

University of Wisconsin - Madison

International REACH

CROSS-CULTURAL SPEAKERS PROGRAM

International Student Services

www.iss.wisc.edu/reach



2020 2021

PROGRAM SUMMARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Program Overview.....	3
How does Reach work?	
Program Impact Statements.....	4
Requesters	
Ambassadors	
2020-2021 Reach Ambassadors.....	5
Geographic Diversity of Reach Ambassadors	
Ambassador Profile	
2020-2021 Reach Events.....	7
Audience Reached	
2020-2021 Social Media Engagement.....	9
Reach and Interactions	
2020-2021 Virtual Training Socials.....	10
Topics and Participation	
Challenges, Accomplishments and Strategy.....	11



Program Overview

International Reach is a unique, cross-cultural speakers volunteer program that places international speakers in schools, campus venues and community organizations for short presentations. It provides interesting opportunities for international students and dependents to share perspectives on their home countries with teachers, students and area residents for the purposes of furthering global education and intercultural dialogue.

Goals

The International Reach cross-cultural speakers program strives to:

- Enhance the international student experience
- Support the Wisconsin Idea & campus internationalization
- Foster global awareness & cross-cultural understanding

Partners

Ambassadors: A cohort of specially chosen UW-Madison international students

Requestors: Campus personnel & programs, area K-12 teachers, community members

International Reach Staff: Coordinator & Student Program Assistant

How does Reach work?

International students, scholars, and legal dependents of international students and scholars interested in sharing their countries and cultures submit their applications to become Reach Ambassadors before the next school year begins. The Reach staff reviews applications and invites applicants to attend an informal interview, where they learn about the expectations and logistical details of the program. Once a student is invited and chooses to join Reach, their information and interests are placed in a speaker database and their biographies will be posted on the Reach webpage. This information is referenced when a requestor approaches the Reach staff about bringing a speaker to their classroom or event. The Reach staff then matches the Requestor with one or more ambassadors, continuously facilitating communication and event logistics between the two parties to ensure the presentation is successful. Evaluations are then sent to both the ambassadors and requestors to evaluate each event for strengths we can maintain and areas we can improve. The Reach staff also hosts a series of training socials designed to help train Reach ambassadors to be effective communicators and presenters, as well as enhance professional and personal development of our student ambassadors.

