
Meeting the Needs of International Students

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1. Introduction

There is a currently a trend towards internationalization in higher education leading many institutions to incorporate into their mission statements their responsibility to prepare students for citizenship in an increasingly globalized world (Hendrickson, Lane, Harris, & Dorman, 2013). The American Council on Education (ACE) has stressed the importance of preparing graduates “to operate effectively in other cultures and settings . . . and to better comprehend the realities of the contemporary world so that they can better meet their responsibilities as citizens” (as cited in CIGE, 2012 p. 3). A major component of many institutions’ internationalization strategies is attracting students from overseas to study at American universities (Hendrickson et al., 2013). This is part of a broader global trend wherein the number of students studying abroad is increasing exponentially (Cadd, 2012; Lassegard, 2013; Sivakumaran, Tomida, Hall, & Sumida, 2013). According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 3.7 million students studied abroad worldwide in 2011, which was a 75% increase since the year 2000 (as cited in Lassegard, 2013). The Institute of International Education (IIE) also reported that the number of students studying abroad worldwide has tripled in the last two decades (as cited in Sivakumaran et al., 2013).

Increased student mobility worldwide has led to greater numbers of international students at universities in the United States. The number of international students in the United States has almost doubled over the

past two decades, from 450,000 in the 1993/94 academic year to 886,000 in the 2013/2014 academic year (IIE, 2015b). International students currently make up 4% of the total student population at American universities, and 50% of them come from China, India, and South Korea (IIE, 2015b). Chappell (2013, November 11) has pointed out that international students contributed more than \$24 billion to the U.S. economy in the 2012/2013 academic year. Many students who choose to study abroad are motivated by the fact that in an increasingly competitive, globalized world, businesses and organizations around the globe are demanding employees with the ability to think critically and creatively, communicate competently, and engage in innovation (Asgari & Borzooei, 2014). This in turn is leading many universities to focus on the satisfaction and learning outcomes of international students (Asgari & Borzooei, 2014). Thus, the purpose of this paper is to explore the needs of international students and recommend ways in which American universities can provide services to ensure their success.

2. The Problem

Ensuring the satisfaction and learning outcomes of international students is challenging for many institutions. International students differ significantly from other acculturating groups in the U.S. such as immigrants, ethnic minorities, and expatriate workers as they tend to be younger; they are expected to adjust quickly to a new culture; they face higher demands in terms of academic performance; they are usually on temporary visas; and they generally lack access to networks of family and friends (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). In addition to the usual difficulties of embarking on a college education, international students have a whole other set of challenges that domestic students do not face (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). They are under pressure to adjust to a different culture, language, academic environment, and communication style (Baba & Hosoda, 2014). Other obstacles to their successful adjustment include homesickness, social isolation, financial pressures, perceived discrimination, and overall culture shock (Baba & Hosoda, 2014). Compounding the problem is Levine and Dean's (2012) finding that race continues to be a significant source of tension on U.S.

campuses, and that over half of most American undergraduates self-segregate by race. Furthermore, Mesidor and Sly (2014) have found that psychological problems experienced by international students in the U.S. include depression, issues with relationships, and anxiety. Despite the fact that they face greater challenges than domestic students, however, fewer international students seek mental health services. Yakunina, Weigold, & McCarthy (2011) have stated that 36% of domestic students have sought counseling in the past, compared with only 17% of international students (as cited in Lee, 2014), and Mesidor and Sly (2014) have attributed this underutilization of mental health services to cultural issues.

Meeting the needs of international students is also challenging for U.S. institutions because research on international students' goals and learning outcomes is deficient (Asgari & Borzooei, 2014). While the most popular fields of study for international students are business and engineering (IIE, 2015b), many international students are also motivated by the desire to improve their foreign language proficiency, engage in new cultural experiences, and achieve personal and academic growth (Cadd, 2012). However, Cadd (2012) has also noted that these linguistic and cultural gains are not always guaranteed by immersion in another culture. Knight (2011) has stated out that a common myth associated with internationalization is that sheer numbers of international students on campus will automatically yield a more internationalized culture on campus. However, this is not necessarily the case as many domestic students are often reluctant to mix with international students, which leads the latter to socialize together exclusively (Knight, 2011).

