Ice Breaker

• Find a partner (someone you do not know)
• Talk for two minutes about how your family celebrates birthdays
Starting the Conversation:  
Fisher College’s International Student Focused Initiatives for the First Year  

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Agenda

- Assessing need
- Academic initiatives
- Co-Curricular initiatives
- Fisher International Friends Conversation Partner Program (FIFCP)
- FIFCP end of semester survey results
- Goals for future
- Questions/Discussion
International Undergraduate Student Experience

• Brief released in May 2013 by the Office of International Affairs & the Center for the Study of Student Life reported that in comparison to their domestic peers, international undergraduate students have:
  – Less satisfaction with their academic experience
  – Greater involvement in identity-based organizations
  – Lower sense of belonging
  – More negative perception of campus climate (CSSL & OIA, 2013)

• 2012 national study found that more than one in three international undergraduate students reported having no close U.S. friends (Gareis, 2012)

• Develop programs to promote cross-cultural awareness, dialogue, and integration
Fisher College’s International Student Population

• UBUS enrolls ~6300 undergraduates
  • 1246 total UBUS international students (19.8%)

• AU14 entering UBUS class:
  • 1160 NFYS: 184 international (15.9%)
  • 430 Transfer: 115 international (26.7%)

• INTL students % of total UBUS NFYS/Transfer enrollment:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NFYS</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
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Fisher College’s International Student Population

• Top Countries:
  – China
  – Korea
  – Malaysia
• China Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO)
• Undergraduate Business Summer Language Program
• International Student Orientation
• EDU T&L 5892
China Pre-Departure Orientation

- Pre-arrival academic advising housed in Carmen “course”
- Overview of business curriculum (1st year) and first semester courses
- Instructions for completing ESL and math placements online
- Opportunity to be enrolled in BUS ADM 1100, Math, and ESL composition courses prior to arrival
- 70 students enrolled / 41 completed
China Pre-Departure Orientation

• Challenges:
  – Accessibility: Online access inconsistent
  – Timing: SIS upgrade
  – Eligibility: Tracking of in-country participants

• Successes:
  – Registration: Enrolled in critical courses prior to arrival
  – Preparation: Completion of ESL & Math placements before arrival
  – Belonging: Community of new peers
Undergraduate Business Summer Language Program

RODO: Ready on Day One

• 3-week intensive language and culture program designed to help students “be ready” for the first day of Autumn semester classes

• Comprised of intensive English language instruction, academic & cultural preparation

• Introduced students to the kind of classroom environments and assignments they will encounter as a business student at Ohio State
Undergraduate Business
Summer Language Program

Pilot: Summer 2014

- 4 UBUS students:
  - 2 NFYS, 2 transfer

- Campus & city exploration, company visits, leadership development, professional networking, capstone marketing plan

- Will track students’ academic success & college involvement
International Student Orientation

• **Old way:**
  – One day
  – Pick classes and alternate classes, advisor makes schedule
  – 2 hours of contact

• **New way:**
  – Two day orientation
    • Aligns with domestic student orientation
    • Allows for more time to look over open course list
  – Students schedule their own classes in computer lab
  – 4-5 hours of contact

• **Benefits:**
  – Sense of ownership regarding schedule
  – Can see how limited course offerings are/better able to identify
  – Less schedule changes in the first week, and if making a change, better able to identify appropriate classes
  – Students know how to search for classes and use schedule planner, thus are better prepared to schedule classes in the future
Rationale

• Concern that UBUS international students have difficulty speaking English in the classroom context:
  • have difficulty adjusting to US classroom style
  • not accustomed to active classroom discussion
  • hard to understand spoken answers or discussion
  • challenges working well in groups

• Lack of Engagement/Participation at Fisher, other OSU organizations:
  • involvement often limited to nationality groups
  • “live” in library/dormitory, don’t engage outside culture bubble
Who

- Taken by all new international UBUS
- Exempted: 26 or higher on TOEFL IBT spoken
  - less than 5%
What