Program Impact Statements

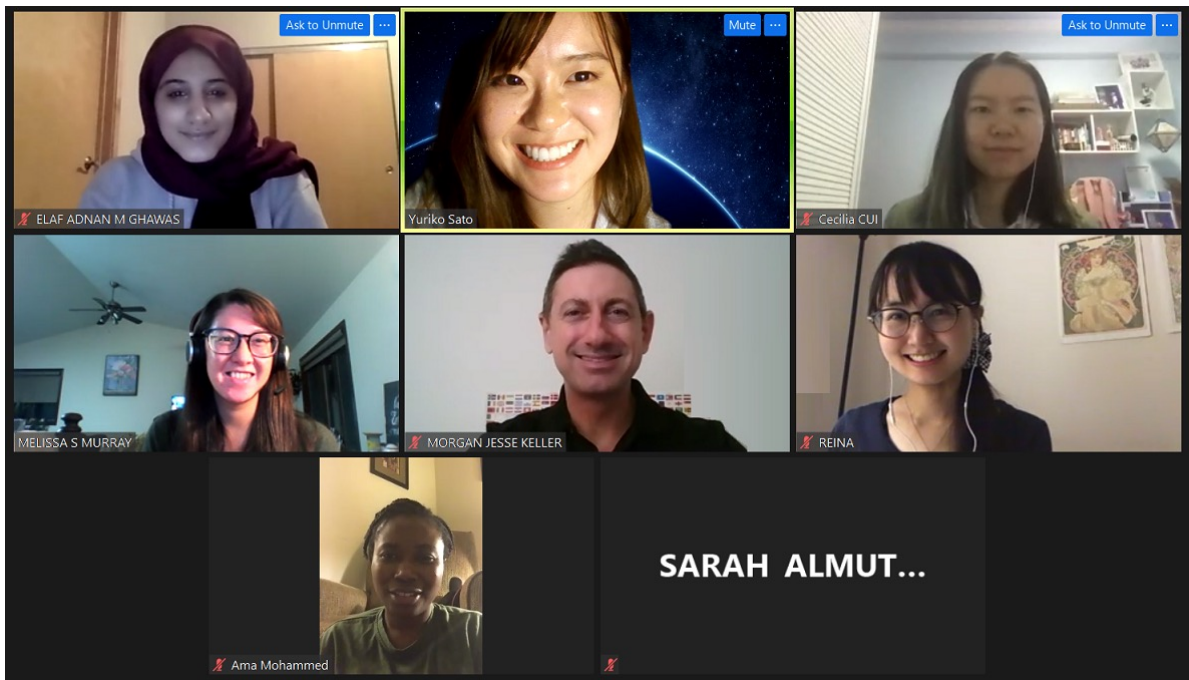
Requesters

“I just wanted to say thank you so much for offering the opportunity to have Joel and Reina in our virtual space. They were incredible, they prepared great presentations, and were right on with connecting to the subject we are studying. It was an honor to have them both in.”

-Joel Jarosky, Capital High School

“Joel was outstanding - informative, interactive and interesting for our students.”

- Scott Quincey, Edgewood Campus School



Ambassadors

“International Reach provided me a window into different cultures and a forum to interact with other people about their worldview and perspectives. As an ambassador, I enjoyed worthwhile and engaging moments of sharing knowledge about my country Ghana and also learning about others' unique experiences.”

-Ama Mohammed, Ghana

“Being a Reach Ambassador has opened my eyes to cultural diversity in that it was a great way to learn about and share cultures.”

-Elaf Ghawas, Saudi Arabia



2020-2021 Reach Ambassadors

For the 2020-21 school year, International Reach offered the Madison community and campus 9 ambassadors. The International Reach Program and its cohort of ambassadors continued to promote diversity and increase cultural knowledge, foster cross-cultural dialogue, and make connections beyond University of Wisconsin-Madison’s campus.

Geographic Diversity of Reach Ambassadors

International Reach ambassadors represented **7 different countries** of the world: China, Egypt, Ghana, India, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and Uganda.



Country	# of Ambassadors
China	2
Egypt	1
Ghana	1
India	1
Japan	1
Saudi Arabia	2
Uganda	1

