iSuccess: Simulated Classroom Experience for Incoming International Students

Early Intervention and Personalized Mentoring: Student Reflections

Program Structure

- Pre-arrival
  - Pre-departure consultation (online and social media use)
  - Airport greeting and check-in assistance
  - Preparation of tailored programming to student’s needs and academic background

- Program
  - Simulated Classroom Experience
  - Group work and groups assignment
  - Socialization and early exploration of UMN resources
  - Preparation for processing cross cultural interactions
  - Personalized Mentor matching

- Mentoring
  - Semester check in with mentors and Program Coordinator
  - Reunion and active student engagement

- Planning next iSuccess
  - Past participants apply for iSuccess leadership positions
  - Utilize past experience to improve program
  - ROI model: investing in the leadership skills of student for professional development

iSuccess gives new international students the opportunity to experience what it is like to be in a US classroom setting before they start taking classes in the Fall semester.

The first six weeks of a student’s college journey are crucial in determining how well connected they will become to their UMN environment. In recent surveys across the university, international students have indicated a lower sense of belonging (based on 2012, 2013, 2014 SERU).

Students who have completed iSuccess have often indicated that the most significant part of the program’s outcome was the ability to make long-term friendships and connections.

Discussion Areas

- Is providing an early structured program a way to enhance the sense of belonging for our incoming international students?
- Is preparing our students early on during their first year a key component in preparing global ready students?

“People are willing to help you and they made it special, like they made me feel like I really belonged here.”
“I don’t have words left to describe how I feel and think about this program. If I have the chance, I would like to volunteer for the next year.”

Presenters

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Program Evaluation and Long Term Goals

Sense of Belonging to the Campus and Community (2016 cohort)
- Agree: 59%
- Somewhat Agree: 37%
- Uncertain: 4%

Become more interested in other student leadership opportunities (2016 cohort)
- Agree: 59%
- Somewhat Agree: 41%

Students who complete iSuccess, and then maintain a mentoring relationship with the program staff, are more likely to remain involved with ISSS and become leaders on campus!

iSuccess Participants and Mentors

Year 1: 13 Participants, 2 Mentors; Year 2: 18 Participants, 3 Mentors; Year 3: 14 Participants, 4 Mentors; Year 4: 40 Participants, 10 Mentors; Year 5: 31 Participants, 11 Mentors