

A Summary of Best Practices

This summary of best practices was collected 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. Responses are presented here in alphabetical order, by university. For a synthesis of these responses, see *Successful Strategies for Recruitment and Retention*.

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Edmonds Community College

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Lane Community College

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Binghamton University, State University of New York

Courtesy of: Ellen H. Badger

Director, International Student and Scholar Services

Mid Semester “Students at Risk” Review: The tutorial center, the office of International Student & Scholar Services, and the English as a Second Language Program work together to identify new undergraduate international students who may be at risk academically.

- The students’ professors report back to the center regarding the students’ mid-term grades, and then we follow up depending upon the grades to recommend tutoring or meeting with their academic advisor.

Getting Good Grades: one time program offered to new students during orientation*. We have academic advisors from the various schools come to the event to meet the students and speak to them informally, prior to when they will register for their classes. We have current international students speak as well. *Companion handbook/web site at: <http://www2.binghamton.edu/iss/getting-good-grades/index.html>

Description of Program:

What You Need to Know About Binghamton University:

This is “How To Get Good Grades” strategy and planning session. Learn what is expected of you academically:

- What Your Professors Expect of You
- Academic Support Programs and Research Assistance
- Software like “Blackboard” an essential tool in many BU classes
- Who is your Academic Advisor and when to meet with your advisor
- Resources on Time Management and strategies for managing your course workload
- Career Planning
- Using the Library System at BU

Strategies for Success at a US University:

Learn about the differences between Binghamton University and your home University system from a panel of successful international students:

- Discussion of characteristics typical of Binghamton University classrooms
- Who can help you understand what courses you should register for this semester
- How you can practice speaking English
- Making friends
- Tips on managing reading assignments in English when it is your second language
- Learn what to do if you are unsure of your coursework and professors’ expectations of you
- Who is your Academic Advisor and when to meet with your advisor

Student Support Group: a group that meets bi-weekly to discuss strategy, data, trends and issues that can negatively impact students. The following offices are represented at this meeting:

- | | |
|---|---|
| -Office of Transfer Initiatives | -International Student and Scholar Services |
| -Athletics Dept Student Services | -Center for Learning and Teaching |
| -English as a Second Language Program | -Office of New Student Programs |
| -Faculty Masters | -Discovery (Tutorial Center) |
| -Academic Advising | -TRIO |
| -Educational Opportunity Program | -Residential Life |
| -Student Affairs Assessment and Strategic Initiatives | |

Coordination: *In tight budget times, the ability to coordinate programs and services with other offices is the key to making things successful. Coordination increases effectiveness and outreach, keeps all offices informed. It also facilitates referrals; we can just pick up the phone and easily have a student seen.*

Edmonds Community College

Courtesy of: Martha Acosta-Pieters

Director, International Marketing and Recruitment

Know Your Campus Resources: to grow and maintain numbers, programs need to look inwards and ask, “What is it that we have to offer?”

Use Students as Resources:

- Students talk to other students. Student employees can tell you “the word on the street” and the reasons why students think what they do about the program. Students can also tell you what will work to communicate with students. For example, technology can help track things and help get in touch with students.
- Seek feedback from your student population. Students know what they want and what they are looking for. We ask students: Why do you like us? What do you like about our program? *Try a survey or a focus group.* You will be surprised to hear why students like and don’t like your program.

Encourage Campus Involvement, Leadership, and Employment:

- Consistently a large number of students are employed on campus and a large number are involved in student government as officers, public relations, faculty liaisons, etc. Advisors can encourage students to become involved.
- Provide job-seeking support by offering workshops on getting jobs. English skills/language skills are improved by working. Our office provides handouts and forms/flow-charts for any department who would like to hire international students and we help students with the employment process directly instead of referring students to other services.

Focus on Your Student Population: This is my target group—what services do they need?