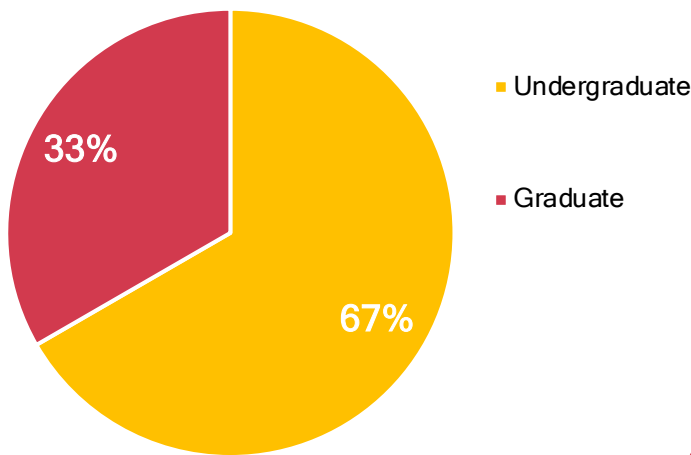


2020-2021 Reach Ambassadors

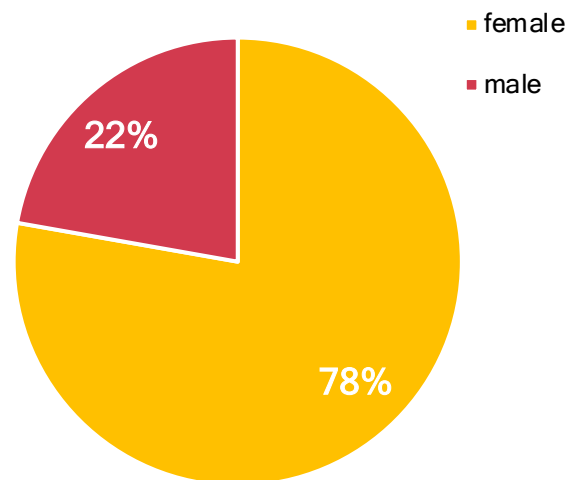
Ambassador Profile

In addition to the geographical diversity that Reach ambassadors brought to the program this year, ambassadors also brought diversity in student level, the field of study, and gender. Undergraduate students were 67 percent of Reach ambassadors and 33 percent of ambassadors were graduate students. 7 different degree majors/study areas were represented among ambassadors as well.

