that yielded significant ripple effects in the lives of our students. Our office remained determined, continuing to do all we could to succeed in recruiting, admitting, and advising talented students from around the world to join the University of Houston – Clear Lake community.

Prior to the pandemic, UHCL projected an increased number of international student enrollment. Because of the unforeseen circumstances and impact from both the Pandemic and evolving regulation requirements, these disruptions not only prevented the increase but also contributed to the decline in international student growth and development. We have experienced the continued effects of changes in regulatory reporting requirements for F-1 international students and how OIAP maintains their status. This reporting increase has added a significant strain on OIAP, particularly felt during the spring and summer months, as the significant increase in inconsistencies of government proclamations, executive orders, and memos on our students and immigration SEVIS System. OIAP addressed many of these challenges by updating our website, creating FAQs, hosting townhalls and group discussions, group Zoom advising, and various methods of communication to support our international population. While OIAP is resourceful in dealing with the challenges, each immigration case is unique, demanding individual review, analysis, and frequent updates due to new changes. Though faced with a variety of unknowns and immigration challenges, OIAP has risen to the occasion to address these inconsistencies and develop a strategic plan going forward on how to support our students both prospective and current.



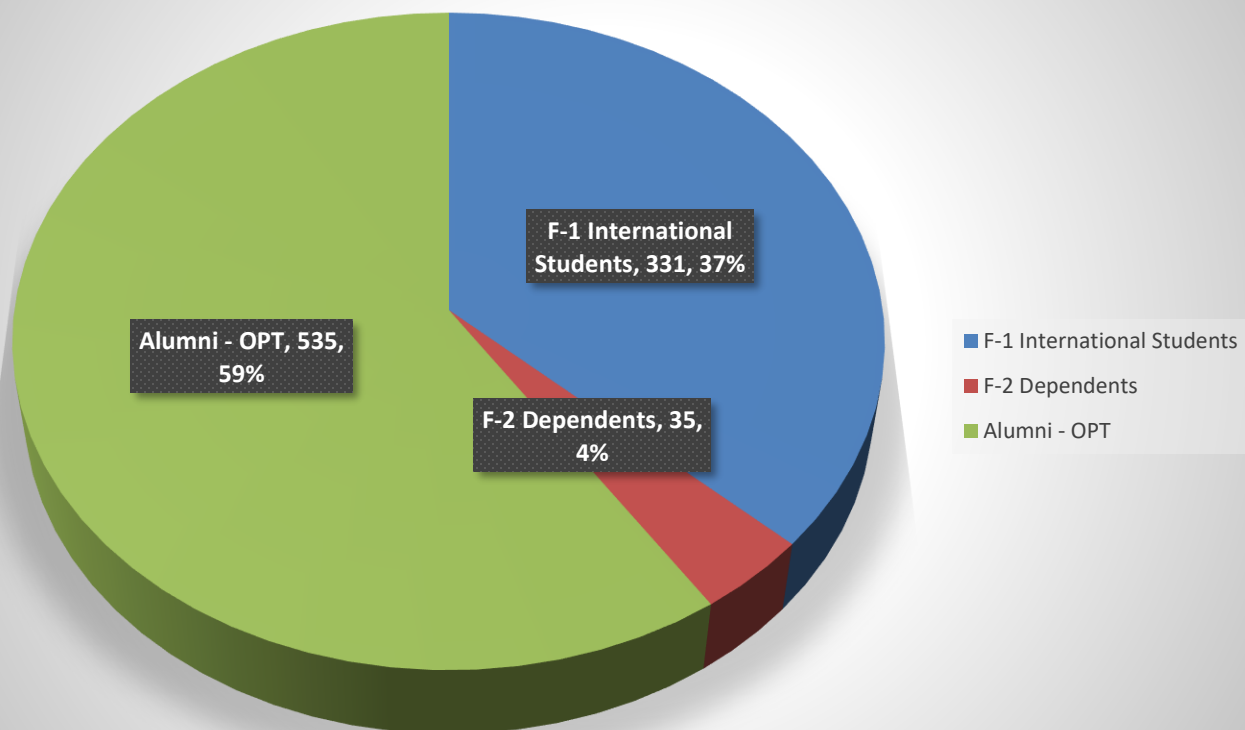
## Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Report

