

 International
REACH
2024-2025
Annual Report

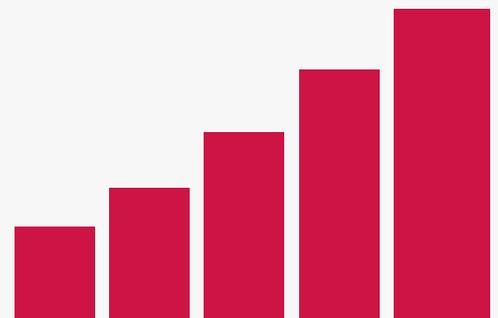


International Student Services
INTERNATIONAL DIVISION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



Table Of Contents

1. Program Overview
2. Reach Presentations
3. Program Impact
4. Reach Ambassadors
5. Training Socials
6. Appreciation Reception
7. Overview 2024-2025
8. Future Strategies





Program Overview

International Reach is a unique, 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 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 program strives to:

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

People

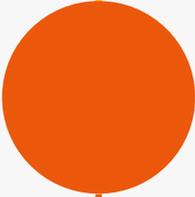
- **Ambassadors:** A cohort of specially chosen UW-Madison international students
- **Requestors:** Campus personnel & programs, area K-12 teachers, community members
- **International Reach Staff:** Coordinator & Student Program Assistant

Program Overview

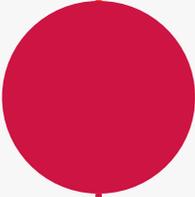
How does Reach work?



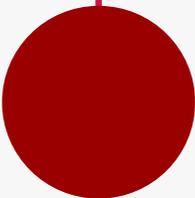
International students interested submit their applications to become Reach Ambassadors before the next school year begins. The Reach staff reviews applications and invites applicants to attend an informal interview, where they learn about the expectations and logistical details of the program.



After students join Reach, their information is placed in a speaker database and their biographies are 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.



When Reach receives a request, Reach staff match the requestor with one or more ambassadors, continuously facilitating communication and event logistics between the two parties to ensure the presentation is successful.

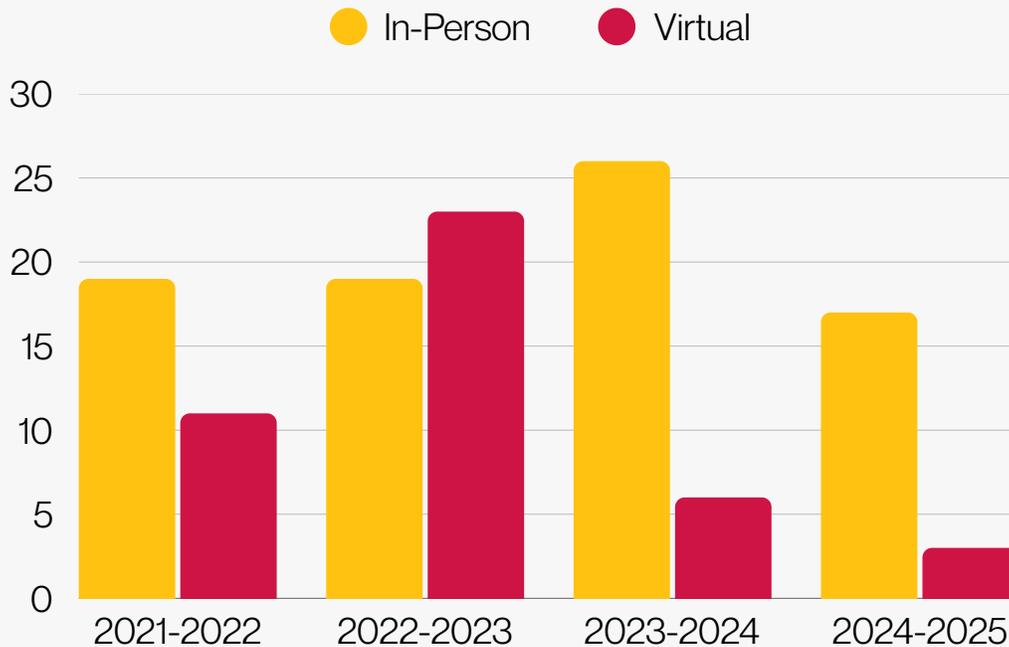


Finally, evaluations are sent to both the ambassadors and requestors to evaluate each presentation for strengths to maintain and areas to improve.

