Successful Strategies for Recruitment and Retention

This synthesis of successful strategies was prepared for the “Seminar: Comprehensive Strategic International Enrollment Management: Recruitment, Retention, and Reentry” presented at the 2012 NAFSA Annual Conference in Houston, Texas as a follow-up to the original session presented at the 2011 NAFSA Annual Conference in Vancouver, B.C.

We asked participants to identify successful enrollment management strategies and practices employed at their colleges or universities. Institutions who suggested the practice, or provided an example of how to implement the practice, are listed in parentheses. For more information on the practices of a specific institution, see A Summary of Best Practices.

Successful Strategies for Recruitment:
- **Personalize Admission Experiences and Promote Positive Interactions**
  (RU, WSU, WU)
  - Why is it successful?
    - Students who feel valued as individuals by a university are more likely to attend.
  - How can you implement it?
    - Focus on hospitality. Respond to students quickly and engage with them online and through activities and events when they arrive.

- **Utilize Current Students**
  (Lewis, RU, WSU)
  - Why is it successful?
    - Word of mouth is a powerful and effective method of communication.
  - How can you implement it?
    - Encourage students to recruit in their home countries. To implement this formally, see Rice University’s program “REAP International” (http://reap.oiss.rice.edu).
    - With student permission, update high school counselors after personal interviews with students. Counselors will appreciate the attention provided at your institution and may be more likely to recommend it in the future (Lewis and Clark College).

Successful Strategies for Retention:
- **Continue Effective Recruitment Practices**
  (BU, ECC, LCC, Lewis, MSU, OSU, RU, UNM, UP, WU)
  - Why is it successful?
    - Students receiving positive, personal attention feel more connected to their university.
  - How can you implement it?
    - **Monitor Student Progress** (BU, LCC, Lewis, OSU, UNM, UP, WU)
      - Meet individually with students in formal and informal situations as often as possible. Discuss academics, extracurricular activities, social life, etc.
      - Identify students who may be at risk academically and focus attention on connecting them to resources to help them succeed.
    - **Evaluate the Success of Your Program** (ECC, MSU, RU, UNM)
      - Seek feedback regarding the program’s ability to meet student needs through formal needs assessments, town hall meetings, focus groups, formal and informal interviews, satisfaction surveys, etc. Use this information to assess services and implement new practices.
• **Facilitate the Transition to Campus Life**
  (BU, MSU, RU, UNM, UW, WSU)
  o Why is it successful?
    ▪ International students face many challenges in adjusting to college life in the United States and need help navigating their environment.
  o How can you implement it?
    ▪ *Develop Online Pre-Arrival Orientation* (MSU, RU, UW)
      • Disseminate clear and concise information to students so they can prepare for campus life before their arrival. After students have arrived on campus, address questions and concerns.
    ▪ *Provide Effective Orientation* (BU, MSU, UNM, WSU)
      • Equip students to navigate campus and community resources by including practical information related to academic expectations, campus employment, health and personal safety, cultural adjustment, and immigration.
      • Use current international student volunteers at orientation as resources, small group discussion leaders, and/or panelists.
      • Schedule social activities or excursions and advertise for campus welcome events to encourage student involvement (University of New Mexico).

• **Coordinate and Collaborate**
  (BU, Lewis, MSU, OSU, UC, UNM, UP, WU)
  o Why is it successful?
    ▪ A collaborative approach with academic departments and other campus offices increases a program’s effectiveness and its ability to support international students.
  o How can you implement it?
    ▪ *Communicate Regularly* (MSU, OSU, UC, UNM, UP)
      • Identify and partner with other offices and academic departments to coordinate programs and services. For example, hold workshops with career services, academic support services, or the counseling center.
      • Advocate for international student needs by educating faculty and staff on interacting with international students and providing academic advisors and campus offices with specific information about the international student population.
    ▪ *Utilize Interoffice Staff Committees and Support Groups* (BU, Lewis, OSU, UNM, WU)
      • Establish committees to anticipate and address student needs or participate in existing campus committees and student support groups.