Lastly, given that the largest group of international students on U.S. campuses are Chinese (IIE, 2015b), and that the largest group of English as a Second Language (ESL) students in North American universities are Chinese, Korean, and Japanese (Huang & Brown, 2008, as cited in Roy, 2013), East Asian students merit special consideration and services. Because of their distinct linguistic and cultural differences from the U.S., Roy (2013) has pointed out that they are especially challenged by the

language barrier as well as by the teaching styles of some American professors. In addition, the greater the cultural differences between international students and the host culture, the less likely these students are to seek out support services (Lee, 2014).

2. Literature Review

Adjustment Difficulties

Meeting the needs of international students requires awareness on the part of student affairs personnel of the adjustment difficulties they face. Sociocultural adjustment, defined by Ward and Kennedy (1993) as the ability to acquire cultural behavior and social skills that allow students to fit in with the host culture (as cited in Baba & Hosoda, 2014), is particularly important for international students. Baba and Hosoda (2014), in a study conducted in a state university in California, uncovered several barriers to sociocultural adjustment among international students including academic pressures, financial pressures, homesickness, perceived discrimination, social disconnectedness, and culture shock, which is most pronounced among students whose home cultures hold vastly different values and ideals from U. S. culture.

Academic literature has associated the socio-cultural adjustment of international students with their acculturation level (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). Acculturation has been defined by Berry (2005) as the cultural and psychological changes that groups and individuals undergo in developing a behavioral repertoire when adapting to a new culture. Behavioral changes include adjusting to new languages, food, dress, and social interactions characteristic of the new culture, and include both culture *shedding* and culture *learning* (Berry, 2005). Berry (2005) has also posited that there are four main acculturation strategies employed by groups and individuals based on their orientation towards their own and other cultural groups. These are *assimilation*, where groups and individuals become absorbed in the new culture and shed their heritage culture; *integration*, where contact with both the host and heritage cultures is maintained; *separation*, where the heritage culture is

maintained and there is little interest in experiencing the host culture; and *marginalization*, wherein groups and individuals maintain contact with neither their heritage culture nor their host culture. Such changes, however often lead to acculturative stress, which, according to Berry (1995) results from mental health issues, feelings of isolation, psychosomatic problems, and confusion over identity (as cited in Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). Sullivan and Kashubeck-West (2015) investigated the relationship between acculturation mode, social support, and acculturative stress among 104 international students at a mid-sized public university in the Midwestern United States. They found that students in the integration and assimilation modes exhibited lower levels of acculturative stress than those in the separation and marginalization mode, with those in the integration mode exhibiting the lowest levels of acculturative stress. Sullivan and Kashubeck-West (2015) concluded that their findings were applicable to all international students, regardless of country of origin, as they all face similar adjustment difficulties. Researchers also suggest that social support networks, particularly involving domestic students, play a key role in the socio-cultural adjustment of international students (Baba & Hosoda, 2014) and reduce levels of acculturative stress (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015).

Despite the adjustment difficulties and acculturative stress experienced by international students, researchers suggests that they are less likely to seek mental health services than domestic students (Lee, 2014; Mesidor & Sly, 2014). Lee (2014), for example, identified two types of barriers to the participation of Asian students in group counseling sessions: institutional and cultural. Institutional barriers included a lack of multicultural competence among university personnel, while cultural barriers included conflicts between Western and Asian models of counseling. Lee (2014) also described other cultural barriers including different culturally acceptable ways of dealing with personal problems among Asian students, language barriers, lack of knowledge about counseling services, and cultural stigmas. Mesidor and Sly (2014) investigated the impact of Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior on the decisions of international students to seek mental health services at

two universities in Mississippi. The theory posits that attitudes and subjective norms towards certain behaviors, as well as perceived control are predictors of behavior. Mesidor and Sly (2014) found that Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior was a significant predictor of international students' intentions to seek mental health services.