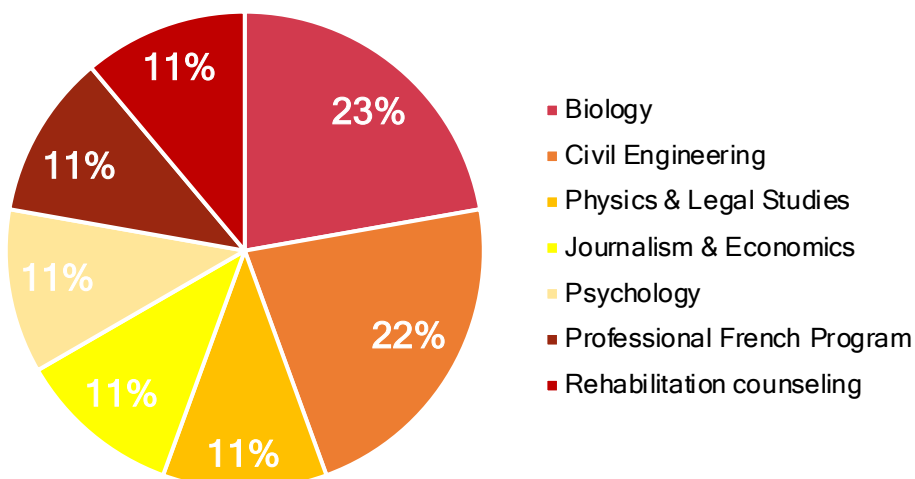
Ambassador Classification



Gender



Ambassador Majors

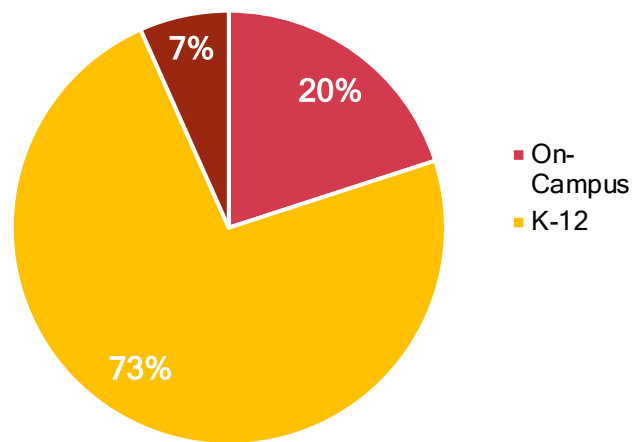




2020-2021 Reach Events

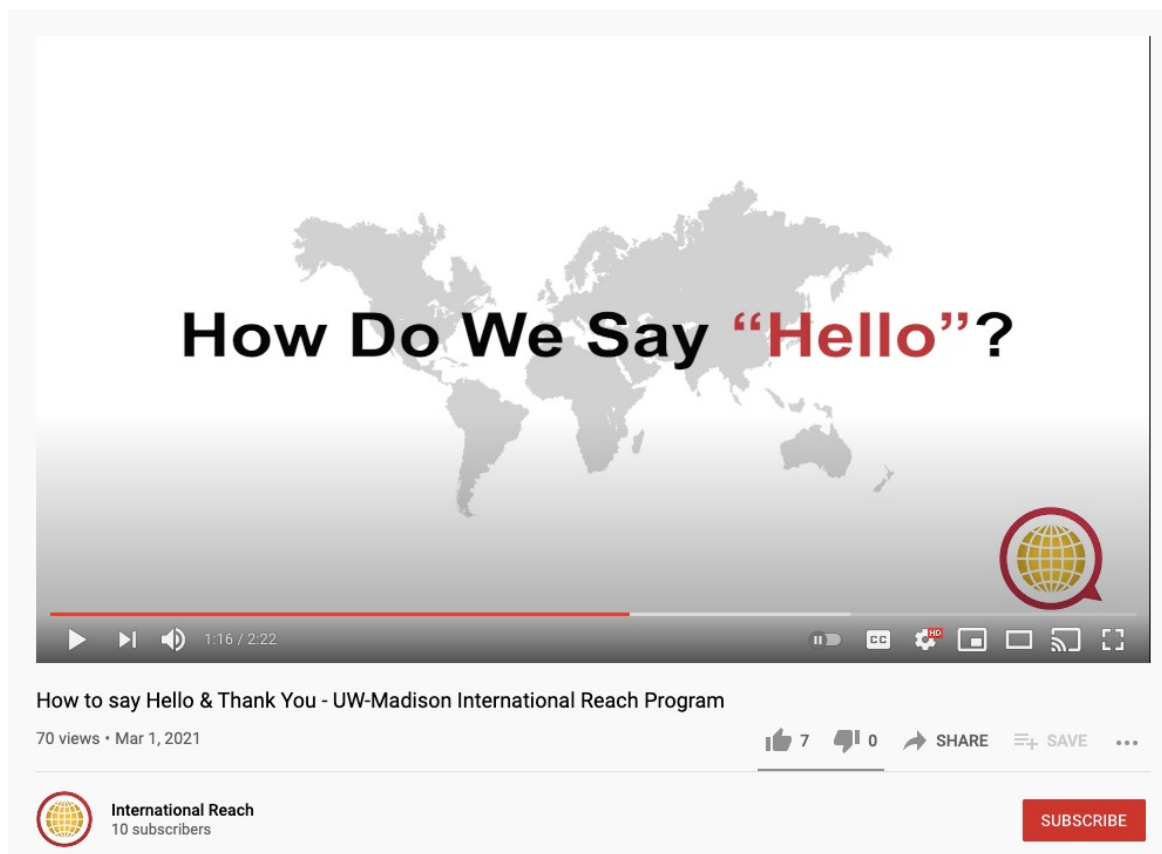
For the 2020-21 academic year, International Reach has received and fulfilled 15 different requests. All requests were fulfilled virtually. Of these requests, 3 were from the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus organizations, 11 were from middle and high school teachers, and the remaining were from the Madison community.

Event Request Types



Types of Virtual Presentations

All presentations this year were virtual, so requesters, ambassadors, and the Reach were flexible and creative in thinking about ways to share their perspectives in the community and promote intercultural dialogue. One notable project this year, was having ambassadors contribute videos explaining how to say “hello” in their native language(s) in order to create a YouTube video for the Madison International Festival. Ambassadors also utilized a variety of different video platforms and slide creating websites for their presentations.





