

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WORKSHOP

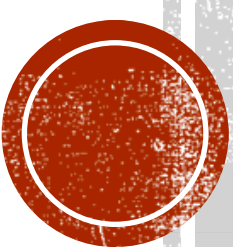
Western New England University – Center for Teaching and Learning – October 17, 2016

Katie Ahlman, International Student Coordinator

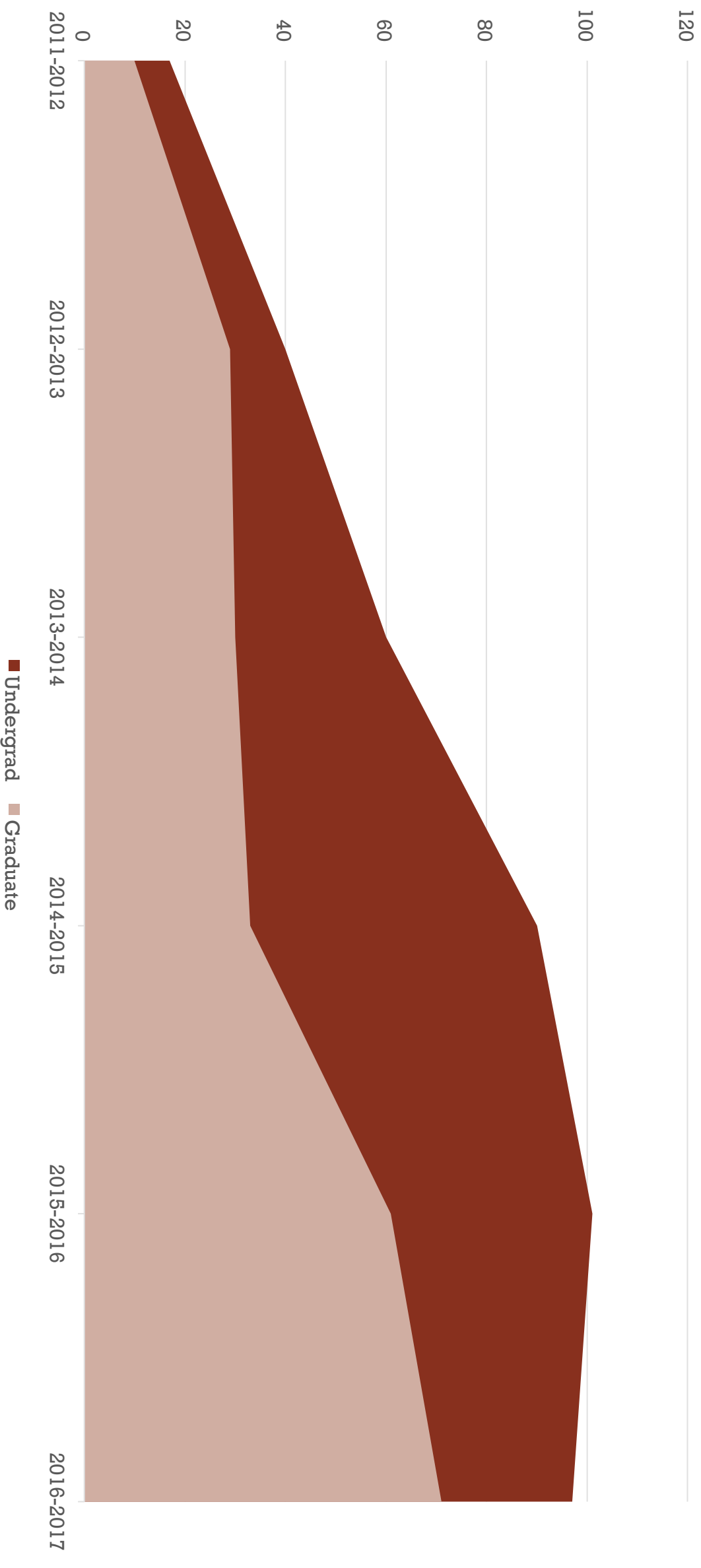
Meri Clark, Associate Professor of History