Goals and Learning Outcomes

Meeting the needs of international students requires awareness by institutions of their motivations (Sivakumaran et al., 2013), but as mentioned previously, research on international students' goals and learning outcomes is sparse (Asgari & Borzooei, 2014). However, Lassegard (2013) has stated that until recently, most international students were engaged in foreign language or humanities study, but that recent years have seen an expansion in students' reasons for studying abroad. These include the desire to attain knowledge not available in the education systems of their home countries, to learn firsthand about another country's culture, history, and society, and to gain so-called "soft skills" including cross-cultural competence. Asgari and Borzooei (2014) have also asserted that many international students seek to study foreign languages, enhance their career prospects, develop cross-cultural skills, and become more global-minded, and their satisfaction depends on the extent to which they achieve these goals. In addition, Cadd (2012) has listed the desire for foreign language proficiency, new cultural experiences, and personal and academic growth among international students' motivations for studying abroad. Interaction with domestic students has been cited by some as essential to the achievement of international students' learning goals. A study by Cadd (2012), for example, found that American students who studied abroad and were required to interact with native speakers in the host country exhibited decreased anxiety and increased willingness to interact with native speakers, as well as greater oral proficiency and cultural understanding. Finally, greater socio-cultural adjustment and less stress were found among international students who interacted with students from the host culture (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002 as cited in Baba & Hosoda, 2014).

Asian Students' Issues

Meeting the needs of Asian international students in the U.S. merits special consideration. This is because, as stated above, 50% of international students at American universities come from China, India, and South Korea (IIE, 2015b). In addition, many U.S. institutions that have strategic plans to recruit international students are focusing primarily on Asia (CIGE, 2012). However, researchers suggest that culture shock is most pronounced among international students whose cultures are vastly different from American culture (Baba & Hosoda, 2014). A study by Yeh and Inose (2003), for example, revealed that Asian international students suffered the most severe acculturative stress because they come from societies where interdependence and close connections are valued, in contrast to American society which values independence and self reliance (as cited in Baba & Hosoda, 2014). As mentioned above, compounding the problem is the reluctance of many Asian students to seek mental health services (Lee, 2014; Mesidor & Sly, 2014). Shea and Yeh (2008) have attributed the underutilization of mental health services by Asian students to the value placed in their cultures on family hierarchy, emotional restraint, saving face, and avoidance of shame (as cited in Lee, 2014). Lee (2014) also found that Asian international students were reluctant to participate in group counseling sessions that included their compatriots for fear of losing status in their own countries, and Yakunina and Weigold (2011) revealed that less positive attitudes towards counseling were prevalent among students with more traditional Asian values (as cited in Mesidor & Sly, 2014).

Japanese students are a particularly interesting case because although worldwide, the number of students studying abroad is increasing exponentially, the number of Japanese students studying abroad has been declining for the past decade (Lassegard, 2013). South Korea, which shares some cultural similarities with Japan, but only has half the population, has at least twice as many students as Japan studying in the U.S., and there are also more students in the U.S. from Thailand and

Singapore than from Japan (Lassegard, 2013). Japanese students, therefore, present a unique challenge for the recruitment efforts of U.S. institutions, as well as for student affairs personnel. A study that compared American and Japanese students who studied abroad found that Japanese students had greater anxiety about security, culture shock, and language problems than the American students (Sivakumaran et al., 2013). Another study discovered that Japanese international students had less acceptance of those with psychological disorders than U.S. college students (Masuda et al., 2009, as cited in Mesidor & Sly, 2014). This may partly explain the Lassegard's (2013) observation that student mobility worldwide is increasing in recent years while the number of Japanese students studying abroad has been declining.

Best Practices

Institutions of higher education who understand how to increase the satisfaction of international students and meet their learning goals can claim good service quality and often have a competitive advantage (Asgari & Borzooei, 2014). Student satisfaction is impacted by the sum total of their experiences – academic, social, physical, and spiritual (Asgari & Borzooei, 2014), and this *holistic* approach to student development forms the theoretical basis for the modern student services profession (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). Pope and Reynolds (1997) identified multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills as essential to their Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence, and asserted that multicultural competence should permeate all other student personnel competencies (as cited in Pope & Mueller, 2011). Pope and Mueller (2011) have also pointed out that while many scholars have called for greater multicultural sensitivity and responsiveness on the part of student affairs personal, training in and assessment of multicultural competency is inadequate. Based on the unique challenges faced by international students listed above, it is understandable why Pope and Reynolds (1997) said that, “multicultural competence is a necessary prerequisite to effective, affirming, and ethical work in student affairs” (as cited in Pope & Mueller, 2011, p. 338). Equity, diversity, and inclusion are also deemed to be key competency areas for student affairs professionals by

the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) (2010) in order to “create an institutional ethos that accepts and celebrates differences among people” (p. 10).