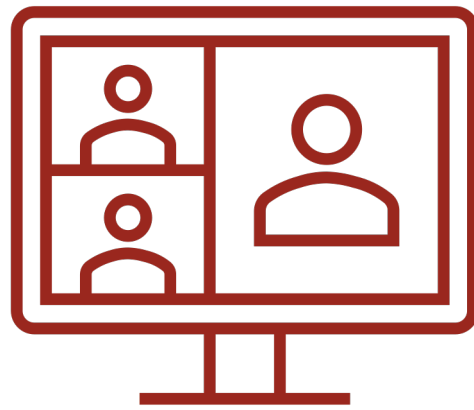
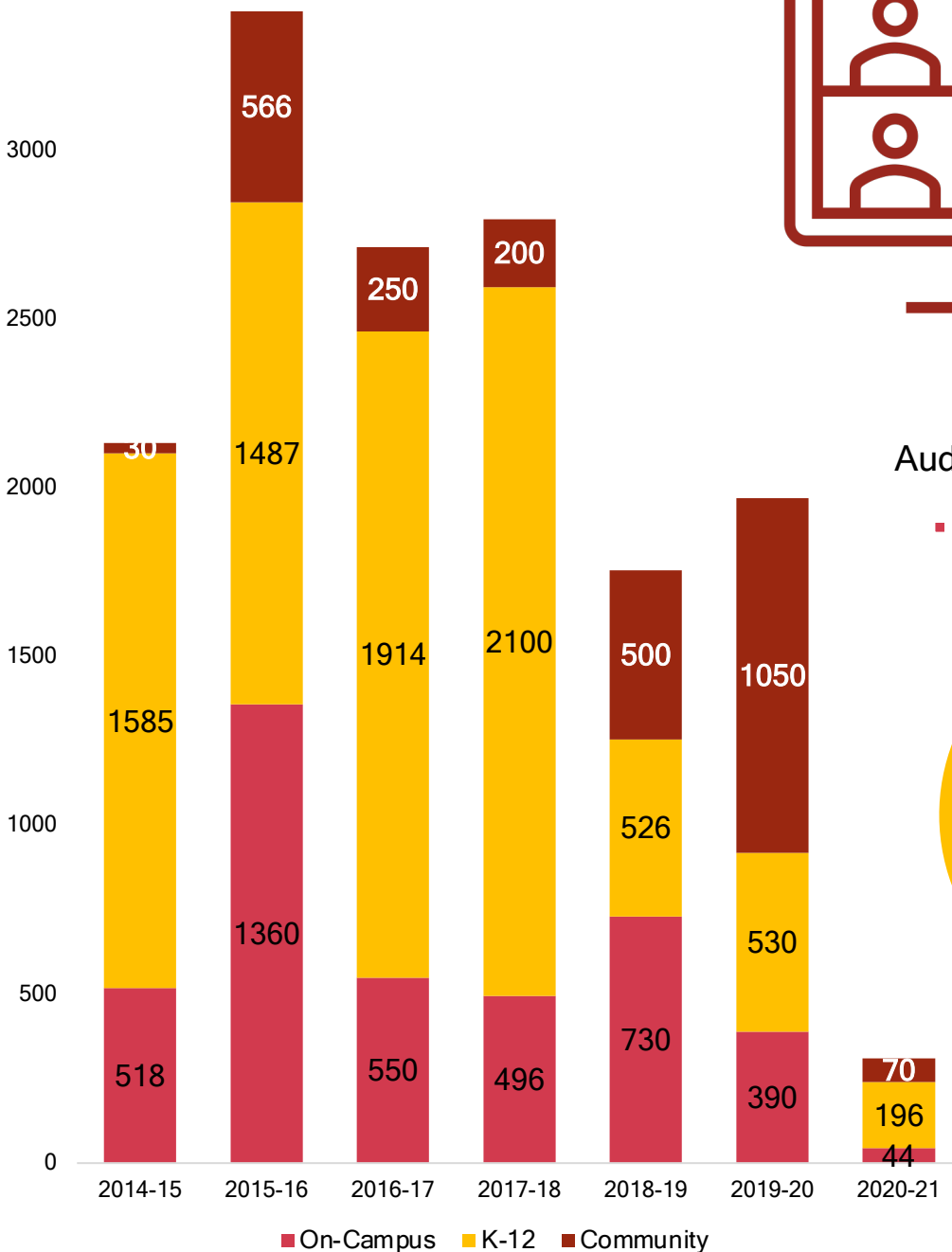
2020-2021 Reach Events

Audience Reached

During the ongoing global pandemic, International Reach ambassadors were still able present to more than 270 people* for on-campus UW students and faculty, for students at K-12 schools, and for members of the Madison community during the 2020-21 academic year.

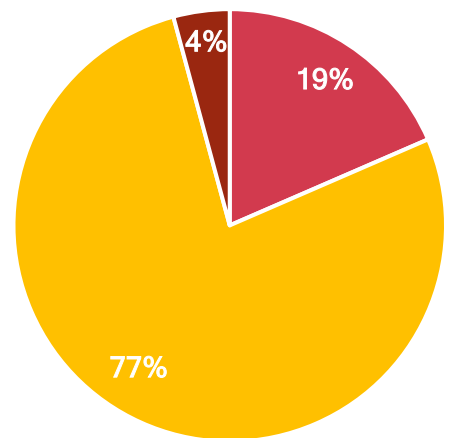
*Audience numbers are either approximations or exact numbers after the event reported by requestors. Therefore, the numbers reported here include some approximations.