### What is SEVIS?

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is a U.S. government internet-based system that tracks current information on non-immigrant students (F and M visas), exchange visitors (J visa), and their dependents (F-2, M-2, and J-2). SEVIS allows schools and program sponsors to transmit electronic information and event notifications via the internet to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Department of State (DOS) throughout the student's/exchange visitor's stay in the United States. SEVIS reflects changes in international student or exchange visitor status, admission at the Port of Entry (POE), changes of address, changes in program of study, employment authorizations, and other events. Immigration forms I-20 (F visas) and DS-2019 (J visas) are also issued through SEVIS.

The Office of International Admissions & Programs (OIAP) is responsible for maintaining records in SEVIS for students, alumni, and dependents for the Fall 2020 semester that totals 901.

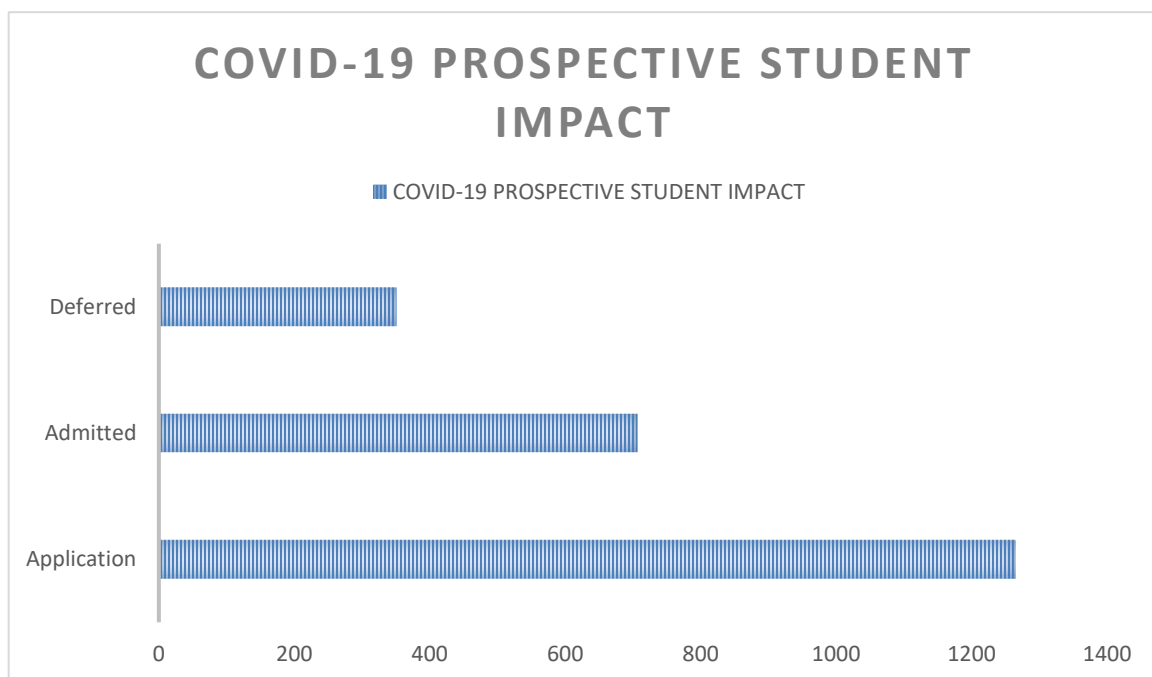
### International Student SEVIS Representation





