Working with International Students at UTSA

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Agenda

- Cultural competence
- International students at UTSA
- Academic challenges
- Non-academic challenges
- Discussion of scenarios

- What brought you to this session?

Learning Outcomes

- In this session, participants will
  - Gain knowledge and understanding about international students at UTSA
  - Increase their cultural competence in working with international students
  - Have a greater appreciation for international students at UTSA
Challenges

- What challenges do you face at UTSA working with international students?

Cultural competence

- Increase knowledge
  - Culture influences students’ academic and personal experiences in education
  - Do not assume that all international students share the same experiences

- Develop skills
  - Multicultural issues training should include international students

- Become self-aware
  (Arthur, 2004)
**Importance of self-awareness**

- Continuous process
- Ask yourself:
  - How do you **perceive** the student?
  - What are your **biases** about international students?
  - How do your **experiences** influence your interactions with international students?

(Arthur, 2004)

**Who are international students?**

- “Individuals enrolled in institutions of higher education who are on temporary student visas and are non-native English speakers (NNES)” (Andrade, 2006, p. 134).
Enrolled international graduate and undergraduate students in higher education in the US:

- 43,000 in 1957
- 350,000 in 1991
- 700,000 in 2011

International student enrollment at UTSA – Percent of total (2007-12)

UTSA’s international students

Fall 2012:
1,123 undergraduates
619 graduate students
Why is this so important?

International students
- enhance campus diversity and cross-cultural understanding
- contribute economically to higher education institutions in the US
- prepare students for the global marketplace

(Andrade, 2006; Arthur, 2004; Erichsen, 2009)

Theoretical basis

- Validation theory

- College involvement theories
Myths and stereotypes

International students
- come from wealthy families
- are subsidized by the US
- do not want to do things for themselves
- are pushy/passive


Academic challenges international students face

- Different educational systems
  - Teaching styles
  - Background knowledge may not match academic program
- English proficiency (writing, speaking, listening, and reading)
- Academic confidence
- Pressures from beyond the classroom

(Abel, 2002; Andrade, 2006; Charles & Stewart, 1991; Wan, Chapman, & Biggs, 1992)
Non-academic challenges international students face

- Integrating socially and friendships with American students
- Discrimination, racism, and negative campus climate
- Culture shock and transitions
- Loss of identity
- Financial concerns, lack of work, visas

(Arthur, 2004; Bista & Foster, 2011; Erichsen, 2009; Jaschik, 2012; Redden, 2012; Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010)

Additional challenges in assisting international students

- Won’t accept “no” for an answer
- Have visa/government requirements
- Attitudes (staff and students’ attitudes)
- Language barriers
- Only get a brief orientation
Small group discussions

- How would your group approach the situation?
- What are the circumstances and factors that should be considered?
- What is one campus resource you could utilize?

Scenario 1

- You are in charge of planning and marketing a de-stress event on campus. In the past, international students have not attended. You know international students face a lot of stress and believe attendance to this event would be beneficial. You want to make sure that you plan and market your event in such a way that it will increase international student presence.
Scenario 2

- Imagine that you are a community coordinator in a residence hall. Two roommates are not getting along. One is a domestic student and the other is an international student. The domestic student begins to post hateful comments on Twitter about the international student. One of the RAs reports this to you.

Scenario 3

- During the week after census date, an international student comes into Enrollment Services to add a class, but the class is now full. The student insists that there is a seat available and becomes upset. As an enrollment services officer, you need to communicate to the student that the class is full and that you cannot add them.
Know UTSA’s campus resources

- Office of International Programs
- Tomás Rivera Center – Learning Assistance, Supplemental Instruction, Tutoring
- Academic advising offices – TRC, CFAC, college-specific advising centers
- The Writing Center

UTSA’s campus resources

- English as a Second Language (ESL) office
- Counseling Services
- Inclusion & Community Engagement Center
- Student ombudsperson

(You might need to call for them or take them to these resources yourself!)
Additional references and resources

are listed on your handout!

Thank you!

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