Deana Olsen

Academic Support Coordinator
The University of Kansas

Amanda Enriquez

Intercultural Program Coordinator Northwest College



Aiming for success, not just status:

Helping international students effectively navigate the U.S. higher education system

Introduction

Deana Olsen

- Academic Support Coordinator
- University of Kansas
 - Public research and teaching institution
 - KU Total Student Enrollment: 24,435
 - 2250 International Students from 100 different countries
 - Graduate: 965, Under graduate: 1285
 - Top 5 countries: China, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, India & Japan

Amanda Enriquez

- Intercultural Program Coordinator
- Northwest College
 - Public 2 year community college
 - NWC Total Student Enrollment: 2,136
 - 71 international students from 33 different countries
 - Top 5 countries: Hong Kong, Brazil, Korea, Vietnam, & United Kingdom



Northwest College

Personal Reflection

 What has been your biggest challenge in retaining international students?



 What has been your biggest challenge in helping international students navigate through the U.S. educational system?

Global, Economic, & Social Trends



Global, Economic, & Social Trends

Global

- Rising demand for higher education
 - Student mobility
 - Demand for accountability
- Globalization
 - Transcending national boundaries
- Internationalization
 - Our response to globalization

Economic

- Global recession
- Budget cuts
- Increased tuition rates
 - Students' ability to pay for education

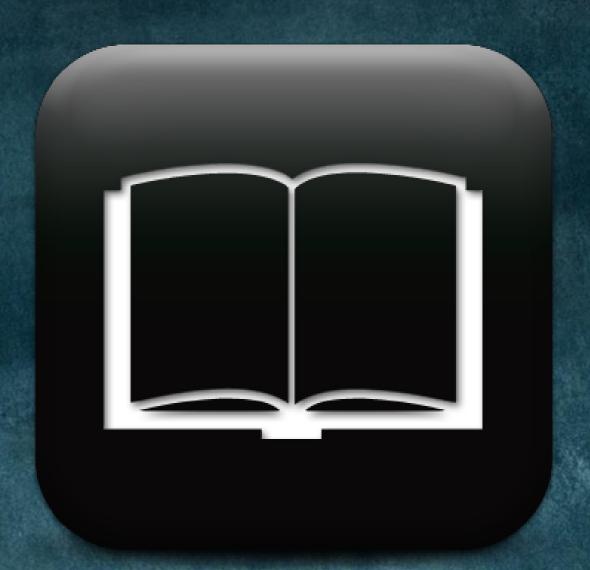
Social

- International students studying in the U.S. is increasing
- Competitive job market
 - Opportunities and demand of globalized knowledge-based economy

Impact of Trends on Institutions

- Retention becomes crucial to all institutions
 - We need to know and understand:
 - What are the institution's goals, mission, vision, strategic plan, etc?
 - Who are our students and what are their needs/wants?
 - Students are not just numbers or dollar signs
 - How do students chose one institution over another?
 - » What factors come into play?
 - Institutions can no longer afford to adopt the sink or swim attitude toward students