Rob Gettens, Associate Professor of Engineering

Sophia Rios, Assistant Director for Academic Support Initiatives



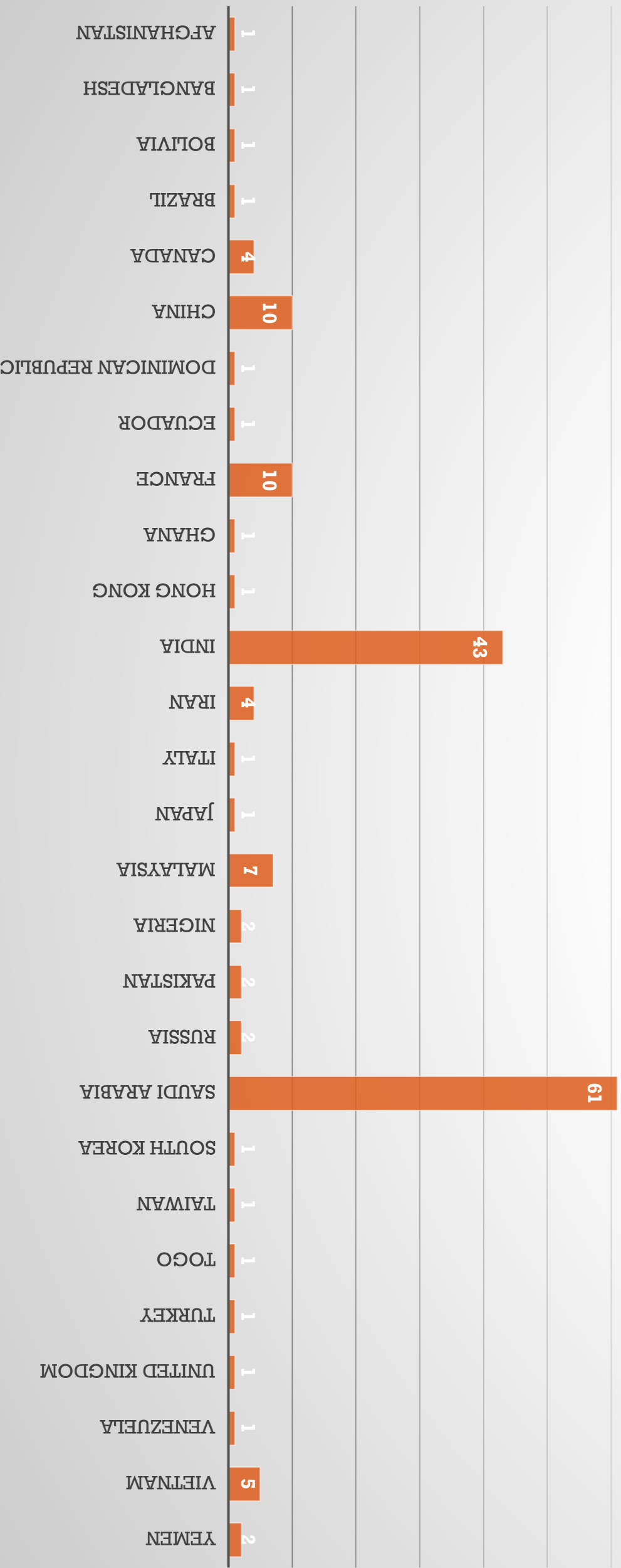
GROWTH OF GLOBAL GOLDEN BEARS



168 Total International Students as of 9.27.2016



WHERE DO OUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS COME FROM?



168 Total International Students as of 9.27.2016



TRANSITIONS TO WNE

How do they fare in the first semester at WNE?

This is the most challenging semester.

All students may experience:

- Homesickness
- Stress at home
- Financial issues
- Academic culture shock
- Housing issues
- Food issues