- Example #1: Before we recruited students from China, we made sure we could provide the needed services to this student population. Having services to help students in their language helps a lot. We hired a full-time Chinese speaker who recruits students and follows up with a quarterly meeting to address academic trouble. We also developed an Intensive English program.
- Example # 2: 700 of our students transfer to a university so we created a “*transfer advisor.*” Students wanted help answering the questions: Where do I go? Why? How do I get there? The transfer advisor tracks students and knows the requirements for many schools. Students feel comfortable talking to her, knowing they can get somewhere.
- Example #3: Our population is young. 400 students are under the age of 18 because of our high school completion program. Since younger students demand more services, we hired an *activities director:* a short-term employee who puts together welcome packages and manuals and oversees a team of students to organize activities.
 - With younger students, *parents play a very important role in recruitment and retention. Once you gain the trust of parents/establish relationship with parents, retention increases.*
 - We created a three-day orientation (held the same week as student orientation) to introduce parents to housing, registrar, financial aid, etc. During this orientation, we provide a jump-drive with all the information they can possibly need as a parent (like “how do I get a transcript?”) and all of the forms they need to fill out. We also walk them through the website and our services: what we are able and not able to do.

Lane Community College

Courtesy of: Jennifer Hare

International Retention and Academic Advisor; Honors Program Coordinator, International Programs

The Success Program: a contract system for students facing academic difficulty to help them increase their academic performance level and reach progression towards a degree. Students are required to sign the *Success Program contract*, which entails:

- 2 hours/week of international student tutoring (provided by 3 paid tutors)
 - Students are required to complete a 30 minute individual tutoring appointment and 1.5 hours of independent study
- Participation in a progress report meeting with their Success Program advisor
 - Progress reports are emailed to the student to hand out to each of their instructors to receive feedback about their attendance, homework, class progress, quiz and test scores, current grade, and suggestions for improvement.
- Enrollment in EL 115E or CG 100 (a 3-credit transferrable study skills class)
 - Designed to provide students with critical information for their academic success. Study habits, test-taking skills, motivation, time management, and memorization techniques are some of the topics covered as part of the curriculum.

Why it is successful:*

The program gives students the chance to develop regular study habits and get the individual help they need to address areas that they struggle with academically. The progress report meeting in particular gives students a chance to reflect on their progress in each class and to formulate a proactive plan to raise their academic performance in any class they are in danger of not passing; it also opens up the line of communication between the student and instructor so that the student can feel comfortable approaching the instructor later in the term with questions and concerns.

*A review of the Success Program contract since its inception in Fall 2010, showed that out of 52 students placed who were placed on the contract, 28 received between a 3.0 and 4.0 GPA during the term that they were on contract and that a majority of them have continued to maintain a 2.0 GPA or higher up to three terms later.

Lewis and Clark College

Courtesy of: Bridget Flaherty

Assistant Director, International Students and Scholars

Student Interviews:

- We meet individually with each of our new international students at the end of their first semester to see how the experience has been so far. The meetings last about half an hour, and we talk to them about academics, extracurricular activities, social life, etc. This practice helps with retention, in that the students know we care about their well-being.
- With the consent of the students, we then send their high school counselors an email updating them on the student. This helps with recruitment because the counselors can also see the type of personal attention we provide students, and it also helps them to see which students thrive here and who to suggest our school to in the future. *It's time intensive, but cost-free.*

Interoffice Staff Committees:

- Focused on student success, these committees are comprised of members from Student Health and Counseling, various offices in Student Life (Campus Living, ISS, etc.), Academic Advising, and Student Support Services. We meet on a weekly basis to discuss students who someone has referred to the committee, whether the reason is academic, social, health, multiple, etc. Appropriate members of the

committee will reach out to the student and make sure that they know which resources on campus are available and are feeling supported.

A committee has started up in the past two years with the purpose of creating more resources and events for students in their sophomore and junior years when they may be more likely to leave school.

Michigan State University

Courtesy of Ravi Ammigan

Assistant Director, Office for International Students and Scholars

Campus and Community Integration:

- Work with partners and collaborators both on campus and in the community to help students become global citizens during their experience in the United States.
- Intentional programming and community outreach efforts help connect international students and scholars to resources on campus and in the community via programs that support academic success, Government regulations compliance, international understanding and community engagement.