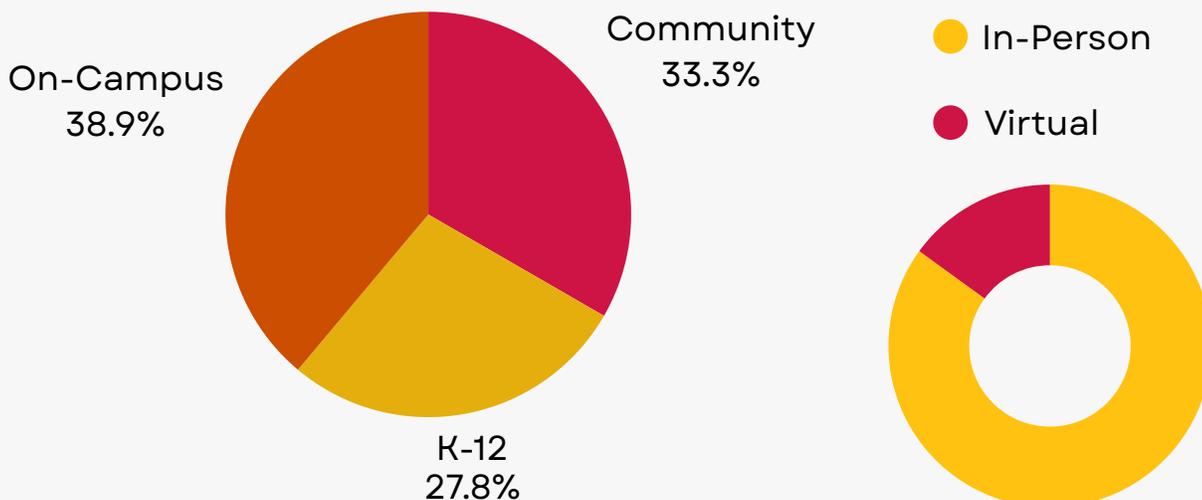


Reach Presentations

Presentation Types



For the 2024-25 academic year, International Reach fulfilled 20 different requests, with the majority being in-person. Over the past two years, there has been a steady decrease in virtual requests post-pandemic. This year, we also saw an overall decrease in requests which will be addressed in the 2024-25 Overview and Future Strategies section.