## COVID-19 Pandemic Impact of Prospective and Admitted Students

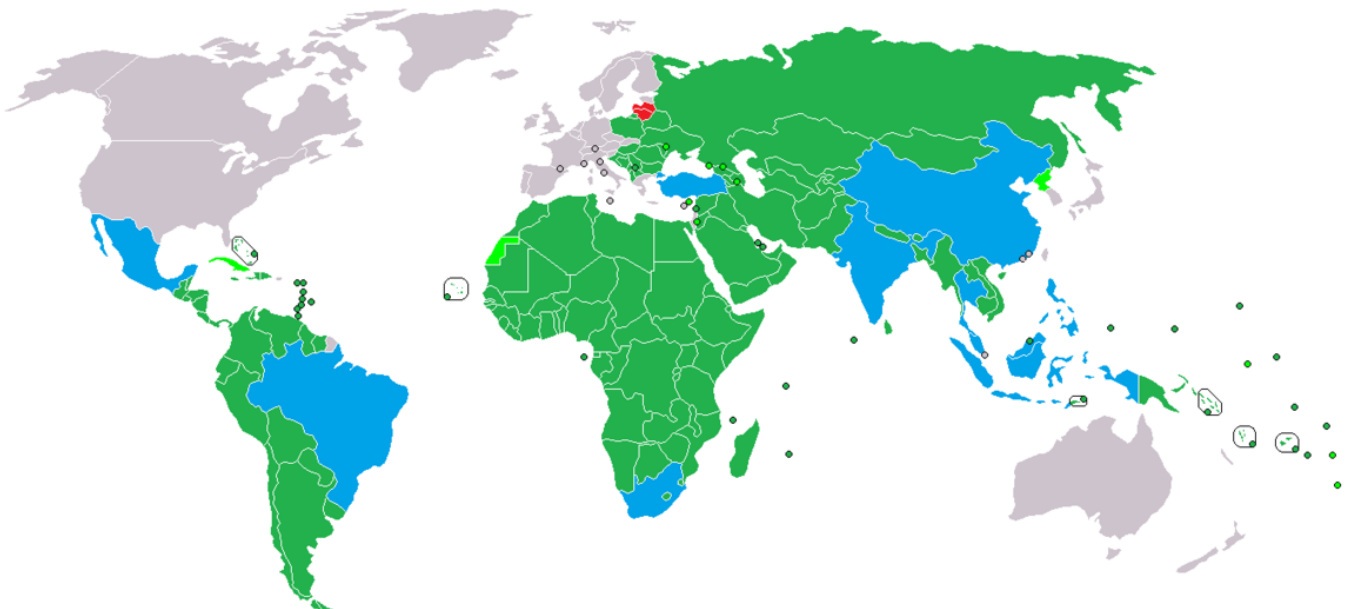
1. Incoming F-1 International Students were impacted significantly by the COVID-19 Pandemic, the impact ranged from travel restrictions, health outbreaks, canceling of flights to the U.S., travel bans, Embassy closures, and changes immigration regulations. Fall 2020 1,265+ prospective applications with 707 admits were impacted.
2. Transfer International Students were able to transition their F-1 visa to UHCL while additional international students were able to secure their visa appointment either prior to the pandemic or within weeks of the first day of class after Embassy closure slowly began to open. **(6.22%)**
3. Additionally, 5 newly admitted international students for Fall 2020 had the option to take courses while still inside of their home country.
4. Some international students met the challenge of not being able to secure a visa interview by opting to defer attendance to an upcoming semester. **(27.75%)**





## COVID-19 Pandemic Impact of Current UHCL International Students

1. OIAP was greatly impacted during the Spring, Summer and Fall 2020 terms due to the evolving nature of the immigration compliance landscape caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. All with the ability to respond to students, campus community, and government agencies as well as making sufficient updates to existing and prospective student immigration compliance documents.
2. While COVID-19 impacted over 2,000 international students inclusive of Prospective, Current, on OPT, and STEM OPT; OIAP was greatly impacted and overextended as each case and student obligated more time, advising, and research because of the changing landscape of immigration requirements and ever-changing policies
3. OIAP processed 2,100+ requests in the OIAP ISD Portal for the 2020 Academic Year indicating a significant increase in normal processing, documents included CPT, Status Letter Requests, Reduced Course Loads, OPT/STEM Updates and Applications, I-20 Extensions, Concurrent Enrollment I-20 reprints, Travel Signatures, Change of Status, Transfer out requests, F2 Dependent Requests, and SEVP/SEVIS Record Portal Inquiries.
4. The inconsistencies in government policy, immigration guidance, the impact on course delivery along with the interpretation of maintaining students F-1 lawful status yielded larger pressure on the OIAP office.





# OIAP 2020 AT A GLANCE

## Recruitment



Recruitment initiatives carried out through designated territory management strategies.