Audience Reached by Program Year



Audience Reached in 2020-21

On-Campus K-12 Community





Social Media Reach & Engagement

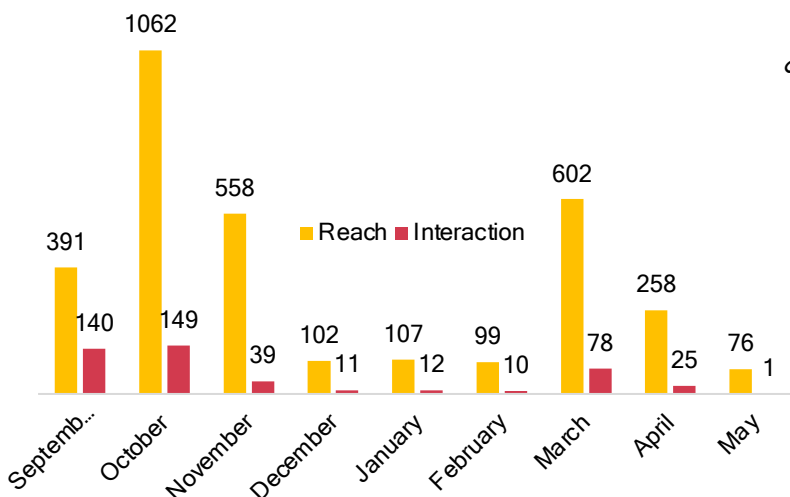
The unfolding of the current global pandemic during the past school year inspired International Reach to become more active on social media platforms. The program found new ways to connect with our audience and still provide ambassadors with a platform to share their culture and experiences. Posts had a variety of purposes, including ambassador introductions, fun facts about their home countries, next year's application promotion, and holidays/festivals.



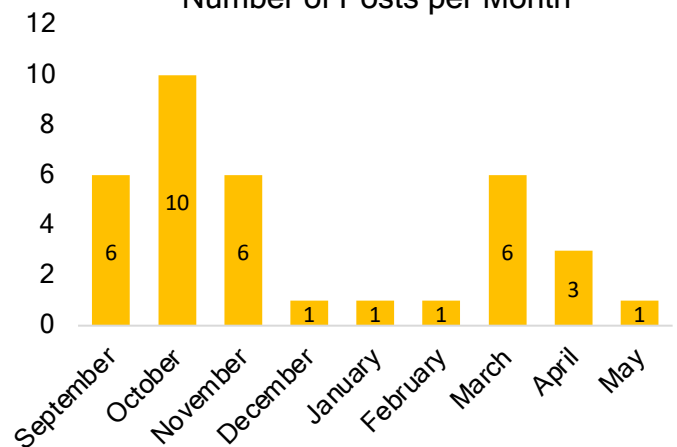
Reach and Interactions

This page includes data collected from Instagram Post Insights. “Reach” is the number of different accounts that saw the post, while “interactions” are actions taken from the post, such as profile visits. The Reach social media did not start tracking post insights until mid-September so that month may be even higher than depicted.

Reach & Interactions per Month



Number of Posts per Month



While these graphs only include data from Instagram, most posts were also posted to the Facebook page. One Facebook video about Ghana Independence Day made by Ama, reached over 1,000 people.