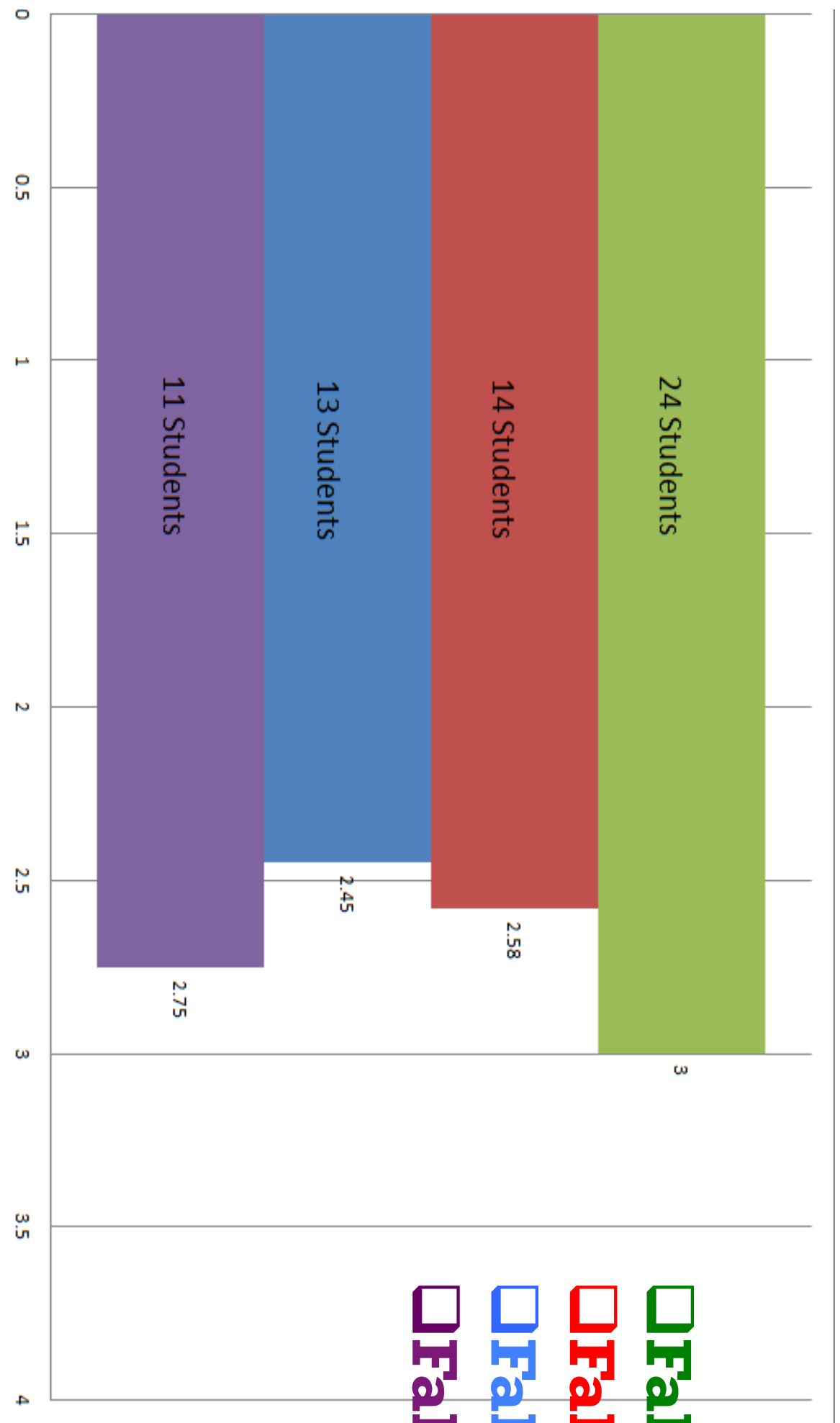
International students also have to:

- Understand immigration regs
(Handout PhD Comics – F1 Visa Process Explained)
- Understand different state laws
- Deal with visa scams
- Overcome language barriers
- Understand cultural differences
- Handle weathershock