## Admissions



Application Processing of F-1 international students

## Immigration Advising



IMMIGRATION COMPLIANCE ADVISING AND MAINTAINING F-1 RECORDS

COVID-19  
Town Hall



10 STUDENT  
DIPLOMATS



### University of Houston – Clear Lake Fall 2019/ 2020 F-1 Student Enrollment Summary

Student Population	2019 Total	2020 Total	Growth %
Non-Immigrant	433	331	-23.56
U.S. Citizen	8,649	8725	0.879
Total	<b>9,082</b>	<b>9,056</b>	-0.286

#### Fall 2019 Student Enrollment by Percentage

Non-Immigrant	U.S. Citizen	Total
433	8,649	9,082
5.1%	94.9%	100%

#### Fall 2020 Student Enrollment by Percentage

Non-Immigrant	U.S. Citizen	Total
<b>331</b>	<b>8725</b>	<b>9056</b>
<b>3.79%</b>	<b>96.21%</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Fall 2020 Non-Immigrants with UHCL Affiliation

Selected Categories	Non-Immigrants
Non-Immigrant Students Enrolled at UHCL Fall 2020	331
F-1 Alumni on Optional Practical Training (OPT)	535
F-2 Dependents	35
Grand Total Non-immigrants with UHCL Affiliation	<b>901</b>
Total Countries Represented Among all Categories	<b>36</b>



## International Immigration Advising Based on Visa Type



### Selected Visa Categories

F-1 Student VISA designated for full course of academic study

F-2 Dependent

B-1 Temporary Business

H-1B Individual temporarily in the U.S. to perform services in a specialty occupation

H-4 Dependent of H-1B

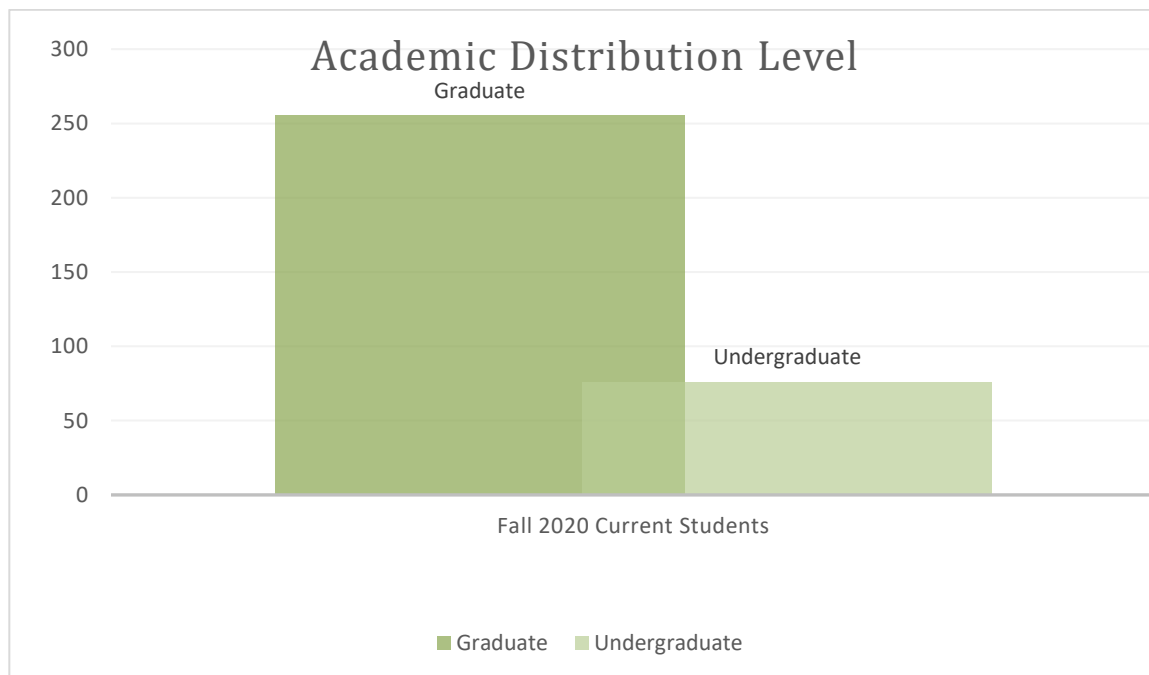
L-2 Dependent of L-1 (Intracompany Transferee)