Retention Theories



Retention Theories

Tinto – Student Integration Model

Astin – Involvement

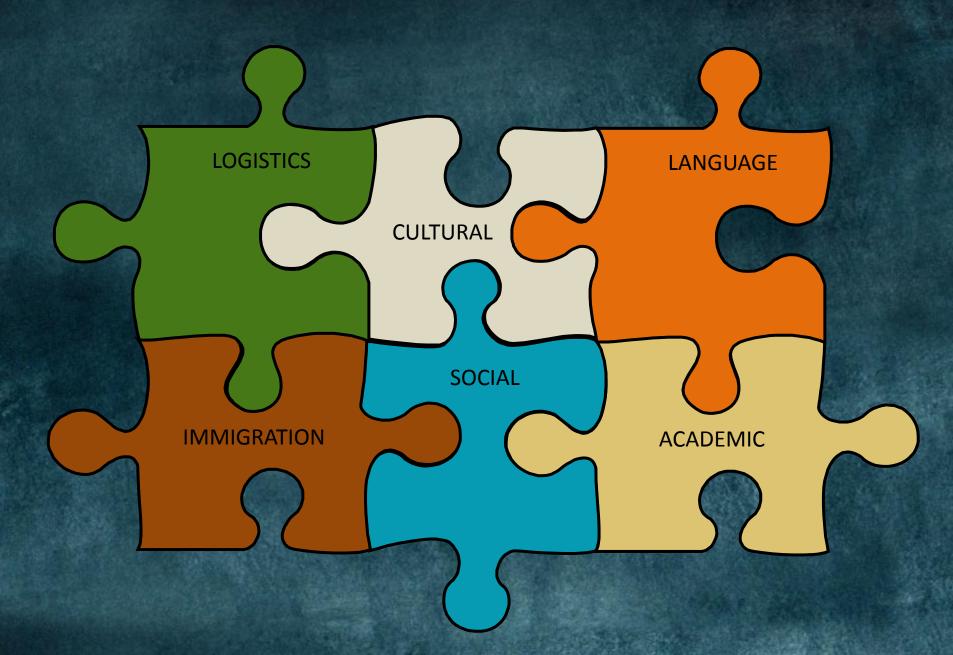


- Seidman Retention = Early Identification + (Early + Intensive + Continuous) Intervention
- Kuh and Love Sense of belonging, finding cultural meaning
- Schlossberg Marginality versus Mattering

Strategic Retention Initiatives

- Using some of these theoretical concepts, we know that:
 - The first year experience is absolutely critical for retention and graduation
 - Both academic and non-academic retention strategies should be implemented (orientation, classes, workshops, programming, etc.)
 - Programs need to be beneficial to both the student and the institution
 - Mattering versus Marginality
 - Students need to feel a sense of belonging
 - Students need to feel the institutional integrity and commitment to their welfare.
 - Students need to be more than just numbers or dollar signs

Focus Areas Vital for Success



Focus Areas for Retention Strategies

- Logistics
 - pre-arrival, arrival communications, and preparation, expectation setting
- Immigration
 - SEVIS regulations, maintaining status
- Language
 - language skills
- Academic
 - aptitude and preparation for their academic coursework
- Social
 - student's personal level of maturity and responsibility
- Cultural
 - Adaptation to U.S. classrooms, instruction and way of living

Logistics

- Recruiting and admissions
- Pre-arrival communication with students via email, social media, publications, etc.
- Guidelines to obtaining entry documents (SEVIS fee, Visa, I-20/DS-2019)
- Let them know what the institutional expectations are before they arrive on campus
 - Academic, financial, general living

Immigration

- Visa regulations
- SEVIS regulations
- Helping students maintain status
- Applying for CPT/OPT, on campus employment
- Assistance with filing taxes, obtaining a social security card, driver's license, health insurance, etc.

Language

- Language struggles are highly visible, often the first observed or expected
- Pin-point the specific areas of struggle
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Vocabulary
 - Listening
 - Speaking
 - Formal/slang, humor, non-verbal communication
- Offer resources
 - Writing center
 - Intensive English counselors /tutors
 - Record lectures, use audio books, translations
 - Conversation partners Intensive English resources, etc.
 - Practice listening: www.TED.com



Academic

- Different preparation backgrounds
 - Humanities, Math and Science
 - Discussion vs. lecture
 - Critical thinking vs. memorization and recall
- Success strategies
 - Pin-point problems
 - Refer to resources and/or...
 - Walk them through the process
 - Writing center, tutoring, office hours
 - Participation, critiques What they look like
 - Procrastination, time management
 - Advising center
 - Math & Science: www.KhanAcademy.org



Academic

- Various academic indicators
 - Syllabus "class contract"
 - Class attendance
 - Class participation
 - Grades for assignments
 - Quizzes
 - Tests/exams/finals
- How to get help
 - Where to go and how to ask if you don't know
 - Academic advisors and academic success units
 - Communication with instructors



Academic

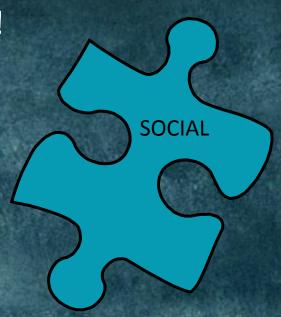
- Academic advising center
- Seminars and workshops
- Career and transfer coordinator
- Quality of faculty-student interaction
- Linking curriculum and co-curriculum
- Peer mentoring



Social

- There are different kinds of socializing: Advisors, faculty and staff, roommates, classmates, friends
 - From home country? Other international students or American students?
 - The larger the nationality group, the harder it will be for students to diversity and expand their horizons

Comfort zones always feel safer!