Employment and Experiential Learning:

- We have an advisor dedicated to providing experiential learning guidance to the international population through career services assistance and service learning opportunities.
- We educate employers about immigration and employment regulations and partner with the Global Talent Retention Initiative, an initiative from the Executive Office of the Governor.

Student Engagement and Leadership:

- OISS provides leadership opportunities and serves as a liaison to over 40 registered international student clubs on campus for their cross-cultural and international programming efforts.

Academic and Social Support:

- *Use existing resources.* We provide an array of academic resources and services to assist international students with academic issues. Resources include the Writing Center, the Learning Resource Center, the Math Learning Center, tutoring services and engagement Centers.
- English Language Center serves as a bridge program to future degree-seeking opportunities, helping students to improve their English proficiency and gain exposure to the academic life at the university.
- Partnership with the MSU Counseling Center to provide mental health and wellness resources and multi-faceted programs designed to enhance the well-being of international students. Programs focus on crisis intervention and treatment, education, prevention and promotion of student well-being.

Internationalization:

- MSU has strengthened the *global student experience* through initiatives like Internationalizing the Student Experience, MSU Neighborhoods in the residence halls (<http://neighborhoods.msu.edu>), strong alumni relations and internationalization in the classroom.

Assessment:

- *To ensure our international students continue to receive an enriching experience, we need assessment and satisfaction surveys throughout the year.* This includes the i-graduate (<http://www.i-graduate.org>) benchmarking barometer and other country-specific surveys and focus groups.

Further Thoughts on Strategies for Retention:

Courtesy of: Michigan State University

Excerpts from: *Executive Summary: Office of International Students and Scholars Student Retention* by Cierra Gillison, Julie Hagopian, and Andrea Sell

Universities need to focus their attention on *three retention strategies: academic transition, community and social support, and increased communication, capitalizing on their existing relationships and focusing on programs that are already in place.*

Office Support:

- The Office of International Students and Scholars is designed to be a support system for international students, scholars, and their families and should be dedicated to creating and providing services to enhance the learning experiences of their students.
- Services provided through OISS include assisting international student acculturation and orientation, providing resources to aid students in their academic and social success, assisting in immigration and re-entry into students' home country, and consulting on other legal issues.

Faculty and Staff Workshops:

- Faculty and staff have a large influence on international students' acclimation to the institution. Workshops will be aimed to improve cross-cultural understanding when working with international students in order to improve the academic experience and relationships with faculty for international students.

International Student First Year Seminar:

- A program designed to address common academic and institutional challenges international students face in order to best help them adjust to the intellectual demand of higher education.
- Topics could include navigating the US academic system, time management, study skills, interacting with faculty, developing a peer network, American culture, and English language proficiency and slang.

Peer Mentoring Program:

- A mentoring program matching first-year international students with a domestic partner can help international students better understand classroom expectations, extracurricular activities, transportation, student employment, American culture, and help to improve their English skills. Students would meet for social and conversational purposes in an informal setting.

Campus Involvement:

- In order for students to persist in higher education, they must be socially and academically integrated to the institution. If students feel connected to their campus, they are more likely to stay.
- Help international students become involved through greater communication between OISS and other university divisions about programs being sponsored by different offices and departments. Capitalize on students' high use of technology. Send e-mails about international student events, and include events from other campus programs.

Online Orientation

- Online orientation prepares students for what they can expect prior to their arrival in order to reduce culture shock. It can supplement in-person orientation.

- Focus on disseminating comprehensible and concise information that will aid in comprehending transitional issues. Ultimately, the orientation results in a one-on-one meeting with an international student advisor to address what the online tool could not answer.

Collaboration:

- Internationalization of campus is an administrative priority. It would be useful for OISS to identify their core partners so they could address retention issues from several different areas, utilizing shared resources in order to be successful.
- High collaboration between an office of international student support and academic departments is a critical part of international student retention.