• 2-credit intercultural communication course
• Practice spoken English skills in the context of business career preparation
• Objective: Increased confidence in oral proficiency and cultural competence in formal face-to-face interactions, media interactions, oral presentations, and informal/spontaneous interactions (such as networking events).
Curriculum
• Discussions (in-class & on-line)
• Communication activities
• Self-assessment & fluency improvement plan
• Participation in FCOB networking events and student organizations
• Professional LinkedIn profile
• 2 presentations: Elevator Pitch
Social Practice - Speaking Confidence

- I feel like [20]
- I'm still ner [0]
- I don't really care [0]
- Yes, I can talk to both people I know and people I don't know on campus. 20 50%
- I feel like I can talk to most people but still feel a little nervous about talking to people I don't know. 20 50%
- I'm still nervous when talking to people on campus. 0 0%
- I don't really care to interact with other people outside my close social group. 0 0%
Elevator Speech Improvement Progress

- I made significant improvement - I can speak confidently about who I am, where I am from, etc. 14 35%
- I made some improvement - I’m happy with my progress but I can do a lot more. 26 65%
- I did not improve my elevator speech - I still do not know what I need to say in a short time and it sounds like I am reciting something I memorized. 0 0%
- I think I’m worse than when I started. 0 0%
Co-curricular Initiatives

• Going Global, Feeling Home

• Fisher International Friends Conversation Program
Going Global, Feeling Home

• Committed to helping international students feel more at home in the U.S.
• Increase connection to OSU and Fisher College
Going Global, Feeling Home

Goal is to provide programs and events are designed to help students:

• Learn more about their campus home
• Experience the culture of Ohio State & Fisher College
• Promote their personal, academic, & professional growth
Previous events include:

• Spring Holidays & Festivals
• Football 101
• Autumn Holidays & Festivals
• Winter Crafts & Cookie Decorating
Going Global, Feeling Home
Going Global, Feeling Home

Successes:

• Marked increase in attendance
• Positive feedback from participants

Challenges:

• Increase participation from students outside of FIFCP
• Funding for events
Fisher International Friends Conversation Program

- Pairs first year international students with domestic students for language practice and cultural exchange
- Semester long program
- Voluntary
- Now in 4th semester of program (started AU13)
Fisher International Friends Conversation Program

- Students receive email about program
- Sign up online
- Attend FIFCP orientation where they meet partner
- Encouraged to meet at least 1/week
- Emphasis placed on activities that promote conversation
- NOT a dating service or study buddy
Fisher International Friends Conversation Program

• Goals:
  – Help international students gain fluency and confidence in spoken English
  – Forge friendships between domestic and international students
  – Promote greater global awareness among all participants
Participation AU14:

- 89 international students / 86 domestic students
- International participants:
  - 51 NFYS / 38 new transfer
  - 58 female / 31 male
  - Chinese, Korean, Taiwanese, Egyptian, Malaysian
- Domestic participants:
  - 30 NFYS / 56 continuing students
  - 55 female / 31 male
An anonymous, voluntary survey was given to participants at the end of Autumn 2014 semester.

- 41 students responded (~24% of all FIFCP participants)
- Some questions were targeted at International Students
- Both quantitative and qualitative questioning
- Notable attrition
Fisher International Friends Conversation Program

FIF Partner Meeting Frequency

- Once a week: 6
- 2-3 times a month: 14
- Once a month: 19
Fisher International Friends Conversation Program

Common Activities:
• Going out to eat
• Making food together
• Getting coffee
• Rec sports (ping pong, tennis, basketball)
Qualitative Inquiry

• Four questions:
  – What did you learn about yourself through this partnership?
  – How, if at all, has the partnership changed your perspective/behaviors regarding international students?
  – How, if at all, has the partnership changed your perspective/behaviors regarding U.S. students?
  – What do you believe to be the biggest benefit of the Fisher International Friends Program?
Themes

- Communication
- Cultural Awareness
- Breaking stereotypes
- Similarities
- Friendship
- Learning about Self
Theme One: Communication

Met program goals:

• Improved English
  – I speak better English and I feel more confident.

• Increased interaction
  – Meeting someone from across the globe that you most likely would never have met before.
  – It give me better chance to communicate with US students
  – I feel that I will reach out to international students more to make them feel more welcome.

