Strategies & Staffing
Innovations for International Student Integration

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Integration Goals

- Addressing demographic shifts on campus
- Fostering a collaborative approach
- Supporting students as well as faculty/staff
- Facilitating an inclusive environment
Focus areas

1. Pre-arrival and transition to campus
2. Academics: inside the classroom
3. Student Affairs: co-curricular
4. Funding and staffing efforts
Campus snapshots
Welcoming new students

- Pre-arrival
- Transition
- On campus efforts
Purdue: Pre-arrival & Transition to Campus

1. Orientation in Beijing and Shanghai (600+ of nearly 1,200 international freshmen hail from the PRC)

2. Virtual STAR
   (Summer Transition, Advising and Registration)

3. BGRi (Boiler Gold Rush international)

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5. MIX (Multi-National Integration Exchange)
WMU: International Student Orientation

Challenges

• Competing needs: Specific content vs. interacting with domestic students
• Alternative delivery models
• Dealing with sensitive content

Solutions

• Staffing with a view towards integration
• Early interaction with domestic students
• Adaptation of domestic modules
Illinois

Challenge: Communicating with non-native English speakers and reaching “digital natives”

Solution: Prioritizing online resources, connect sooner, offer practical support

Result: Three transition webisodes, subtitled in Mandarin, Korean, English. Pre-arrival orientations in China & South Korea, featuring translated PPT and native speakers facilitating the discussion.

Lessons Learned: Include int’l parents & alumni in transition efforts, get buy-in from senior leadership. Caution: language politics Don’t underestimate project timeline & budget.
In the classroom

- Student support
- Faculty resources
Purdue: Academics

1. Early discussions with English Composition course coordinator and Speech class coordinator

2. One faculty per year participates in the pre-arrival orientation program in China
WMU: ESL Center as Catalyst

• ESL faculty as resource for campus
• “Cool tools” workshops in conjunction with Office of Faculty Development
• Conversation partners
• Driver of plagiarism discussion (Writing Task Force)
• Bridge Courses
Illinois

Challenge: Growing international student demographic calls for new expertise & resources

Solution: Intercultural training for front-line staff and paraprofessionals, teaching resources for faculty/instructors

Results: Workshop options for staff, faculty & TAs, expanded online support for staff and int’l students. Capitalize on existing forums- writing/teaching centers (faculty retreat)

Lessons Learned: Instructors & advisors, don’t feel prepared to support ESL learners & unique needs of int’l students (career/leadership services). Training & support for staff & faculty is key. Help campus/units shape international message.
Co-curricular engagement

- Programming
- Advising
- Outreach
Purdue: Programming & Engagement

1. International Friendship Program
2. Boiler Out! Program
3. Orientation programs
4. Cultural Trips
WMU: A Campus-wide Effort

• International Program Council
• International Programs/Student Affairs joint meetings
  • Address ad hoc issues
  • Long-term projects
• International Education Council
• Presidential involvement: Country-specific luncheons/town halls
Illinois

**Challenge:** Decentralized campus structure, efforts were scattered & disconnected

**Solution:** Increase communication, coordination & oversight at every level

**Results:** Collaboration & buy-in from key stakeholders (RSOs-SIOs) for major initiatives, including shuttle project, in-country orientations, webisodes

**Lessons Learned:** Frequent & transparent info sharing, unified efforts & message, inter/intra unit politics, maximize scale & timing
Funding & Staffing

- Funding
- New positions
- Campus buy-in
Purdue: International Tuition

1. Positions allocated to 4 colleges with the most international undergraduates
2. International Students and Scholars counselor
3. Writing Lab staff
4. Speech class funding for TAs
5. Testing Center funding
6. Dean of Students staff
7. Grant program funding
8. Center for Instructional Excellence hire
   - Ad-hoc Funding from President for MIX position
WMU: A Distributed Model

• Legacy funding
• Multiple Stakeholders
• No position specifically dedicated, but embedded in several job descriptions
• Director for Faculty and Global Programs Development
• International Student Activities Specialist
Illinois

Challenge: Oversight, coordination of integration initiatives, cohesive & comprehensive communication

Solution: Re-defining/assigning job duties, reporting structure & position reach, bring key stakeholders to the table & establish first point of contact (critical during emergencies)

Result: Creation of new positions and campus-level committees:
- Director for International Student Integration, VPIAGS/IPS
- Assoc. Director of Health & Safety (abroad), SAO/IPS
- International Specialist, College of LAS
- Int’l Advising Specialist(s), Int’l Student & Scholar Services
- Program Director for Int’l Education, Student Affairs/OIIR

Lessons Learned: Unified message, timely & proactive communication, don’t estimate +/- power of social media
Audience Questions...
Discussion Question

• What are the successful integration efforts (student or faculty/staff initiated) that are happening on your campus?
• What type of integration hurdles or challenges have you encountered at your institution?
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