Oregon State University

Courtesy of Emiko Christopherson

International Student Advising and Services

Support for Students in Times of Crisis: a comprehensive approach to support international students

- *Example:* When the Libyan crisis occurred last spring, our office cooperated with the Financial Aid office, Dean of Student Life, Academic Departments, Career Services, and the Counseling and Psychological Services office in order to ensure the Libyan students' educational opportunity and make sure of their financial and psychological stabilities during their education at OSU.
 - Our office was able to pull some of the scholarship fund from our office for those Libyan students. Our office also worked with Academic Departments to see if they could provide assistantships for those Libyan graduate students. After the Libyan student relief came out from SEVP, our office cooperated with Career Services and gave a PowerPoint presentation for Libyan students on how to look for a job and how to write a resume. Our office also held meetings to meet with Libyan students to listen to their concerns and answer the questions they have. After the Libyan crisis calmed down, some of the Libyan students showed great appreciation for the practices we conducted during the crisis.

Walk-In Appointments:

- Instead of following our pre-arranged appointment system, incorporate a walk-in system. This reduces student frustration by allowing students to meet with an international advisor as needed during a certain period of the day.

Provide Innovative Services: seek new ways to address the international student population

- *Travel Signature Workshop:* Hold this workshop before a long period of vacation time in order to provide travel signatures in a very efficient manner.
- *Hold Clinic:* Some of the international students have many holds on their accounts and these holds delay their class registration. The "Hold Clinic" is offered about a week before registration starts to give students enough time to work on their holds before their registration period.
- *H1-B Visa session:* During the International Education Week, we invite an immigration attorney to talk about how international students can obtain an H1-B visa. Many international students, especially graduate students, are looking into obtaining an H1-B visa and work experience in the U.S., and this session educates students on the process.

*Further Thoughts on Strategies for Retention: Chemeketa Community College
Courtesy of: Emiko Christopherson (employee 2007-2008)*

Student Check-ins, Academic Contracts, and Afternoon Tutoring Sessions

- With approximately 80 international students, the office conducted mandatory check-ins with an international student advisor every term to identify academic and social concerns. Academic contracts were created for those students who did not do well academically or did not attend classes very often in the previous term. Students on the contract were required to attend afternoon tutoring sessions. This practice was initiated by Jennifer Falzerano.
- Tutoring sessions were held a few times a week in our office. One of our student staff members took attendance and tutored the international students for their math assignments. The students seemed to enjoy the personal attention and the time to do homework with their fellow international students.
- This practice might be very effective in small community colleges or other colleges with smaller number of international students.

Rice University

Courtesy of: Adria Baker

Associate Vice Provost for International Education; Executive Director, OISS

The IDEAL Program: a comprehensive plan to help with the retention and success of our growing international undergraduate population. The program includes:

- *Online pre-arrival training on key issues*
- iPREP - (International Program for Regulatory & Education Preparation) and partnership with Peer International Advisors (PIAs)
- The development of an academic acculturation course: training on US culture, academic expectations, and social success information
- Monthly workshops on various topics including: leadership, networking/career, academic expectations, and beyond the classroom
- Small group advising support
- Special writing support: designed for first-year students who are second language learners
- Semester discussions on various topics of expectations for academic excellence and integration and leadership success
- Annual student and college leadership focus group feedback

Language Support: *volunteer courses*, such as:

- Beginning English Conversation
- Intermediate/Advanced English Conversation
- Idioms & Slang
- Grammar & Pronunciation.

Note: This program allows students, scholars, and spouses to join for free. The program is *zero-budget*, with the exception of an appreciation luncheon and a small gift for the volunteer teachers.

Ladies Networking Luncheon: monthly opportunity for international ladies to meet one another, network, and/or do a craft.

Hospitality: if we have a strong sense of hospitality, the students are happy and we will have a higher retention rate. The positive word-of-mouth will attract prospective students as well.