P-3 Perform, Teach or Coach Artist or Entertainer

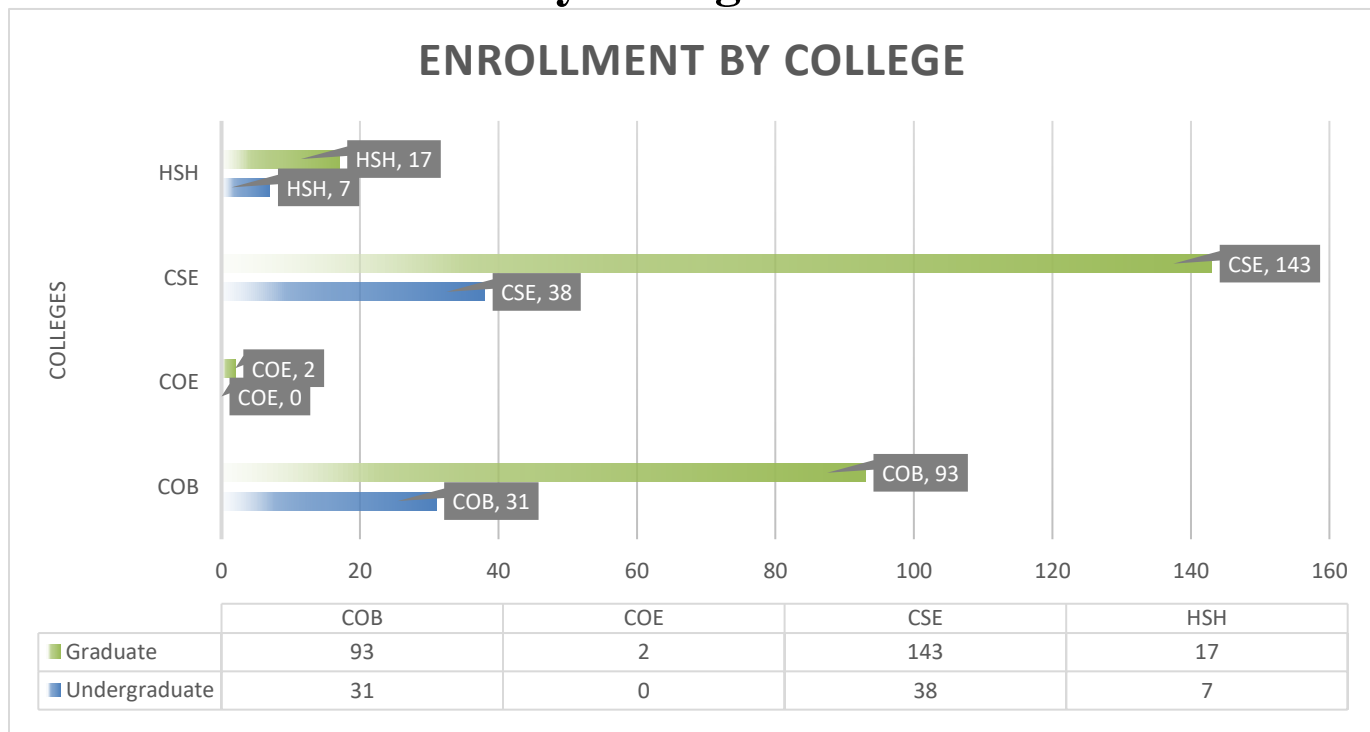
R-2 Dependent of Minister or other religious occupation



### Fall 2020 Distribution by Level of Study



### Fall 2020 Enrollment of Non-Immigrant Visa Holders by College





### Distribution by Geographic Region

Country	F-1 International Student Count	Country	F-1 International Student Count
Angola	4	Malawi	2
Australia	1	Mali	1
Belize	2	Mauritius	1
Cameroon	2	Mexico	3
Canada	2	Nepal	8
Chile	1	Netherlands	1
China	10	Nigeria	12
Cote D'Ivoire	1	Pakistan	6
Egypt	2	Palestinian Territory, Occupie	1
Honduras	1	Peru	1
India	179	Russian Federation	1
Iran	3	Saudi Arabia	10
Japan	1	Singapore	2
Kenya	1	Taiwan	2
Korea, Republic of	1	Trinidad & Tobago	1
Kosovo	1	Turkey	5
Kuwait	3	Uganda	1
Lebanon	1	VietNam	57