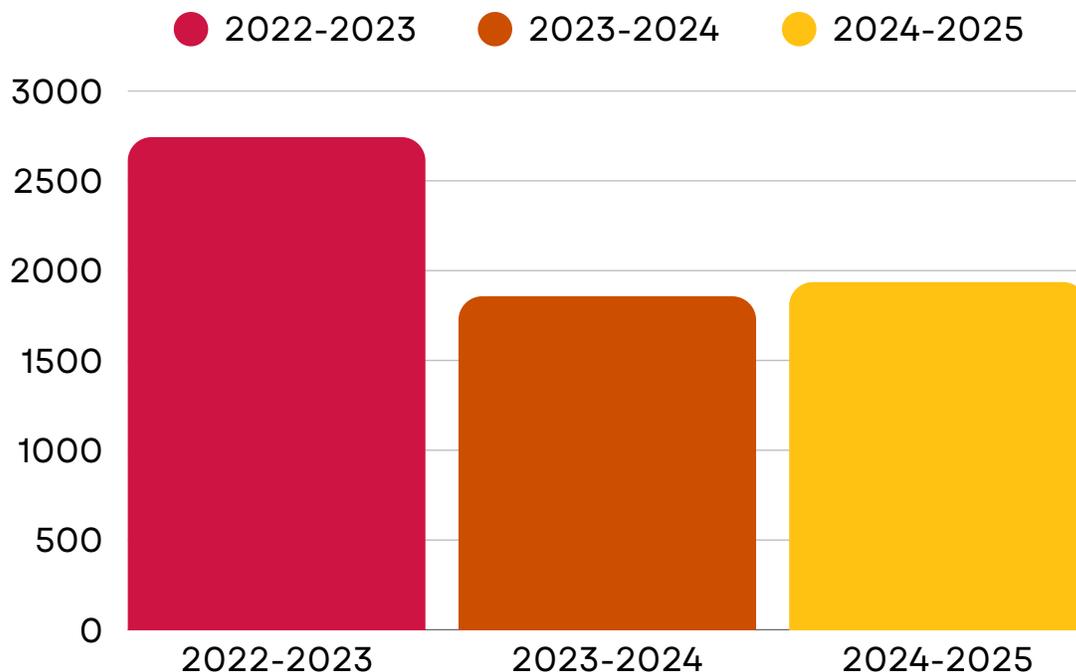
Reach Presentations

Audience Reached

1,963

International Reach ambassadors connected with more than 1,900 people* this academic year. This total audience includes local school children, senior citizens, UW-Madison students, faculty, and staff from many different backgrounds. The largest audience reached this year was a community event- the International Festival at the Overture Center, with 8 student ambassadors interacting with ~500 community members.

*Audience reached is calculated using a combination of exact attendance and estimations from requesters, so the numbers reported are approximations.



Program Impact

Impact Statements

“What does home mean when you're thousands of miles away? For me, it's in the moments when I get to share a piece of my roots with others. That's exactly what I got to do at the International Festival at the Overture Center for the Arts in Madison, WI. (After this experience) I found a deeper sense of pride in representing Malaysia, making it more visible to the world, and helping others gain a better understanding of my culture.”

-Aisyah Kamilia Muhd Saufi
International Reach Ambassador



“My students learned about different cultural perspectives and gained meaningful insights into language learning experiences across three different cultures. The exposure to these diverse backgrounds has significantly enriched their understanding.”

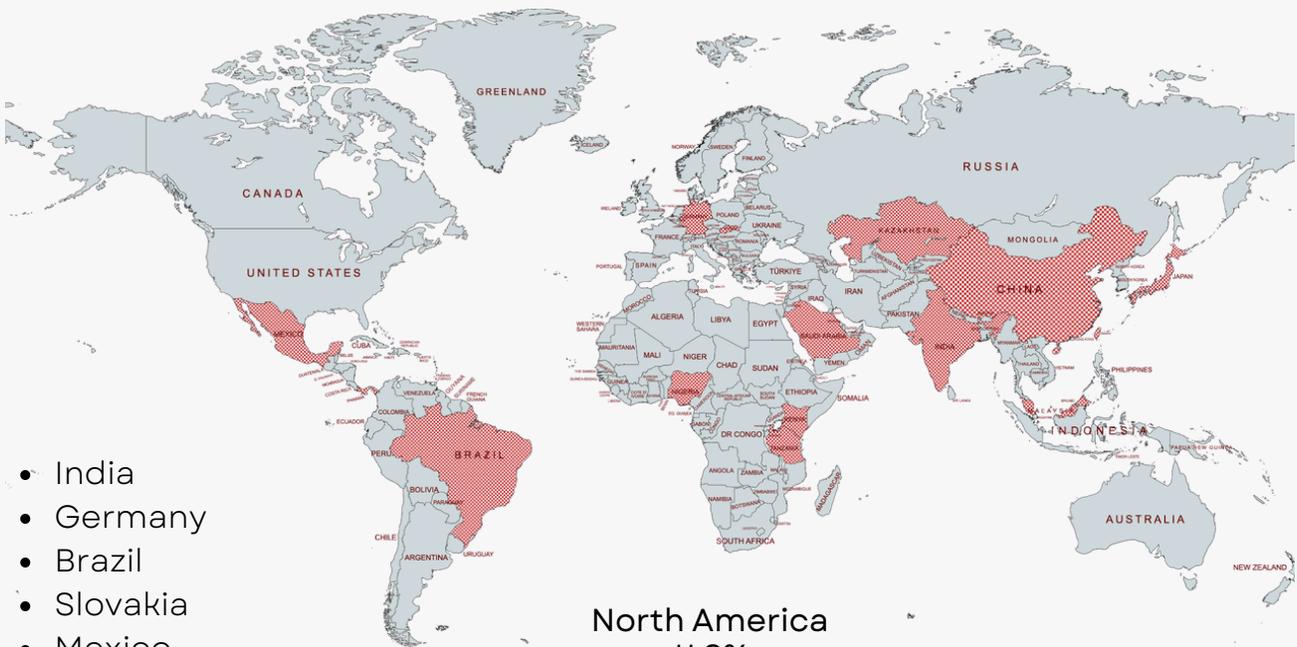
-Dr. Ran An
Professor, Fort Hays State University