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

First Semester GPA



Fall 2015

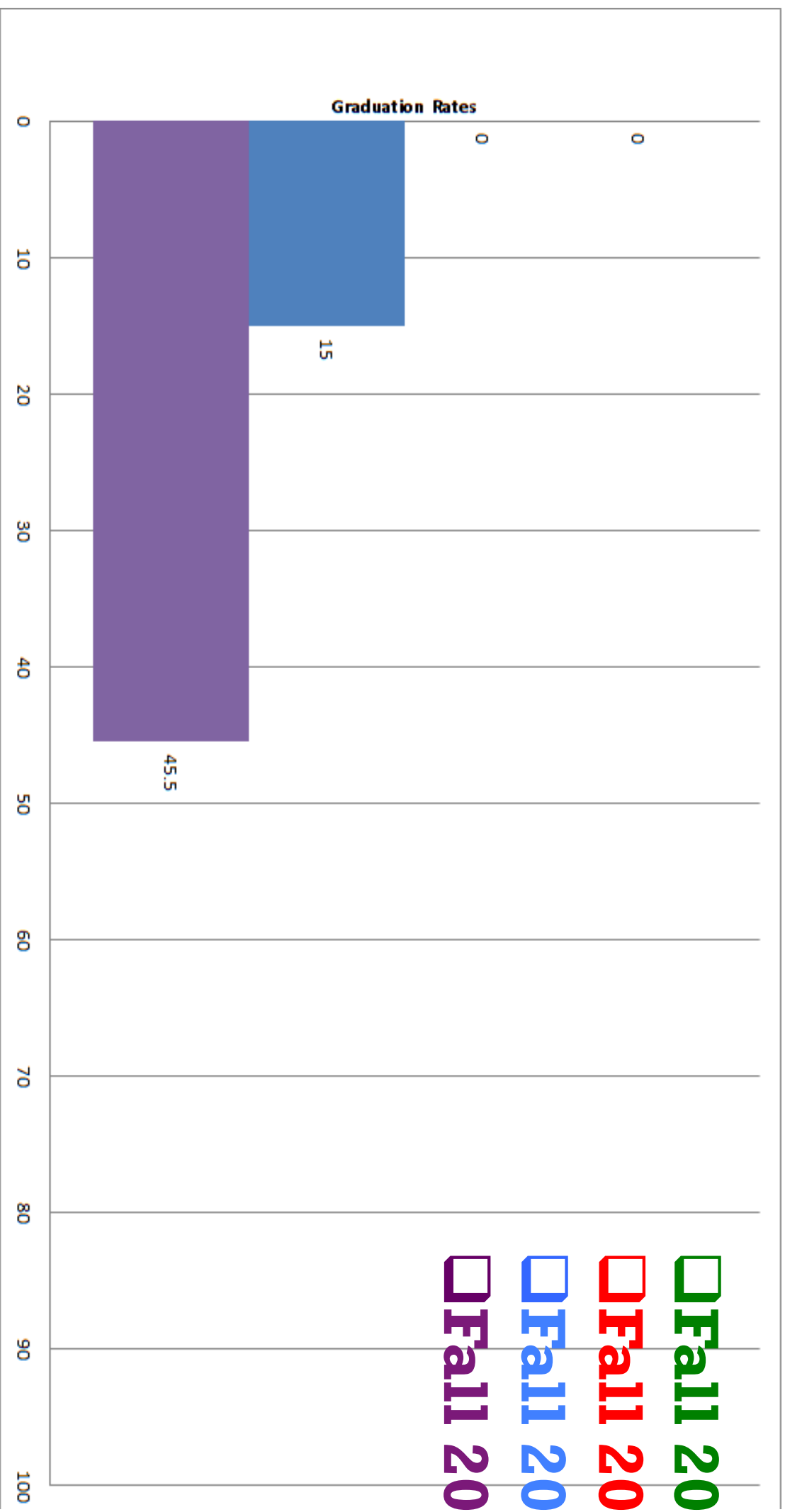
Fall 2014

Fall 2013

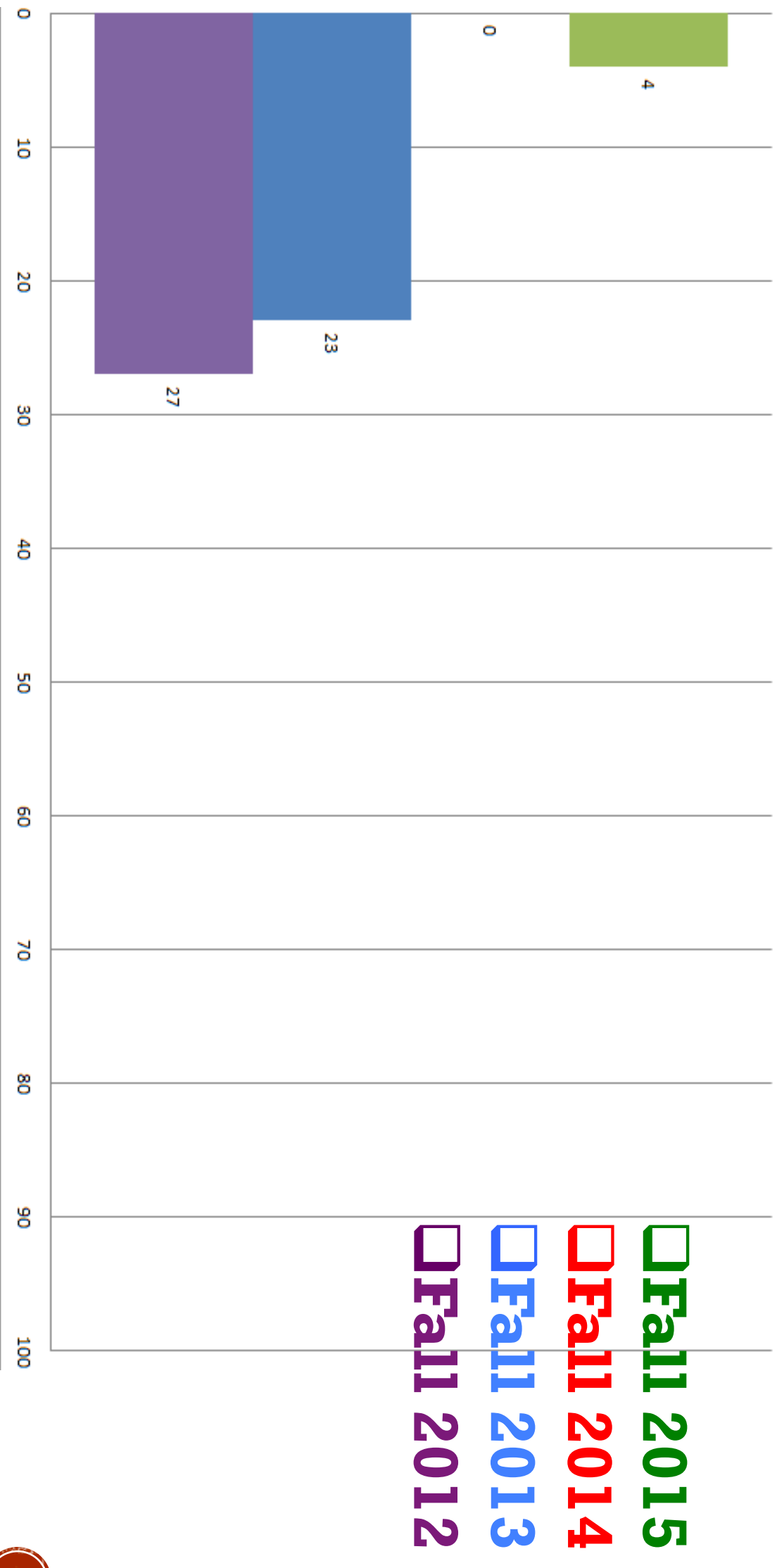
Fall 2012



GRADUATION RATES



ATTRITION RATES



HOW WOULD YOU HANDLE THIS REAL-LIFE SCENARIO?

Please read the scenario, think about your role, take 2-3 minutes to enact the scene, and discuss:

- How was this scenario handled?
- What worked? What did not?
- If it did not, what might have helped? (e.g. suggestions of resources)



WHAT DO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS EXPERIENCE WHEN COMMUNICATING IN CLASS?

- International students vary individually and culturally.
- Some experience insecurity regarding their academic skills, especially written and spoken English, but also mathematics, reading, and computer literacy.
 - Use handout on English language skills
 - Math for Arabic language speakers
 - Nervous to participate in class
- Religious and cultural beliefs, as well as their earlier education, may not be visible but affect student attitudes toward communication in the classroom and with professors.
 - For example, some may think that asking questions demonstrates ignorance or disrespect rather than appropriate engagement and polite interest.
 - Accustomed to rote memorization and regurgitation
 - Idioms and/or pop culture references are usually lost on international students
 - "As American as apple pie," "the bee's knees"



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCES:

- “When we were discussing in class, my American classmates form their own discussion groups. They didn’t want to include me and other international students. They think we are poor in English and may not contribute to the group.” (24, Female, Japan)
- “During my TA section, a student complained about the grade of his lab report. While discussing his answer, he soon got upset and rudely said, “You don’t understand what I’m saying,” in which he meant my English was too poor to understand him. In fact, he didn’t understand the material, and that was why he didn’t understand me.” (28, Female, South Korea)
- “I know a professor who is harsh on Asian students only and ignores what they have done for a lab meeting. However, the professor does not act like that to Caucasian students.” (28, Male, Vietnam)
- “My lab mates sometimes say sexual words behind me really quickly. And if I don’t understand the word, they laugh at me and make me feel I’m sexually harassed. If I ask them to repeat the word, they just ignore me.” (24, Female, Philippines)

From: Jongyeon Ee (2013), “He’s an idiot!” 10 Experiences of International Students in the U.S.,” *Journal of International Students*, 3(1), 72-75.



