

Going Global: Internationalizing the Office for Student Affairs

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Beginning Our Journey 2011-12 Academic Year

- August/September 2011: OSA decided to focus on internationalization for the academic year
- Internationalization-related topics were discussed during every Directors meeting
- Focus on staff development and student experience
- Commitment to continue this work beyond academic year

 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

What We Have Done

- Developed Group IDI Profile for OSA Directors
- Perspectives on Internationalization research with OSA Directors
- Created Student Affairs Internationalization Working Group
- **Created OSA Statement on Internationalization**



What We Have Done (cont.)

- Surveyed OSA units to catalog recent internationalization initiatives
- Intercultural Communications Training for OSA staff and partners using the Cultural Detective Model
- Created staff exchange partnership w/Australian National University
- **Expanded Global Leadership Offerings (curricular and co-curricular)**



What We Have Done (cont.)

- **Conducted Listening Sessions w/international and domestic students**
- Created Staff Development and Intercultural Communication graduate assistant position
- Shared our story
 - NASPA, NAFSA, NASPA International Symposium, NAFSA Regional
- Included responsibility for international initiatives in my job description



OSA Statement on Internationalization

Global competence is most successfully developed through international/intercultural interactions in daily life, and the Office for Student Affairs (OSA) is uniquely poised to support these interactions. We aim to develop global competence among students and staff by:

- **developing programs and practices that internationalize the student experience**
- **examining practices and providing professional development designed to increase cultural competence and a global perspective among OSA staff**



OSA Statement on Internationalization (cont.)

- helping OSA staff understand, serve, and support the experiences that U of M students encounter personally and academically when they study abroad, as well as addressing the expectations and needs that international students bring when they come to the U of M
- **providing opportunities that promote a worldview to students who may not travel abroad**
- **providing opportunities that promote interaction between domestic and international students**



Global Leadership Initiatives

- **Leadership/intercultural curriculum integration in study abroad programs (Rome, Tanzania, Montpellier, Istanbul)**
- Leadership May-Term seminars (N. Ireland, S. Africa, parallel domestic in a local immigrant community)
- **“Global” Leadership Minor – intentional integration of international/intercultural/global themes in all core courses**
- **Global Undergraduate Leadership Program partnership w/Australian National University**
- Co-curricular week-long leadership/service trips for spring break and J-term (Costa Rica/Brazil)
- **Parent Service Learning Trip (Guatemala)**
- University of the Free State F1 Program/Global Leadership Summit (South Africa)



Listening Sessions

- **Purpose:** Explore to what extent and in what ways students perceive and experience efforts to internationalize curriculum and student life for international students
- **4 international sessions** —two with male students, two with female students (12 males and 8 females)
- **8 domestic sessions** —three with male students, four with female students, one with males and female students (18 males and 31 females)



Listening Session Findings

Challenges to Forming Relationships with Domestic Students

- Feeling self-conscious
- Cultural differences
- Language barrier
- U.S. personality
- Academics

What is needed to build positive experiences

- American student curiosity and support
- Being outgoing
- Branching out
- Social environment to encourage interactions



Listening Session Findings (cont.)

What makes domestic & international students inclined to meet each other? (asked of domestic students)

- Cultural exchange or mutual benefit
- Finding common ground
- Wanting to make new friends, (freshmen especially)
- Interest in knowing about different perspectives
- Having the outgoing personality to reach out to students
- Seeing each other on a continuous basis (class, work, etc.)
- Similar professional goals



Listening Session Findings (cont.)

What makes domestic & international students disinclined to meet each other? (asked of domestic students)

- Language, cultural barriers (e.g., American culture intimidates some)
- Past negative experiences with international students (e.g., TA's)
- Unsure of appropriate interactions with internationals and fear of offending
- Intimidated by large groups of international students
- Lack of understanding
 - Where to meet internationals
 - Why they're here
 - Hygiene and personal habits



Listening Session Student Recommendations

International:

- Build international students' confidence
- Leverage engagement opportunities
- Promote activities to international students
- Help Americans care more and be more curious
- Support classroom instruction for international students



Listening Session Student Recommendations

Domestic:

- Incorporate cultural competence into orientation, welcome week, and initial experiences on campus
- Intentionally pair international and domestic students in residence halls
- Purposeful classroom/academic work integration
- Enhance global/cultural competence
- More attention and visibility for multicultural events on campus
- Intentionally encourage domestic students to reach out to international students



Student Affairs Initiatives Under Consideration

- Sharing tips for connecting with students from a different country
- Intentional outreach to international student groups about OSA resources
- Creating an OSA International Student Advisory Board
- Introduction to American football (and other sports)
- OSA International Ambassadors



Lessons Learned

- Support from the top is critical to success
- Staff development component is vital
- Buy-in from staff is important; need to see what the benefits are to students, to doing their own work differently/better
- Staff “refresher:” A new perspective on jobs; new energy
- Partnerships across campus are key
- This work can transform you into an advocate





University of the Free State Closing Dinner
September 2013



Rationale for Partnering in Internationalizing the Campus

- Much of students' living and learning takes place outside the classroom
- Student affairs and student services connect with students every day
- Student affairs and student services provide opportunity to influence an international perspective for all students, including those who do not travel abroad