Reach Ambassadors

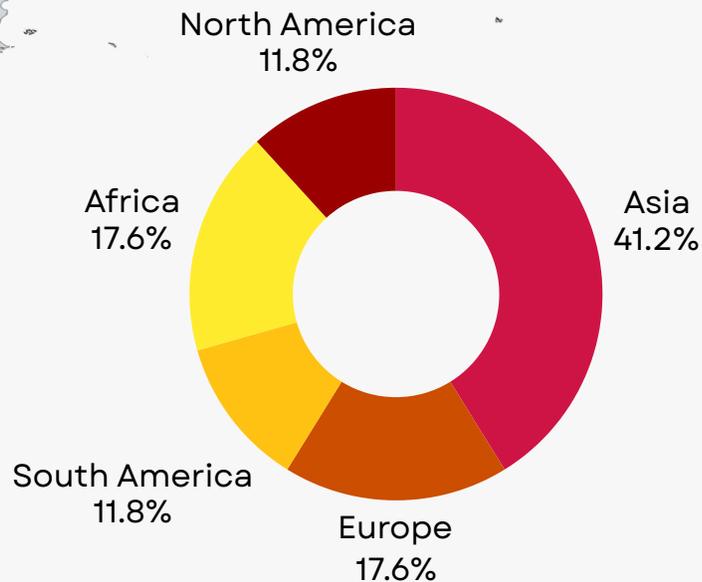
Geographic Representation

For the 2024-25 school year, International Reach sent 25 ambassadors into the Madison community. 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.

Reach Ambassadors represented 17 different places in the world:



- India
- Germany
- Brazil
- Slovakia
- Mexico
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Saudi Arabia
- Nigeria
- Tanzania
- Malaysia
- Japan
- Spain
- Argentina
- China
- Panama
- Taiwan





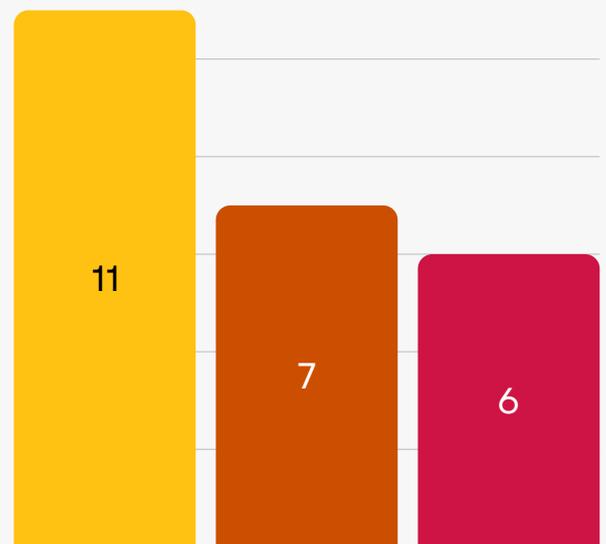
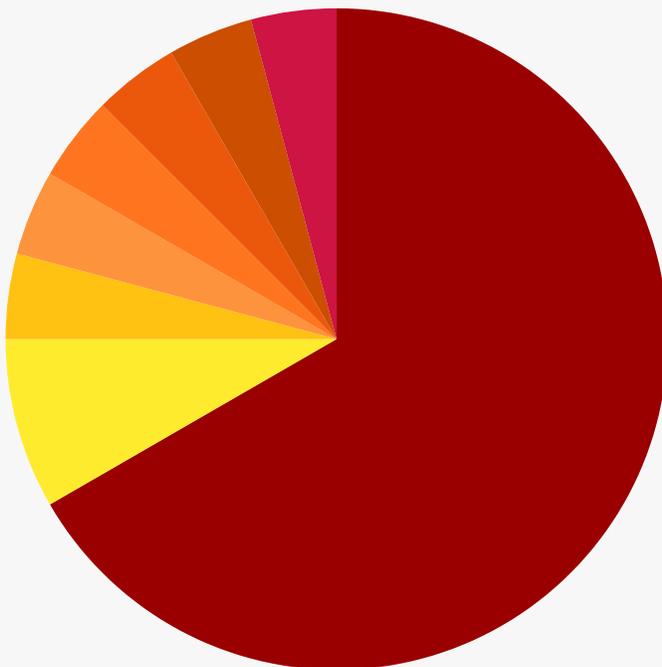
Reach Ambassadors

Ambassador Profiles

In addition to the geographical diversity that Reach ambassadors brought to the program this year, ambassadors also brought diversity in student level and field of study.