• Increased confidence/comfort in interacting
  – I learned how to reach out to other cultures and communicate effectively
  – I find that in general I am much more comfortable with working around communicational misunderstandings I have with international students.
  – It broke kind of an invisible barrier that seemed to permeate with the international students.
Fisher International Friends Conversation Program

Improved English Communication Skills

- Strongly Agree: 4
- Agree: 9
- Neutral: 1
- Disagree: 1
- Strongly Disagree: 0
Increased Comfort Interacting

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Extracurricular</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
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<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>Disagree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
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Fisher International Friends Conversation Program
Theme Two: Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness and understanding increased:
• I learned how to respect other cultures
• I need to be more open to other cultures because I can learn a lot from people from other parts of the world
• I learned the importance of global awareness

Greater understanding of the international student experience:
• It helped me better understand the challenges international students face
• I’m much more understanding of their certain mannerisms and am much more friendly towards them. I loved the program as a whole as it helped me to open my eyes and not be so judgmental
• Participating helped to break down communication and cultural barriers between international and domestic students.
Fisher International Friends Conversation Program

Improved Understanding of Another Culture

- **Strongly Agree**: 14
- **Agree**: 6
- **Neutral**: 1
- **Disagree**: 1
- **Strongly Disagree**: 0
Theme Three: Friendship

Partnerships led to real friendships!

• Gaining a real friend throughout the rest of my time at OSU
• I have made a new friend in a large college
• I have a good friend now
• The biggest benefit was make a good friends
• Just gaining a new friend
• Have more chances to get in touch with a 'real' U.S friend and learn more about the U.S culture.
• Having friends who already know about resources which definitely helpful to international students.
• 78% of those surveyed said they plan to continue to meet with their partner after the conclusion of the program
Theme Four: Breaking Stereotypes

Interaction debunked stereotypes:

• Sometimes stereotypes come natural to us, but we have to do our best to put them to the side. Also, putting myself in another's person's shoes is a great learning experience.

• My partner is really positive, vigorous, and nice person among people that I know here. He changes my view of American people a lot.

• My conversation partner is hard-working and change my idea that American students did not care about studies.
Theme Five: Similarities

**Decreased views of the differences**

- I learned that I am more similar to international students than I originally thought.
- I have learned that just because we are from different parts of the world and grew up in different cultures that we still have similar interests and can get along.
- I learned that we are very similar
- I saw how alike we are
Learning about self was an unexpected benefit of FIFCP:

- The biggest benefit was the learning about not only another culture but learning about your own as well.
- I was forced to really look at the stances I took on certain issues such as patriotism or my religion and really flesh out what I believe.
- I learned that I need to be more active to hang out.
- I learned that I enjoy getting to learn about different cultures.
Improved Understanding of Own Culture

- Strongly Agree: 7
- Agree: 18
- Neutral: 9
- Disagree: 3
- Strongly Disagree: 0
Fisher International Friends Conversation Program

Additional Successes:

• Marked participation in program year over year
• 100% of those surveyed said they would recommend the program to their classmates

Challenges:

• Increase meeting frequency
• Increase participation—potential to include all international NFYS
• Funding for events
Fisher International Friends Conversation Program

Increased Connection to Fisher

- Strongly Agree: 5
- Agree: 6
- Neutral: 4
- Disagree: 0
- Strongly Disagree: 0
Fisher International Friends Conversation Program

Require Participation by All First Year International Students

- Strongly Agree: 18
- Agree: 14
- Neutral: 4
- Disagree: 1
- Strongly Disagree: 0
Goals for the Future

Fisher International Friends Conversation Partner
• Set up a weekly group conversation time
• Match 100% of incoming international students with a conversation partner
• FIFCP becomes a student org

Going Global Feeling Home
• Increase GGFH attendance outside of FIFCP
• Create more activity based events
• GGFH becomes a student org

Undergraduate Business Summer Language Program
• Increase participation

Get funding!
Questions?

• FIF Blog:
  • http://u.osu.edu/fisherinternationalfriends/

• Presenters:
  • Jane Palmer.241@osu.edu
  • Jessica Hall.1464@osu.edu
  • Lindsay McGory.10@osu.edu
• CSSL & OIA. (2013). *International Undergraduate Student Experience: Inside and Outside the Classroom*.