## F-1 Employment Statistics: Optional Practical Training

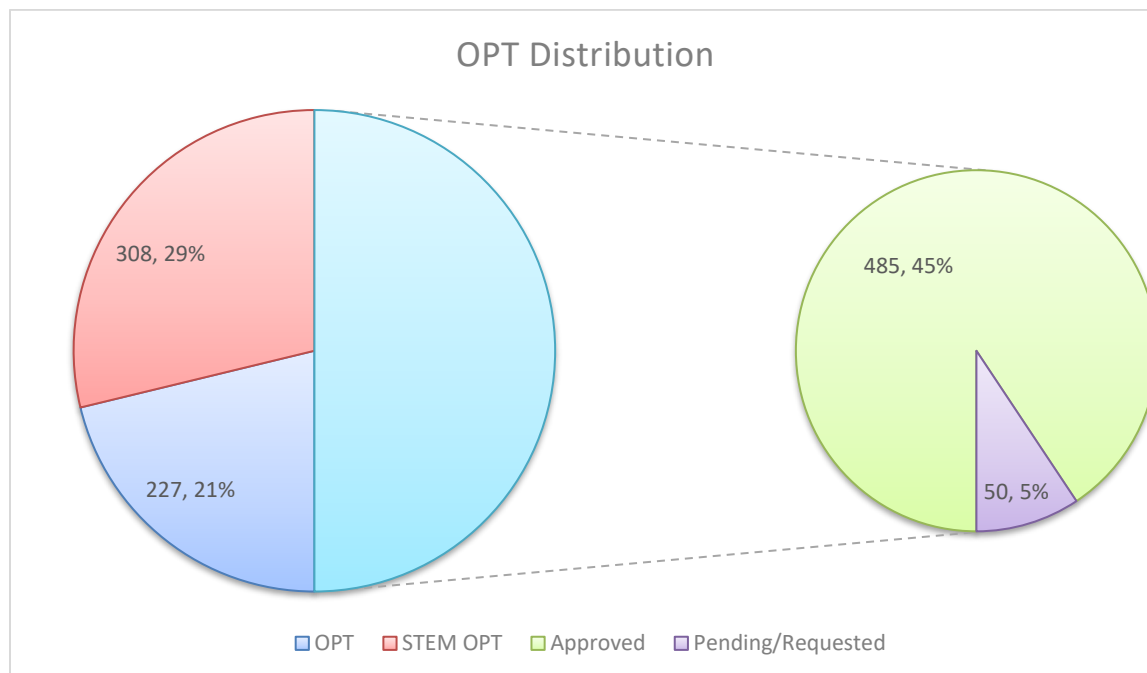
### OPT Defined:

“Optional Practical Training (OPT) is temporary employment that is directly related to an F-1 student’s major area of study. Eligible students can apply to receive up to 12 months of OPT employment authorization before completing their academic studies (pre-completion) and/or after completing their academic studies (post-completion). However, all periods of pre-completion OPT will be deducted from the available period of post-completion OPT”. **(Department of Homeland Security/Immigration Custom and Enforcement)**

### STEM OPT Defined:

The STEM OPT extension is a 24-month period of temporary training that directly relates to an F-1 student's program of study in an approved STEM field. On May 10, 2016, this extension effectively replaced the previous 17-month STEM OPT extension.

