University of Iowa Admissions Counselor shares what makes international students come to Iowa.

The University of Iowa alone last year had over 5,000 international students show interest in attending the university.  About 525 students chose Iowa as their college choice.  It was back in 2007 that the University of Iowa saw an increase in international enrollment and that they actively started to recruit overseas.  With China, having a population of about 1.3 billion, this created a big cultural shift.

When Adam Parker, Senior International Admissions Counselor, was asked why the university started to proactively seek out international students, he simply said, “there was a need.” With international enrollment growing rapidly across the US, Iowa decided to get more involved with attracting overseas students. “We had international enrollment before 2007, it was at the graduate level.  At that point, our international programs and our domestic admissions office were together.  They started to see a trend of growing international enrollment across the United States campuses.  At that point, they made a position to help the university attract international students.”

For many of these students, this is the first time they’re leaving their home country.  Not only is there a language and culture difference, but students must also get used to the time change.  For a student in India, India is 12 hours ahead of Iowa.  This makes contacting friends and family back home a challenge.  “For many students it’s a weird paradigm as soon as they get off the plane. They’re trying to figure out things, but it’s not in their native language. They have a fun time exploring the culture, such as the food.  When they can’t get that authenticity they have at home, that can create a sense of homesickness.”

The college recruiting game overseas is pretty similar to the US college recruiting game. Through various emails, digital communications, and school visits, it’s as if these students are in an American high school.  Iowa International Admissions counselors, such as Parker, travel abroad to various English-speaking schools abroad.  Those who go to English-speaking schools typically have a focus of studying abroad.

“A lot of these students have the United States, Canada, and Australia to choose from, so really they have a bigger net.  They don’t necessarily know that they’re going to attend the University of Iowa until later in the cycle, like in late March or April.” The University of Iowa has a large population of students come from China, India, and South Korea.  Not only because they have a large middle class that can afford to send a child to a US school, but, it’s “a double-sided coin”, as Parker put it.  Through various government sponsorship programs, it creates affordability when studying abroad.

Students find Iowa through various college-ranking websites.  Iowa is ranked as the 34th best institution in the United States.  Due to it’s nice study atmosphere, Iowa’s good crime track record, and affordability, a lot of parents feel at ease when sending their children abroad.