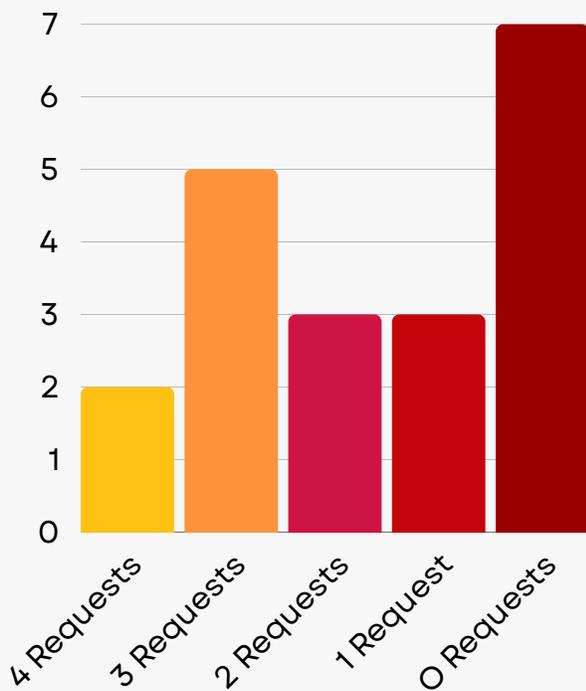
- Letters & Science
- CALS
- Nursing
- Public Affairs
- Engineering
- Education
- Business
- Pharmacy

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Doctoral

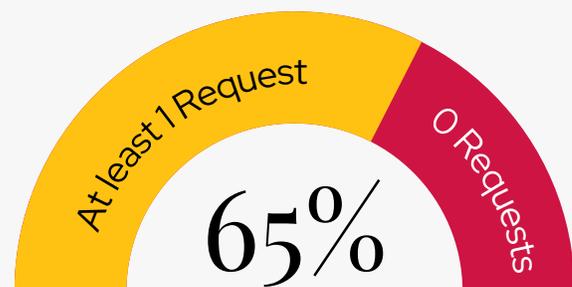


Reach Ambassadors *Involvement*

We ask each ambassador to fulfill at least 2 requests per academic year. Encouraging student participation can be challenging due to their demanding schedules. To better understand and address this issue, we gathered data on Reach Ambassador involvement throughout the year. The statistics below highlight participation trends.



The data reveals that although most ambassadors completed at least one request, overall participation fell short of expectations. In the 2024–2025 Overview section, we will discuss strategies to enhance engagement and improve ambassador involvement.



Training Socials

For the 2024-25 academic year, International Reach provided monthly Training Social events for the cohort of 25 Reach ambassadors. The Training Socials allow Reach ambassadors to connect with one another and build community. During each Training Social, ambassadors learn new skills and tips that can help them during future presentations, practice presenting to their peers, and share a meal together.

Training Social Topics

1. **International Reach Fashion Show** (October 2024)
2. **Workshop with DesignLab** (November 2024)
3. **Childhood Games around the World** (December 2024)
4. **International Festival Preparation & Poster-making** (February 2025)
5. **Music Videos around the World** (March 20th)
6. **International Reach Trivia** (April 2024)

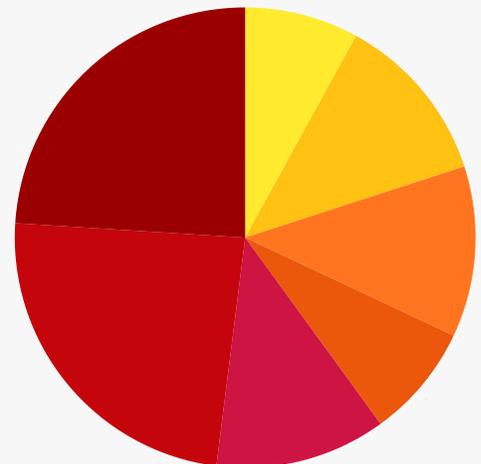


Training Socials Attendance

In the past, we hosted 2 Training Socials per semester (4 total). This year, with the goal of fostering stronger connections and sense of community among the cohort, we increased to monthly socials (6 events). While ambassadors did build community, attendance remained a challenge. More than half of the Reach Ambassadors attended only 0–2 of the six required Training Socials. Below, you'll find individual attendance statistics for each ambassador. We'll address this challenge and propose potential strategies for improvement in the 2024–2025 Overview section.