Pitfall

International students do not appear to be taking notes, asking or answering questions, discussing material, or working well with peers. What are they doing?

Possibility

- Struggling to listen and/or translate what you and their peers are saying.
- Thinking about what they understood (or did not) from the reading, lab experience, computer exercise, etc.
- They may not know or understand what they are expected to do in class, including attending regularly, taking notes (or how to do so).
- Email Sophia Rios with questions or concerns about specific students (note-taking, writing, reading, etc.).



Pitfall

When illustrating or explaining a point, you may use cultural references, jargon, or idiomatic expressions.

These may be familiar only to some domestic students or other professors.

These can be obstacles to comprehension, especially for international students.

Possibility

- Try to avoid idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and jargon.
- We may not be able to remove every cultural reference or idiom from our speech, but we can try to be more aware and attentive.
- Invite students to ask about words or expressions they do not understand, especially if they interfere with their understanding of a core concept.



Pitfall

Managing student expectations about development of skills like reading comprehension and writing.

E.g. “I went to the Writing Center so why did you give me such a low grade?”

Possibility

- **Encourage students to use academic support services (Writing Center, tutors).**
- **Offer bonus points on assignments for doing so.**
- **Explain that fundamental skills require sustained practice and develop noticeably over the medium- and long term.**
- **Remind them that the investment is worth it.**



Pitfall

Students are often nervous, some totally averse, to speaking with or emailing their professors.

They may approach you after class when there is not enough time to talk.

They may appear to understand your answer but do not really.

They may not come to your office hours or schedule an appointment.

Possibility

Remind all students to contact you with questions or concerns. Invite students to speak with you in an open-ended way. Let them define their question or concern. Do not interrupt, even if you are trying to help them. They may have rehearsed these sentences carefully before speaking with you. Identify the student's main concern and focus on the resources that might help them. Follow up.

- Ask the student: “Have you spoken with [Sophia Rios, Katie Ahlman, the Writing Center, etc.] about this?” If not, why? If so, what resulted?
- Ask them to summarize what you have discussed in their own words. Try: “What is your plan of action?” or “What are your next steps?”



UNDERSTANDING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Pitfall

Academic cultures vary worldwide and many international students do not understand the specific rules of academic integrity in the U.S.

- **Example:** Sharing a computer file in an Engineering exam. Augmenting a file is not the same as copying.

Possibility

- Present clear instructions for each assignment (not “write an essay” or “work together”).
- Define the structure of what you expect the students to produce and explain the specific steps of how they are supposed to do so.
- Refer to International Education Systems PDF and other online resources



WHAT COULD YOU ASK AS YOU PREPARE SYLLABI, TEACH, AND MENTOR TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES?

- What are my goals for this class and its assignments?
- How will I evaluate each assignment? Which skills/solutions/areas do I want to prioritize in my assessment and which are supplementary?
- Have I created opportunities for students to interact with one another in this class? Will I assess these interactions?
- Have I created in- or out-of-class assignments or experiences that allow students to develop and demonstrate their understanding of the course goals in different ways (verbal, visual, written, etc.)?
- Have I read my syllabus from the perspective of an international student?
- Audience suggestions?



QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS:

Re: international students, email:

- Sophia Rios, Academic Success Center: Sophia.rios@wne.edu
- Katie Ahlman, International Student Coordinator: Katie.ahlman@wne.edu

Re: teaching and mentoring international students, email:

- Jonathan Beagle, Director, Center for Teaching and Learning: jonathan.beagle@wne.edu

Also see WNE online resources:

- International Students and Scholars Services – Faculty Resources
<http://www1.wne.edu/international-students/faculty-resources.cfm>
- International Education Systems Compared (PDF)

<http://www1.wne.edu/international-students/doc/International%20Education%20System%20Final.pdf>



Immigration comics present:

