



## ABOUT THIS COLLECTION

The Opla Collection features an outdoor chair, armchair, and barstool.

### STANDARD FEATURES

- 5/8" round, 12-gauge steel tube frame
- Powder coated steel wire mesh seat and back
- Plastic glides
- Counter and barstool heights include an aluminum cover on footrest

### OPTIONAL SEAT PAD

- Removable Opla Seat Pad uses a Velcro strap to attach to seat
- Anti-Theft Opla Seat Pad uses a Velcro strap and plastic security tie with D-ring to attach to seat
- Both seat pad options feature 1" thick foam on seat

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### PERSONALIZATION OPTIONS

- High gloss and low gloss clear coat not available on Opla Seating Collection.

Factors revealed that personal development is also significantly influenced by participation in developmental education, being of traditional age (18-24 years), and expressing a vertical transfer goal. The findings emphasize the potential importance of developmental education courses in increasing engagement, personal development, and academic success for international students within the community college landscape. Implications include targeted support services and guidance to enhance the overall educational experience and facilitate smoother transitions for international students pursuing further academic pathways.

*Keywords:* International students, transfer, engagement, community college

International students are those who are not U.S. residents and who are studying in the United States on non-immigrant student visas (Higher Ed Immigration Portal, 2023). Studies focused on international community college (CC) students generally infer this status from participant self-identification as having a non-U.S. country of origin (Slantcheva-Durst & Knaggs, 2019), survey response of international or non-resident alien (Garcia et al., 2018; 2019; Ghazzawi et al., 2020; 2021), or institutional records with this designation (Chen et al., 2020; Mamiseishvili, 2012; Zhang, 2016). Lack of a clear definition along with inconsistent institutional variables and

categories can lead to research findings that misrepresent international students (Zhang, 2016). International students make up nearly 1 percent of the community college population, with 5 percent of the 1.1 million international students in the United States studying at CCs (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2023a). International students at CCs predominantly enroll in high transfer associate's colleges (50%) and baccalaureate/associate's colleges (25%), which support pathways to baccalaureate-granting institutions (BGIs), while fewer than 20% attend mixed transfer/career and technical colleges, and 8% attend high career and technical colleges (Mason, 2022). Community colleges have a diverse international student body, with the top five places of origin—China, Vietnam, Japan, South Korea and Brazil—representing 31 percent of all international CC students (IIE, 2023a). Community colleges offer educational opportunities that improve job market competitiveness and family support, with commonly used services including transfer credit assistance and academic and career advising (García et al., 2019). International students increasingly recognize CCs as unique and valuable resource for higher education, yet they face challenges such as language and communication issues, high cost of tuition and living, homesickness, relationship issues, social interactions, culture shock, feelings of isolation, hostility, racial/ethnic prejudice, and perceived discrimination among others (Slantcheva-Durst & Knaggs, 2019).

Community colleges have been excluded from the conversation on international students (Zhang, 2016). While the large corpus of empirical work on international students is still focused at the baccalaureate level, there is sparse research on international students within the CC sector (Hagedorn & Lee, 2005; Lau et al., 2018; Zhang, 2016). Limited research on international CC students suggests they may feel detached from the institution (Slantcheva-Durst & Knaggs, 2019). Perceptions of a supportive institutional environment and welcoming campus community may lead to increased involvement, engagement, and sense of belonging (García et al., 2019; Ghazzawi et al., 2021; Slantcheva-Durst & Knaggs, 2019). Given the increasing enrollment of international students in community colleges (IIE, 2023a), it is crucial to examine factors affecting their success, and create an inclusive campus climate that significantly contributes to their achievement (García et al., 2019).

## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To contextualize our current investigation, we looked at the extant literature on the characteristics of international CC students, the role of engagement more broadly and for international CC students particularly, as well as the transfer goals of international CC students.

### International Students at CCs

International students at CCs differ from typical community college students and are more similar to traditional students at BGIs, as most study full-time, do not hold full-time jobs, and are not married (IIE, 2023a). Additionally, they stand apart from racially diverse American student populations due to their status as foreigners, requiring scholars to draw insights from various student groups that only partially reflect their experiences (Slantcheva-Durst & Knaggs, 2017). While racial and ethnic gaps have been studied related to CC experiences and outcomes,

these studies generally exclude international CC students due to their classification, i.e., international as their race/ethnicity.

International students opt to start their higher education journey at a CC for a variety of reasons, including more relaxed admission standards, lower application fees, and tuition expenses, support for English as a second language (ESL), the chance to acclimate to a new academic environment with smaller class sizes, and a better opportunity to prepare for and transition to a four-year institution (Durrani, 2019; Kanno, 2018; McIntyre, 2019; Hagedorn, 2020). Stringent admission requirements on standardized tests like Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), and American College Testing (ACT)/Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) often limit postsecondary options for international students, leading many to pursue CC as a more accessible pathway to higher education in the United States (Rozhenkova & Park, 2021).

Unlike American universities, which attract international students through global rankings and well-established reputations, CCs face challenges such as the lack of widely recognized ranking systems, visa difficulties, and limited campus life, yet they offer a more affordable and supportive environment with smaller class sizes and a clear transfer pathway to top universities (Jennings, 2017). CCs, with their open-access admissions and affordability, often come with fewer resources, as Raby and Valeau (2016) note that many lack comprehensive international student services or internationalization strategies, leaving students without essential academic and cultural support.

## Engagement in CCs

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) has become the leading survey assessing student engagement in community colleges across the United States. Various seminal theoretical foundations (Astin, 1984; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pace, 1984) were utilized to identify student behaviors and effective educational practices linked to student learning and persistence for the survey (Center for Community College Student Engagement [CCSE], 2017). It establishes five key benchmarks: active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners, which, to evaluate engagement at the student level (CCSE, n.d.). Researchers analyzing CCSSE data from 2017 to 2019 applied exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses to establish an eight-factor model of student engagement, ensuring measurement consistency across gender, age, race/ethnicity, and enrollment intensity (Wang & Bohlig, 2022; Wang, 2024), making it a valuable reference for engagement measurement in our study.

CC student engagement is influenced by demographic factors including age, gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. For example, CC women tend to be more engaged than CC men (e.g., Mitchell & Hughes, 2014; Ryan & Fong, 2024; Sontam & Gabriel, 2012). Racial and ethnic gaps in CC outcomes are well documented (e.g., Lin et al., 2022) however CC students of color may show higher levels of interaction with faculty and utilize support services more frequently (e.g., Sontam & Gabriel, 2012). Competing demands that go along with having employment or family commitments are barriers but also motivation for many students (e.g., CCSE, 2022).

Research underscores the importance of student engagement in CCs, as peer interaction enhances learning and development (Butler-Paisley & Clemetsen, 2019), while faculty