• **Promote Campus and Community Engagement**
  (ECC, Lewis, MSU, RU, UNM, UP, WSU, WU)
  o Why is it successful?
    ▪ Students who are integrated socially and academically have more opportunities to succeed.
  o How can you implement it?
    ▪ *Encourage and Facilitate Participation* (MSU, RU, UP, WSU, WU)
      • Connect students to opportunities to engage with other students through established peer mentoring programs, campus organizations, academic departments, and community outreach programming.
    ▪ *Provide Job-Seeking Support* (ECC, MSU, UNM)
      • Guide students through the employment process by informing them of job search resources and assisting with hiring and tax paperwork.
- Advocate for international student employment by providing information for departments interested in hiring international students (Edmonds Community College).
  - **Create and Support On-Going Events and Activities** (ECC, Lewis, MSU, UNM, WU)
    - Help students maintain connections with other students by organizing social events and community excursions.
    - Involve students in the community for speakers’ bureaus, service projects, international festival presentations, etc. (University of New Mexico).
    - Capitalize on students’ high use of technology to communicate about international student events and other campus events.

- **Improve Student Support**
  (BU, ECC, LCC, MSU, OSU, RU, UC, UNM, UP, UW, WSU, WU)
  - **Why is it successful?**
  - Sufficient academic, cultural, and social support is critical for student success.
  - **How can you implement it?**
    - **Examine Office Resources and Online Accessibility** (MSU, UNM, UW)
      - Serve as a support system by providing accessible resources to aid students in their academic and social success and assisting with immigration and re-entry.
      - Provide online access to important information, procedures, and forms.
    - **Reach Out to Students** (ECC, OSU, UC, UNM, UP, WU)
      - Develop innovative methods to serve the international student population like the Campus Connector Program at the University of Portland.
      - Contact students proactively to inform them of deadlines, remind them about their responsibilities, and address their needs.
    - **Implement Academic Support Programs** (LCC, RU, UP)
      - Create a program to connect students to resources and encourage academic success and accountability. See Success Program (Lane Community College), IDEAL Program (Rice University), and Five-Week Academic Workshop (University of Portland).
    - **Develop Language and Acculturation Courses or Informational Workshops** (ECC, MSU, RU, UNM, UP)
      - Recruit volunteers to lead language support courses or design an acculturation course with specific learning outcomes, curriculum, and lessons on US culture, academic expectations, and social success (Rice University).
      - Create informational workshops on various topics, including leadership, networking/career, job search, academic expectations, and cultural adjustment, to address student needs and interests.
    - **Ensure Access to Strong Academic Advising** (BU, UC, UNM, WU)
      - Provide accessible, educated advisors who are able to guide students through their university experience, connect them to appropriate resources, and address any personal, academic, or cultural concerns.
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Ellen H. Badger, Director, International Student & Scholar Services

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Jennifer Hare, International Retention & Academic Advisor, Honors Program Coordinator
International Programs

**Lewis and Clark College**
Bridget Flaherty, Assistant Director, International Students and Scholars

**Michigan State University**
Ravi Ammigan, Assistant Director, Office for International Students and Scholars
International Center

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Emiko Christopherson, International Student Advising and Services

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Adria Baker, Associate Vice Provost for International Education; Executive Director, OISS

**University of Connecticut**
Mihwa Lee, Director, Immigration Services, Office of Global Programs

**University of New Mexico**
Linda L. Melville, Associate Director for International Student & Scholar Services
Office of International Programs and Studies

**University of Portland**
Krista Kennedy-Ho, Assistant Director, International Student Services

**University of Washington**
Chanya Allen, DSO & ARO, International Students Services

**Washington State University**
Cheryl A Hansen, Director, Global Services, International Programs

**Willamette University**
Chris Andresen, Associate Director, International Education