



Strategies for Implementing a Successful International Student Orientation Program

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Lynn University at a glance

- Lynn University is an independent, nonprofit, coeducational, residential institution
- Accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Enrollment: More than 2,000 students from 97 countries and 45 states and territories

- 22.5% of students come from countries outside the United States as of Fall 2014
- Highest percentage of international students among master's degree-granting institutions in the South (U.S. News & World Report's 2011 "America's Best Colleges" issue)
- Apple Distinguished School
 - Innovation, leadership and educational excellence
 - iPad initiative
- CIO 100 award winner

Agenda

- Introduction and purpose
- The “Why”
- Trends within the field
- Guiding research
- Points to consider for designing your program
- Resources
- Q + A

Learning outcomes

- Participants will understand the trends regarding international students in the United States.
- Participants will examine guiding principles and scholarly perspectives that inform their understanding of international students' transition to college in the U.S.
- Participants will be given considerations for examining their respective programs in relation to the three aspects highlighted in this session.

International Students in U.S. IIE Open Doors 2013-2014 Report “Fast Facts”

Global Growth

- 8% increase in international student enrollment
- International students make up 4% of total US higher education population
 - Undergraduate level 42%
 - Graduate-37%
 - Optional Practical Training 12%
 - Non-Degree 9%

Fields of Study

Business, Management	21%
Engineering	19%
Math, Computer Science	10%
Social Sciences	8%
Physical Life Sciences	8%
Fine Applied Arts	6%
IEP	5%
Health Professional	4%
Humanities	2%
Education	2%
Agriculture	1%
Undeclared, other	14%

Top Places of Origins

- China
- India
- South Korea
- Saudi Arabia
- Canada
- Taiwan
- Japan
- Vietnam
- Mexico
- Brazil

50% of international students come from China, India, and South Korea

Top 10 U.S. states hosting 61% international students

1. California
2. New York
3. Texas
4. Massachusetts
5. Illinois
6. Pennsylvania
7. Florida
8. Ohio
9. Michigan
10. Indiana

Guiding research

Orientation programs aid in student success

“It is the combination of academic and social integration that is critical to student success and retention, and a student’s comfort level with a college is often established during orientation. Orientation provides multiple opportunities for your new students to meet and interact with others, thus beginning the social and academic integration process” (Mullendore, 2010).

Intercultural competence

“Cultivating intercultural competencies among students, faculty, and staff is the key piece to effective integration of international students into campus life and the curriculum” (Fusch, 2012)

Challenges International Students Face

- Unique transitional and adjustment challenges
- Intercultural transitions
- Psychological stressors multiple factors may influence level of stress
- New institution, community, country

“International students face unique stresses such as their role demands as cultural ambassadors and cultural differences between themselves and their host society, as well as the developmental and academic demands that face all students” (Furnham & Bochner, 1982).

Orientation and transitional programs

Orientation programs should...

- Set the tone of the institution
- Provide important information
- Facilitate student involvement
- Campus culture
- Reduce anticipatory socialization
 - Peer leaders
 - Student handbooks and resources
 - Demystify terminology

Utilize CAS Self-Assessment Guides!

<http://www.cas.edu/>

CAS Standards for Orientation Programs

- Orientation Programs must
 - assess relevant and desirable student learning and development
 - provide evidence of impact on outcomes
 - articulate contributions to or support of student learning and development in the domains not specifically assessed
 - articulate contributions to or support of student persistence and success
 - use evidence gathered through this process to create strategies for improvement of programs and services

CAS Standards for Orientation Programs

- Orientation Programs must be
 - intentionally designed
 - guided by theories and knowledge of learning and development
 - integrated into the life of the institution
 - reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population
 - responsive to needs of individuals, populations with distinct needs, and relevant constituencies
 - delivered using multiple formats, strategies, and contexts

Revisiting your program

“In one sense, an international orientation is no different than a program for domestic students -- in that there are certain rights, responsibilities, and expectations that the students should have of us and that we have of them as members of our academic community. Build the orientation around that. You are working to key up a successful transition to the university, the city, and the US as a whole”

(Tom Studdert, in Fusch, 2012)

- Orientation is a comprehensive process, not a single event
 - “Orientation is not accomplished in a one or two day orientation event, but it can and should be done through a comprehensive, multi-faceted orientation process beginning at the time of admission and continuing throughout the entire first year” (Shupp, 2014).

Three Aspects

- Community
- College/University Life
- Your Institution

Community

- United States
 - Geography of continental US and territories
 - Physiographic regions and climates
- Region
 - US Census Bureau – four statistical regions
- State, City, County
 - Refer to state government websites and local chamber of commerce

College and University Life

- Immediate and practical issues
- Academic challenges
- Introduction to life in the U.S.
- Immigration

Immediate and Practical Issues

- Housing
- Meal plans
- International Student Services office
- University ID and email
- Cell phone
- Bank account
- DMV/License
- Insurance and health care
- Connecting with peers (similar background)

Academic Challenges

- Improving verbal and written English
- Getting advice and help from Faculty, support services, and/or other professionals
- Expressing their individual viewpoint
- U.S. classroom differences
 - Critiquing readings or questioning professor
 - Academic honesty
 - Syllabus
 - Participation in class
- Faculty communication and office hours
- Understanding culture and learning

Introduction to Life in the U.S.

- Communication and cultural styles
- Status and hierarchy
- Laws, restrictions, law enforcement
- Public transportation
- Personal and Community Safety
- Relationships and Social Cues

Immigration

- International Student Services
 - Close working relationship with (PDSO/DSO, RO/ARO) and International Student Advisor
- On and/or off-campus employment
 - U.S. Tax obligations

Your institution

- Cultural differences with the University community
- Academic and social climate
- Campus pride and traditions (i.e., mascot, athletics)
- Phrases, slang, abbreviations
- Campus resources and points of contact with local community
- Psychological support (counseling centers)

Keep in mind...

- Orientation models vary by institution
 - No “one size fits all”
- Assess the needs of your populations
 - Utilize assessment data
 - Focus groups
 - Cross comparisons to similar institutions
- Know your student – view student profile
- Know the mission and goals of your institution
- Determine the necessary objectives for your program

Orientation is multifaceted

Collaboration is KEY – use your colleagues!

Questions + Answers

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