2019-2020 Virtual Training Socials

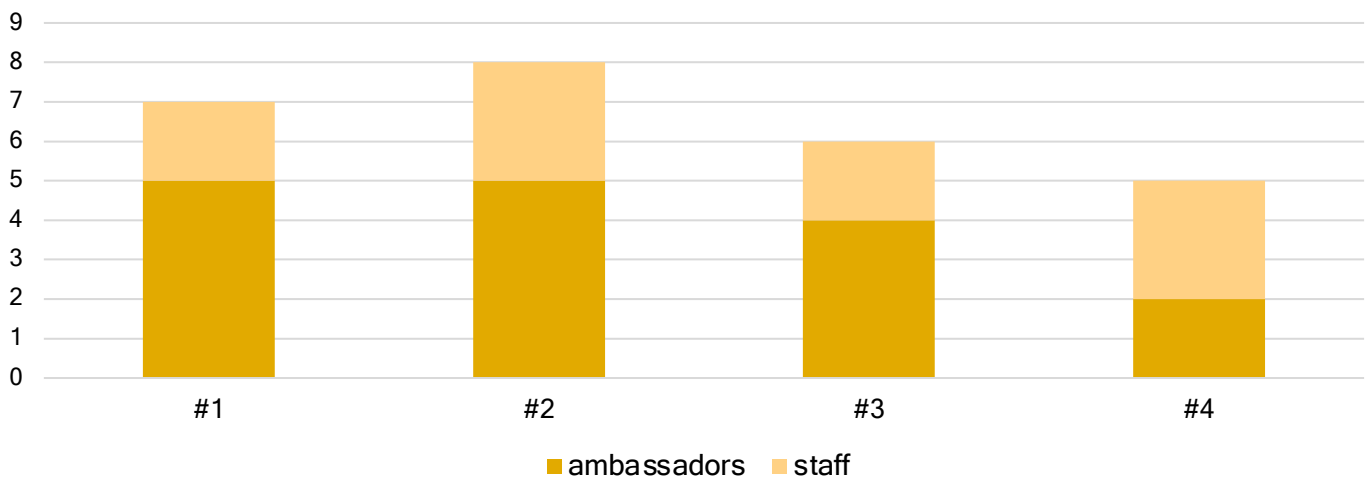
For the 2020-21 academic year, International Reach provided training, development and social events for the cohort of Reach ambassadors. These ambassadors received a variety of trainings and opportunities to meet fellow ambassadors.

Training Social Topics

- #1: “The Danger of a Single Story” - October 2020
- #2: “Circles of my Multicultural Self” - November 2020
- #3: “Time Management, Setting Boundaries & Self Care” - March 2021
- #4: Professional Development: Job Search, Applications & Interviews for International Students w/ Guest Presenter Molly Green from SuccessWorks - April 2021



Training Social Participation





Challenges Faced in 2020-2021

1. Ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic

Requests- This year, we were unable to accept any in-person requests and also experienced a significant decrease in the amount of requests received.

Participation- There were sometimes difficulties in creating a sense of community among ambassadors because of virtual formats, and a decrease in participation in events as the year progressed, likely because of Zoom fatigue, timezone coordination, and other realities of being an international student during a global pandemic.



Accomplishments in 2020-2021

1. Successfully modified program structure

In the past, one problem that the program has had was that many ambassadors sign up to participate, but still not having enough active ambassadors engaged in programming. The successful switch to a cohort model for ambassadors was a step towards addressing this problem.

2. Application and Selection Process

This year, we nearly doubled the amount of applicants, receiving over 25 applications for the program. After an informal interview process, the program chose 13 qualified and enthusiastic ambassadors from 9 different countries for the 2021-2022 academic year.



Strategy for 2021-2022

1. Focus on ambassador involvement and fostering community

Boosting ambassador involvement in Training Socials and other events will be an important part of the International Reach Program in the coming years, as in-person activities resume safely, and the cohort model transition continues. Increasing involvement could help make the program a more useful experience for international students. Some ways this can be accomplished would be emphasizing practical things like professional development during events and encouraging ambassadors to plan ahead for socials. The possibility of being in-person next school year could also be really effective in accomplishing this goal, as many students may feel excited to meet new people and safely participate in in-person events once again. Encouraging community among ambassadors in this way may also make the program more attractive to future applicants.

2. Increase requestors and requests

We want to continue to maintain relationships with past requestors as well as use social media and other methods to find new ways to promote the program, in order to increase the amount of requests we receive. This way, we will be able to provide more opportunities to active ambassadors so they can have a more meaningful experience.



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