REAP-International: “Rice’s Experiences Advertised to Prospects.” This program utilizes students who are returning home for vacation to do visits to their high school or university and speak about Rice University.

Although we give an honorarium, it is a very low cost program. It is a recruitment program with no travel (transportation, hotel, food, etc.) costs to the institution, yet is told in the local language. For more information, visit: <http://oiss.rice.edu/content.aspx?id=114>

University of Connecticut

Courtesy of: Mihwa Lee

Director, Immigration Services, Office of Global Programs

Strategies for Retention:

- Make efforts to ensure that students have positive experiences with your office
- Reach out to the students to remind them of their responsibilities to maintain status. We periodically send out announcements through our international student listserv to remind them of full-time enrollment by the 10th day of the semester or request an RCL for legitimate reasons; 20 hours per week on-campus employment rule, etc.
- Work closely with academic advisors and department heads to assist students with immigration problems to make accommodation to stay in the program
- Hold periodical information sessions for faculty and academic department staff to educate them on what they need to know when dealing with international students
- *Include immigration issues in the university's mandatory compliance training* for state employees to educate the campus community members on how their interactions with international students and scholars could jeopardize their status
- Make sure advising staff's level of knowledge and expertise in immigration law is at an advanced level at all times. They are properly trained in how to research and find the correct information and answers to issues that they handle and communicate that to our students. All our advisors have working knowledge beyond F-1 and J-1 visa categories.

University of New Mexico

Courtesy of: Linda L. Melville

Associate Director for International Student and Scholar Services

- Facilitate an easy transition to life on campus
 - Provide accurate and clear pre-arrival and arrival instructions and information
 - Work with housing, residence life, and new student orientation programs to proactively address arriving international student needs
 - *Orientation:* fill with practical information related to immigration, employment, tax, academics, health and health insurance, cultural adjustment, student activities, safety and security.
 - Work with academic advisement, Registrar's office, and others to ensure smooth enrollment and matriculation of students and to limit logistical enrollment/payment problems
- Help students establish a support network of peers and a sense of belonging early on in their experience
 - Use international student volunteers at orientation as "ask me" resources, small group discussion leaders, and/or panelists
 - Schedule social activities, excursions and welcome events in conjunction with orientation/student arrival; International Friendship Program, International Social Hour
 - Ask international/cultural/special interest groups to participate in orientation activities and/or advertise group activities to international students

- Help students become familiar with university staff and community members that can act as resources.
 - Make sure students are familiar with campus resources and services
 - Partner with other units on campuses for programming, i.e., hold joint workshops/information sessions with Career Services, academic support services, counseling center, graduate resource centers on appropriate topics that affect international students
 - Have international office and other staff attend social events and activities with students so students feel more comfortable approaching staff with issues/problems when they arise
 - Use students themselves as resources, via outreach programs that get students into the community such as speakers' bureaus, service projects, international festival presentations, etc.
- Provide professional and effective international advisement services
 - Make sure that advisors and other staff are well informed on immigration regulations, university policies, and other issues that affect the lives students
 - Ensure staff are welcoming, kind, and open-minded in their interactions with students
 - Provide adequate, accurate, and accessible informational materials so students can get the answers to their questions and the information that they need (for personal, academic, cultural, administrative issues)
- Pay attention to and try to anticipate student needs.
 - Conduct formal needs assessments, hold town hall meetings, interview students
 - Stay informed about changes in university policies and procedures that affect international students through subscription to listservs, participation on campus committees (health insurance, data systems, academic integrity, etc.)
- Create programs and informational workshops that address student needs/interests.
 - Organize practical workshops to address regular issues international students have to deal with and organize cultural workshops to address cultural adjustment or help them to explore elements of US culture
- Help students to continue to maintain connections with other international students outside of their own departments and disciplines throughout their student life.
 - Organize social events for international students and plan trips or community excursions.
- Help students identify financial aid and work opportunities
 - Inform them about where to look for financial aid, scholarship and assistantship opportunities
 - Inform them about on-campus job search resources and help with hiring and tax paperwork
 - Trouble-shoot hiring issues with prospective employers
 - Work with career services and off campus employers to help students identify internships
- Proactively inform students about deadlines and bureaucratic matters.
 - Remind them of travel rules and procedures; inform them about university regulations, policies, procedures and deadlines that affect their lives and their immigration status
- Act as an advocate for international student issues on campus.
 - Proactively provide other units on campus with information about your international population.