Social

- Social strategies for success
 - Exposure: Involvement, involvement, involvement!
 - May need to start "safe" (international students outside of home culture)
 - Expectation setting
 - International students may need to take the first step
 - Benefits of branching out
 - On and off campus engagement
 - Community involvement
 - Volunteer work
 - Student to student interaction
 - Provides a richer experience
 - Challenges allow for growth



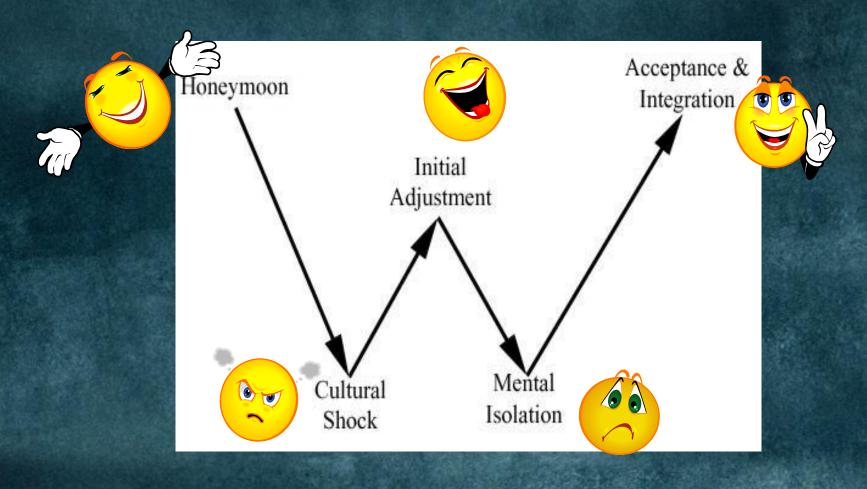
Cultural

- Cultural contrasts
 - Experience
 - Expectations
 - Environments
 - Physical
 - Climate, rural vs. urban, population
 - Living
 - Residence life/roommate, communal bathrooms/showers
 - Social settings
 - Community including food, transportation, health care
 - Learning
 - Classroom
 - Education system
- Cultural Context Challenges
 - Communication difficulties due to differing cultural framework



Cultural Adjustment

- Time of transition in location, role and identity
- Common experience that students may process in different ways
- Normal and ongoing process with multiple stages:



Cultural Adjustment

- Difficulties in adjusting to new customs norms & relations
 - Values
 - Worldviews
 - Lifestyles
 - Homesickness
 - Loneliness
 - Psychological
 - Wellness
 - Adjustment



 What are some resources we can offer that can help students get culturally adjusted

Opportunities and Challenges



Opportunities

- Overall well being of students
- Increased enrollment, retention, and graduation rates
- Internationalization (campus, community, and curriculum)
- Environments conducive to learning
- Great marketing and recruiting strategy

Challenges

- Campus location
- Institutional type and size
- Limited and reduced budgets
- Staff and time management
- Availability of resources
- Institutional support
- Student motivation
- Institutional motivation



Discussion



Supporting Students: Where they need it most



- During WWII, Abraham Wald was given a sample set of planes that were shot up and was asked to help determine where and how to add reinforcements to the planes. He analyzed all the planes that returned and the damage that was done to them.
- While most people were working on fixing the areas that were the most shot through, Wald focused on the areas that all the returned planes had in common. Address the most vital areas.



Questions Answers

Contact information:

Deana Olsen

Academic Support Coordinator University of Kansas

Email: dolsen@ku.edu

Amanda Enriquez

Intercultural Program Coordinator

Northwest College

Email: amanda.enriquez@northwestcollege.edu

Additional Section:

 Note: One of our co-presenters was not able to attend the Region II conference. Her contact information is listed below and slides she developed that focus on the Career and Transitional needs of International Students follow.

Adrienne Hamann
 Master of Arts Thesis Candidate at Lesley University
 Email: hamannadrienne@gmail.com

Career and Transition Needs

by Adrienne Hamann

- What can we as advisors do to assist international students transitioning into a career?
- Nancy Arthur demonstrates that counseling needs to include these three points:
 - 1. Managing the initial demands faced during the crosscultural transition of entering a new culture.
 - 2. Learning in a new cultural context.
 - 3. Transferring international expertise to work settings in either the host or home country.

Things to consider for your counseling session

- Identify the expectations from the family and culture of the student.
- Identify the expectations of the student.
- What is their career path?
- Provide grounded suggestions and solutions if the student is thinking of taking a different path.

Career Advising

- A lot of international students intend to stay in the U.S., so it is important to consider how well the student has acculturated as well as their long-term goals.
- Discuss implications for relationships in the student's home country if they decide to stay in the U.S.
- If the student is conflicted as to return to their home country, discuss the student's values as well their sense of belonging at home.

Improving Students' Candidacy

- Give a workshop on how students should demonstrate their competencies. The students need to be able to show how their skill-set will benefit the workplace.
- Practice job interviews. Give them a list of the top ten interview questions.
- Provide resources for students who are job hunting. Show them how to navigate websites and where they can find job postings.

Recommended Readings

- Singaravelu, Hemla D. A Handbook for Counseling International Students in the United States. Amer. Counseling Assn. (2006).
- Young, Nancy E. The Handbook of International Student Advising: Third Edition. Intercultural Interaction LLC (2013)