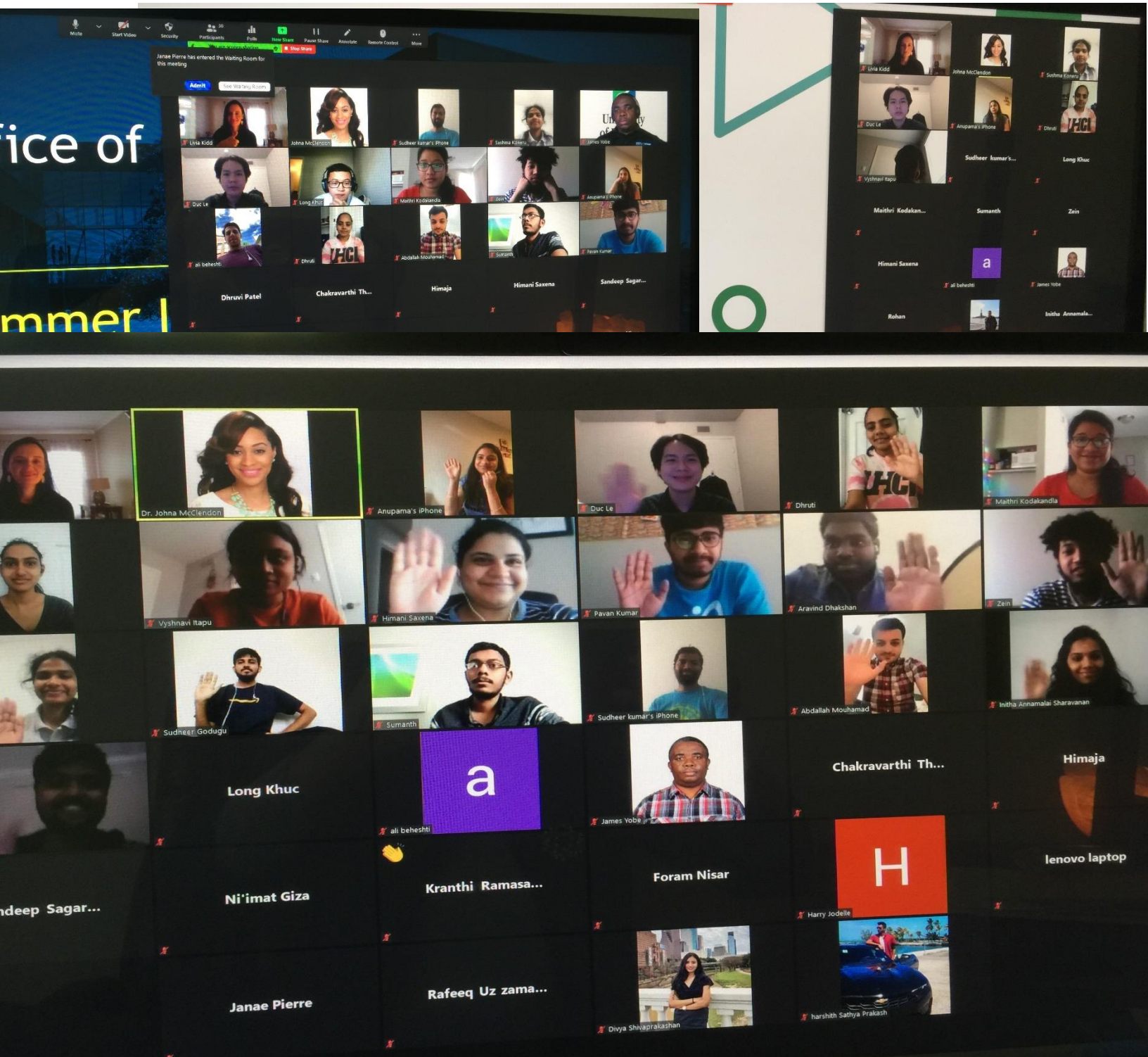
Eligible F-1 students with STEM degrees who finish their program of study and participate in an initial period of regular post-completion OPT (often for 12 months) have the option to apply for a STEM OPT extension. Students may not apply for STEM OPT extensions during the 60-day grace period following an initial period of regular post-completion OPT. **(Study in the States/DHS)**





### Student Ambassador Program

One particular highlight of this year's successes was the International Student Ambassador Program implemented within the Global Learning and Strategy Summer Institute Program. The Office of International Student & Programs hosted 34 international students during the Summer Institute and engage students in Research, Professional Development, a Buddy Program paired with prospective students, the development of an international student blog, and end of program App Project.





# University of Houston Clear Lake

International Admissions and Programs

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