University of Portland

Courtesy of: Krista Kennedy-Ho

Assistant Director, International Student Services

Campus Connector Program: a program designed to help students through the acculturation process by helping students access resources related to the campus, the community, and the city.

- A student leader reaches out to new students by email, attends orientation, and is responsible for creating programs.
- Programs may include academic support workshops, Jump Start Your Job Search, weekly coffee hours, tours of downtown, and hikes in the surrounding area.
- \$500 yearly stipend for the leader; \$300 yearly budget for programming

Initial Interviews:

- Begin each term by meeting with each student for 30 minutes about his or her classes, roommates, eating, exercising, and immigration.
- If it appears a student is already struggling in a certain area during this meeting, refer the student to the appropriate resource on campus.

5-Week Academic Workshop: designed to support students academically.

- The group of students meets for fifty minutes each week to about an aspect of academic success. Topics may include how to succeed academically, using a syllabus effectively, reading strategies, how to use the library resources and citing sources, effective note taking, and test preparation.
- This workshop is open to all students, but required for any student who misses orientation.
- Workshops can be led by International Student Services or by representatives from the library and the learning center.

Freshmen Resource Center: provides a variety of resources to assist freshman and advise all the undeclared majors. *See* www.up.edu/sfrc

Cross-Divisional Communication: open communication between the faculty and our department to address student needs

- Faculty will often contact us if they see a student is starting to struggle. It helps to be part of the discussion because we are able to help the professor determine if it is a cultural issue, homesickness, language, or personal issue.

University of Washington

Courtesy of: Chanya Allen

DSO and ARO, International Students Services

Online Immigration Information Session: to be completed prior to arrival. Students cannot register for classes until they have completed this session. Undergraduate students must also attend an online Academic Advising session, but graduate students report to their academic department.

Online procedure/request forms: Online requests for Proof of Residence for WA State ID and I-20 replacement. The next phase will be to add CPT and OPT requests which both will be routed to academic departments for endorsement first. We expect this will help eliminate incomplete paperwork, facilitate better verification process, and expedite requests.

Utilize website as a main resource referral. Students are encouraged to explore the website prior to contacting advisors with questions.

Washington State University

Courtesy of: Cheryl A Hansen

Director, Global Services, International Programs

Strategies for Recruitment:

- Getting the I-20 first: students are more likely to go where they get the first positive response.
- Having a friend on campus: word of mouth is powerful in recruiting
- Personalized admission experience: not being a number but being treated as a valued individual

Strategies for Retention:

Campus engagement: help students become involved in an organization, or an academic department/program and provide them with opportunities to engage with other students, i.e. explore American culture, through on-going peer mentor/mentee programs.

Support: (academic, cultural, social, etc.) is necessary in order to retain students.

Orientation: if students know what their resources are from the very beginning, as well as what is expected of them, they are more equipped to handle changes and less likely to return home in the middle of their program.

Willamette University

Courtesy of: Chris Andresen

Associate Director, International Education

Strategies for Retention:

- Continue effective strategies used for recruitment: treat students like they matter, get back to them quickly, engage them often in Facebook/online chats, events when they arrive, invite them to coffee regularly, etc.
- Maintain close contact with academic advisors in order to deal with issues from a team approach and exchange information about students' well-being
- Employ volunteer peer advisors at the start of each semester to ease student adjustment to campus life
- Utilize campus-wide committees for academic support or behavioral assessment to facilitate easy referral and connect students with campus resources
- Offer programming to encourage int'l/US students to work with each other cooperatively
- Language in Motion Program: coordinator is more accessible to the students than those that they have to come to for immigration or other official reasons.