



DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL PRE-ARRIVAL PROGRAMS FOR INCOMING CHINESE STUDENTS

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OVERVIEW

Background/Context

Trip Details

On Campus Outcomes

Creating Targeted Pre-Arrival Programming

Developing a Trip Proposal

Small Group Discussions



A QUICK NOTE ABOUT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Every individual experiences things differently, but there are some shared occurrences and contexts that we can use to create programs to help a larger population

Recognizing differences can feel awkward, but minimizing them can be dangerous



DUKE'S PROFESSIONAL MASTERS PROGRAMS



Master of Engineering Management



Master of Engineering



THESE AREN'T JUST DUKE NUMBERS, THESE ARE US HIGHER ED SYSTEM NUMBERS

According to the Institute of International Education...

- For the 2012/13 academic year 235,597 Chinese students came to study in the US
- Chinese students make up 28.7% of the international student population in the US, making it by far the largest international student population



ACCLIMATION CHALLENGES

- **Classroom/Faculty Interactions**
- **Career Services**
- **Student Services**
- **Integration**



PROJECT SCOPE + DESIGN

Literature Review

- The fundamentals of the Chinese education system make transitioning to the US challenging
- Prior Research examines mid or post experiences

Central Question: What are the gaps between anticipated difficulties and experiential realities for Chinese graduate students in the US?

Project Design

- Guided interview format for two groups: students already in the US and students in China preparing to come to the US
- Compared data sets to determine gaps between expectation and reality

MAJOR FINDINGS

Students already at Duke

- Language overwhelmingly selected as most difficult aspect of general acclimation
- Language/rapid rate of conversation most frequently selected as the most difficult aspect of group work
- Difficulty in conversation cited most frequently as something students wish they had known to expect before coming to Duke

Students preparing to come to Duke

- Social interaction and making conversation were the most frequent responses when asked what they expected to be most challenging when they arrived in the US
- Assigning roles and team leaders was most often cited when asked about expected difficulties with group work

DIFFERENT CONCERNS

STUDENTS IN CHINA

Will people relate to me? Can I express myself? Will I make new friends? How will I meet people?

STUDENTS AT DUKE

What is this teacher talking about? Why is my group talking so fast? What does that word mean? I can't keep up!

CONCLUSIONS

In many cases, students may underestimate the extent to which they are likely to struggle with language when they arrive in the US.

This can lead to challenges with:

- **Classes**
- **Group Work**
- **Socializing**
- **The transactions of daily life**

The knowledge is there, it's just harder to access than they expected it to be!



MAJOR GOALS OF PRE-ARRIVAL PROGRAMS

- **Establish trust with students (and parents in some cases)**
- **Manage student expectations**
- **Allow students to meet each other**
- **Provide prep materials and helpful information to ease transitions**
- **Bolster alumni relations**
- **Expand university brand recognition**
- **Increase understanding of employment landscape**

PROGRAM CONTENT

- **Academic and program expectations**
- **US classroom expectations**
- **Honor code/plagiarism expectations**
- **Understanding the US job market/ approach to career search**
- **Introduction to university resources**
- **A look at campus life**
- **Basic US cultural differences**
- **The importance of networking and small talk in the US**

TRIP LOGISTICS

- **Work with admissions to determine which cities to visit**
 - Students can help you understand which cities are easily accessible by train, etc.
- **Utilize alumni network to make on-the-ground plans**
 - Alumni can also help with event execution and are usually delighted to spend time with the incoming students
- **Use a hotel that you feel comfortable with as you will need to trust them to make the majority of arrangements**
 - We typically reserve two rooms, a lounge and a meeting room for during the day that can be opened into a larger room for the group programming
- **Make sure to build in time for jet-lag and cultural excursions**

PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES

- **Changes to admissions model**
 - Skype interviews
- **More strategic pre-arrival emails**
- **Targeted orientation programs**
 - Working in teams
 - MBTI and Intercultural Effectiveness Scale
 - Case study method
- **English Program Changes**
 - Practical approach
 - Resource alignment
 - Language partners
- **Faculty, staff, and domestic student training**

STAFF BENEFITS

- Seeing culture in action and putting it all together leads to...
 - A deeper understanding and connection to an important student population
 - More targeted programs
 - Ability to help other staff, domestic students, and faculty build empathy and understanding
 - Most staff view this as a huge benefit (if they don't...they might be in the wrong field!)



DEVELOPING A TRIP PROPOSAL

Establish a budget and determine what your options are.

Example: 2 people, 2 cities, 2 events, 2 alumni dinners, one week - **\$14,000ish**

To put that into perspective, each Duke class costs \$5,723, so one retained student more than justifies this expense.

Expense	Details	Amount
Flights	Raleigh, Beijing, Shanghai, Raleigh	Roughly \$1600 each
Hotels	We use Hilton because of student recommendations and ease of booking	Roughly \$150 per night per person
Student Programs	Space and catering	\$2600 for about 20 people
Alumni Events	Dinner for 10	Roughly \$600
Other Expenses	Other food, transportation, etc.	\$1000 per person, per week

Also consider things like: cost of visas, swag items, cost to ship swag items and other materials, etc.

TRIP JUSTIFICATIONS

As you make the case for investment, potential benefits include:

- **Increased student success and retention**
- **Increased university brand awareness**
- **Long-term programmatic savings**
- **More targeted programs and initiatives**
- **Benefits beyond student acclimation –interdisciplinary options**
 - Strengthen alumni networks
 - Bolster employer relations
 - Recruitment
- **Personal engagement for you!**
 - This will make you/your colleagues better at your jobs and will improve employee satisfaction/retention

CREATING PRE-ARRIVAL PROGRAMMING ON ANY BUDGET

- **Explore Remote Options**
 - Google Hangouts
 - Skype
 - Weibo
 - Video content
 - Sakai/Blackboard
 - LinkedIn Groups
- **Establish University Partners**
 - Is anybody already going to China?
 - Work with International House, ESL folks, etc. to build content
- **Engage Alumni in targeted cities to host these events**
- **Work with Chinese Student Association**
 - What do the students want and need?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- **What is the current pre-arrival model at your school?**
- **Would a program like this be helpful for your incoming Chinese students?**
- **Does a pre-arrival program in China seem feasible for you? Why or why not?**
- **What are some ways you can (or already) partner with others on campus to deliver targeted programs to incoming Chinese students?**
- **How are you (would you like to) involve your domestic and other international students in your approach to pre-arrival programming for Chinese students?**

QUESTIONS?

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