THE F-1 STUDENT VISA PROCESS EXPLAINED

139 U.S. IMMIGRATION STOPS
 APRIL 15 - MAY 15
 MAR 9 2008
 TO CLASS UNTIL

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM JORGE CHAM © 2008

STEP →

- 1 DREAM OF STUDYING IN AMERICA, LAND OF OPPORTUNITY!**
 technically, America is the continent...
- 2 FIND OUT HOW MUCH OPPORTUNITY COSTS**
 tuition is HOW much??
- 3 FUTILELY WRITE TO PROFESSORS**
 new mail from another foreign student!
 delete
- 4 TAKE STANDARDIZED ENGLISH TEST (years of listening to American Pop culture finally pay off!)**
 "a cow is a farm animal."
- 5 TRUST YOUR FUTURE IN HANDS OF QUESTIONABLE LOCAL MAIL SYSTEM**
- 6 GET ACCEPTED!**
 i love my country!
 but i can't wait to get out!
- 7 WAKE UP AT 4am, FORM LINE AT U.S. CONSULATE**
- 8 GET IN, WAIT IN ANOTHER LINE**
- 9 GET INTERVIEWED**
 so, what's your PhD about?
 uh...
- 10 WAIT SOME MORE**
- 11 VISA GRANTED!**
 i am a worthy human being!
- 12 SAY GOODBYE TO RELATIVES (THE ONES YOU LIKE)**
 will you come back to visit?
 if i can afford it.
- 13 GET EYE SCANNED, FINGERPRINTED, SUBTLY INTERROGATED**
 so, what's your PhD about?
 uh...
 are you a terrorist??
- 14 FIND OUT UNIVERSITY IS ACTUALLY IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.**
 howdy, y'all!
 welcome to America!
- 15 GET USED TO CULTURE, PAY TAXES, ESTABLISH FRIENDSHIPS**
- 16 FACE FACT YOU ARE NOW OVER-QUALIFIED FOR MOST JOBS IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY**
 what is it you do again?
- 17 GRAPPLE WITH IDENTITY ISSUES.**
 who am i?
 what is "home"?
- 18 REALIZE THE PLACE YOU NOW CALL HOME DOESN'T FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT YOU**
 what do you mean i can't get back in the country!?

title: "The F-1 Process Explained" - originally published 6/23/2008

THE SCORE COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

The SCORE Principle	The Rationale	Suggestions
<p style="text-align: center;">S</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Simplify and Specify</p>	<p>Much miscommunication happens across cultures because the language is hard to understand or details are not specific.</p>	<p>Make your communication as easy to understand as possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim for short sentences that are 12 words or less. • Simplify complicated language. "If it wouldn't be too much trouble, would you mind?" becomes "Could you please . . . ?" • Make time zones, locations, and deadlines clear in e-mails. • Limit use of acronyms and idioms, and when used, specify what they mean. "By 'ballpark figures,' I mean a general estimate of pricing."
<p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Clarify and Confirm</p>	<p>It is not uncommon for two people to think they understand each other when each has a different understanding of the situation. It is therefore important to continually clarify what you are intending to communicate and confirm that this is in fact what the other person understands.</p>	<p>Ensure the message you are delivering is clear and understood:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify often what you are trying to say: "What I mean is . . ." / "To clarify . . ." • Check regularly that you understand the other person: "So what you are saying is . . . / "Could you clarify that last point?" • Check to ensure the other person has understood you: "What is your understanding so far?"
<p style="text-align: center;">O</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Organize and Outline</p>	<p>When our communication is structured and organized into different sections and key points, it becomes easier for others to understand the main points we are making and to follow our communication.</p>	<p>Structure your communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number or letter key ideas to divide them into the main points. • When face to face, use your hands and gestures to help structure key points you are making. • State the purpose of your e-mail in the subject line. • Use headings to organize different topics within an e-mail.
<p style="text-align: center;">R</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rephrase and Reframe</p>	<p>Providing multiple ways of saying the same thing increases the chances of our being understood.</p>	<p>Provide alternative ways of saying the same thing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If saying something one way doesn't work, try a different way. • Use analogies, metaphors, and stories when helpful in making a point: "It's a lot like a software update . . ."
<p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Explain with Examples</p>	<p>Providing the rationale behind our thinking can make our intentions clearer to others. By using examples to illustrate our points (and sometimes literally illustrating our point through drawings and visuals), our message becomes clearer.</p>	<p>Reinforce key concepts with explanations and examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you present an idea or make a request, provide the why behind it: "Here's why getting this step right in the process is critical . . ." • As much as possible, provide examples that bring these to life. • Provide visual examples by drawing ideas on paper or showing images.