

Navigating Resources: Connecting to Campus and Community

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Tags

Cross-Cultural Issues; Education Abroad; International Student and Scholar Services; Student Services; University/Higher Education

Setting

This case focuses on the examples from international students, scholars, exchange guests, and study abroad returnees about campus resources. These individual and situational cases provide a unique opportunity to learn about international communities and their willingness to be engaged with campus members, resources, and opportunities in higher education. International program offices assist the international community members with immigration, housing, and other related campus and academic related resources. Despite the common roles international program offices take on, there is diversity in the resources universities can provide, in the host community contexts, and in the needs of individual students and scholars. The following case study offers individual cases regarding campus resources for discussion.

Case

Each of the following cases provide a unique situation that brings awareness to cultural issues that international educators may need to be aware of:

1. Carol, an international student, is on campus to complete a 4-year undergraduate bachelor degree.

“Hi, I am excited to be at this university. When I have free time, I do not know what to do.

Learning about and engaging with new cultures and languages is a passion of mine so I wonder if you could help me find extracurricular activities that focus on my passion? I really want to be part of the university volunteer organizations or clubs to share my culture. At times, I feel alone, maybe because I do not know many people. I hope that if I get involved in some campus activities I will not feel alone. I believe volunteering and being engaged outside of my schoolwork will help me learn about the community.”

2. Ted is a junior in the English Department. He has just returned from a semester abroad experience in Paris, France.

“Hi, I really enjoyed my study abroad this spring. I learned French as part of my program. Could you please guide us to the resources we have on campus that support language learners? I am afraid I will lose my ability to speak French if I do not practice. This is important for my future because my plans are to teach English as a Second Language in Paris after my graduation. My goal is to join a language group or organization that enables me to practice my French on a regular basis. Any help is appreciated.”

3. Marina is an exchange student from Russia who will be on campus for a 6-month exchange.

“Hi, I am a new exchange student, and I am wondering if you have any opportunities to help me get to know other students on campus? As part of my program requirement, I need to volunteer for 15-30 hours, and I must show that I shared my culture and participated in cultural events. Are there any campus programs that I can join to help me meet my program requirements? After completion of the exchange program, I will return to and graduate from my Russian university. After graduating, I will search for a job. Therefore, my overall goals during the exchange program are to engage in volunteer opportunities while also building my resume in preparation for a professional job.”

4. Mustafa is a government-sponsored student from Saudi Arabia.

“Hi, this is my second month on campus. Would you mind connecting me with other students from Saudi Arabia? I have not met anyone yet. If there are no other students from Saudi Arabia that you can connect me with, are there available resources to help me make new friends? I want to improve my English and I want to join American students' clubs or hang out with them. Please can you guide me?”

5. Takashi is an ELL student from Japan.

“I am a new student. I cannot talk much in English. I am wondering if I can get extra help. I need to practice my English, but I feel alone. I have some friends who speak the same language, but they do not speak English with me. I am looking for a club or a group where I can learn more English and share my culture. Are there any cooking classes or any community programs that I can participate in? I want to be around students but also people from the community.”

6. Rakesh is a new international scholar and works as a faculty member at the university and his family is new to the community.

“Hi there, I am a new faculty member and I wanted to learn about community resources that you may have, or you may be aware of. I moved with my family a week ago and I do not know anyone. I have two children, an 8-year-old girl and 10-year-old boy. My wife does not work currently, and she takes care of the children while I am at work. We do not know anything about the community or resources that we could use to support our children. I am wondering if you have a list of organizations or

resources that could support my family. My wife wants to volunteer while she waits for her work authorization. She worked as a high school teacher in our country, and she has her degree in Linguistics. Are there any free English sessions or any community programs that she can participate in? I also want to be around other new families and get to know our community members.”

Discussion Questions

As you consider this case, discuss:

- What strategies could support students and scholars before, during, and after their experiences abroad?
- What resources exist in your organization to support each of these individuals?
- How could you further develop resources in your organization to support each of these individuals?
- How does the context (rural/urban, university/community college, provider organization, etc.) influence the resources available to support each of these individuals?
- What follow-up questions would you ask these individuals to find out which resources would be the best fit?
- What cultural or cross-cultural problems are highlighted in these individual cases? How could you support each student’s intercultural learning?
- How should international program offices foster relationships with campus representatives and community members to support study abroad returnees, international students, and visiting scholars?