Training Social Attendance



Appreciation Brunch



At the end of this academic year, we hosted an Appreciation Brunch to celebrate student ambassadors, requesters, and supporters. We welcomed community members and supporters to thank them for working with our program to request ambassadors to share their cultures and experiences in the Madison community. The event began with a shared meal and a presentation highlighting our accomplishments, including data, statistics, and memorable photos from the year. We reflected on the meaningful connections made through presentations and gatherings, and the program's overall impact. We honored Reach Ambassadors' participation and dedication over the year with certificates, and graduating members received special gifts. Our most involved Reach Ambassadors were awarded trophies based on a point system that factored in total events, total volunteer hours, and total audience reached.





Learning Outcomes

Drafted 2024-2025

To support more meaningful program assessment in the future, we created official learning outcomes for both Reach ambassadors and requesters. These outcomes (page 12) are still being refined to ensure they are measurable and useful for future evaluations.

For students

- Engage the Madison community by sharing their culture and experiences through presentations, panels, and poster sessions
- Learn about and connect with Madison and Wisconsin outside of the university context
- Build confidence in their communication and leadership skills through creating presentations, public speaking, sharing their perspective, and representing their culture
- Create connections with other international student leaders to build community and foster sense of belonging

For the audience/community

- Expand their worldview through learning about international students' culture and experiences, especially for audiences that may not have access to international travel
- Recognize the diversity and unique perspectives that international students bring to the Madison community
- Question their biases and beliefs about people not from the United States through cultural exchange and intercultural dialogue



Overview 2024-2025

Accomplishments

New Partnerships/Requests

Despite challenges with a limited number of requests and requesters, we successfully began partnerships with two new organizations: Madison West High School and the Wisconsin Youth Institute (College of Agricultural and Life Sciences).

Festival Participation

One of the highlights of this year was taking part in community festivals, including the Sun Prairie Multicultural Festival in September and the International Festival at the Overture Center in March. More Reach ambassadors signed up for these events than ever before. Many ambassadors shared that they deeply valued being able to use posters about their home countries to spark conversation with community members of all ages and backgrounds.

International Education Week

For the first time, we hosted our own event in the International Community Center during International Education Week. Three Reach ambassadors gave presentations to share about their cultures. The event was open to the public and drew a diverse audience of students, staff, and community members.

Learning Outcomes

View Learning Outcomes on previous page.



Overview 2024-2025

Challenges

Decrease in Requests

As shown on page 3, the total number of requests has declined over the past year. We believe this decrease is due to several factors. First, because of cancellations from both requesters and students. We have also lost several regular requesters in recent years, due to staffing changes on campus and in the community. Building new relationships with requesters is a complex and time-consuming process, which presents an ongoing challenge.

Involvement and Attendance

As mentioned on pages 8 and 10, the majority of Reach ambassadors didn't meet our expectations of completing one request per semester and attending all the Training Socials. We believe there are several reasons for this: students are very busy, there wasn't enough variety in presentation opportunities, our expectations may no longer be realistic, and Reach ambassadors are not paid.

Planning

To help build stronger connections and a sense of community within the cohort of Reach ambassadors, we increased the number of Training Socials from 4 to 6. However, organizing these additional events took up a significant amount of the Reach team's time, which could have been spent coordinating more requests and supporting student accountability.



Strategies 2025-2026

Point System

To improve attendance and engagement, we're excited to introduce a new points-based incentive system designed to reward participation and involvement. The Reach intern has worked to create a proposal for this initiative, which outlines a point system which allows ambassadors to earn points for attending events, fulfilling requests, and collaborations. These points will translate into raffle entries for different prizes. Winners will be drawn at the Reach Appreciation event at the end of the year, but only those in attendance will be eligible to claim their prizes.

Reduce Training Socials

Due to challenges with planning time, attendance, and newly imposed budget constraints, we will be returning to the standard schedule of four training socials per academic year. This change will help lighten the workload for the Reach team and allow us to focus more intentionally on creating impactful community presentation opportunities.

Assessment

In the next academic year, we will continue to edit the program's learning outcomes and conduct more assessment. This will allow us to more effectively measure the program's impact, both on international student leaders and the groups they engage with on campus and in the broader community.