Sue et al. (1982) and Pedersen’s (1988) tripartite model of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills is currently regarded as the seminal work that forms the foundation of multicultural competence (Pope & Mueller, 2011). Awareness entails consciousness of subjective values, attitudes, and biases that may impact an individual’s understanding of those who are different. Knowledge includes having background information about particular cultural groups as well as cultural constructs, including but not limited to acculturation, the cultural development of identity, oppression, and within-group differences. Skills refer to the implementation of awareness and knowledge as well as the ability to communicate effectively across cultural groups.

In order to reward best practices in international education in colleges and universities worldwide, the IIE created the Andrew Heiskell Awards in 2001 (IIE, 2015a). In 2015, Purdue University, Indiana, with 39,000 international students, received honorable mention in the “Internationalizing the Campus” category of the Andrew Heiskell award for its P3i Program, which is based on integrating international students and American students (IIE, 2015a). The Purdue University program strives to assist international students in adapting to American culture and campus life by providing multiple opportunities for them to engage with American students, faculty, and the community (IIE, 2015a). The program provides pre-arrival, arrival, and post-arrival support services to ensure the integration of international students with the campus community. Before arriving, international students are put in contact with student services staff, academic advisors, and domestic student mentors from whom they receive information on campus life and American culture. The university trains domestic student mentors and personnel in dealing with international students, and these students and staff members maintain regular contact with international students

throughout their time at Purdue. These students and staff encourage international students to participate in co-curricular events and social activities through which they have opportunities to meet American students. Purdue University prioritizes intercultural learning, and has developed the P3i program with the belief that bringing diverse student groups together benefits both international and American students (IIE, 2015a).

In the 2013-2014 academic year, the two leading institutions for attracting international students in the U.S. were New York University (NYU) (11,164 students) and the University of Southern California, Los Angeles (USC) (10,932 students), according to IIE (2014). New York University's Office of Global Services provides a wide array of services for international students (New York University, n. d.). These include a variety of programs and events designed to help students meet other international students, learn professional skills, and attend a leadership conference. International student orientations offered by New York University provide information on practical matters essential to adjustment in the U.S. such as opening a bank account and finding off-campus housing. In addition, New York University fosters the engagement of international students by encouraging them to get involved in its over 300 student clubs and organizations on campus with opportunities for sports activities, service projects, leadership, and exploring New York City.

The Office of International Services (OIS) at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, also offers a myriad of services for international students, with the stated goal of enhancing their academic, personal, and professional development and maximizing their experience on campus (USC Student Affairs, n. d.). The OIS also operates on the philosophy that the diversity brought by international students is an asset to every school and department at USC. In addition to providing a weekly *International Update* newsletter with information on programs and activities for international students, the OIS also publishes *International Connection Magazine* twice a year that celebrates the experiences and achievements of international students and faculty, and

provides information on the Los Angeles and Southern California area. Practical information is also provided on the OIS website including immigration forms, student life checklists, employment information, class registration procedures, and videos on American culture. International students can also give feedback on the website and have the option of a follow up from OIS. The OIS is staffed by student services professionals as well as student staff, who provide counseling and advice on a wide range of issues.

3. Analysis

In order to meet the academic, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of international students, institutions need to ensure that their personnel are trained in multicultural competence, as defined by Pope and Mueller (2011). The tripartite model of multicultural awareness (Sue et al., 1982; Pedersen, 1988, as cited in Pope & Mueller, 2011) offers a useful foundation for meeting the unique, varied, and complex needs of international students. This model includes awareness of one's own subjective values and beliefs about those who are different and avoidance of stereotypes and bias. The model also includes knowledge of cultural constructs. These may include Berry's (2005) Acculturation Framework, Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov's (2010) Theory of Cultural Dimensions, Hall & Hall's (1987) intercultural communication theories, and Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) Values Orientation Theory (as cited in Hills, 2002). The third element of the tripartite model is the skill to implement theory and knowledge in dealing with international students, as well as intercultural communication skills.

Multicultural competence can enable student affairs personnel to address the adjustment difficulties faced by international students. Awareness and knowledge of the level of acculturative stress experienced by students, and the acculturation strategies they adopt is likely to help alleviate adjustment difficulties. As stated previously, the greatest acculturative stress is likely to be experienced by students in the marginalization and separation modes (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West,

2015), so it is incumbent on student affairs personnel to assist students in integrating to American culture. Purdue University's P3i Program acknowledges this by its emphasis on integrating international students and American students, and by providing assistance to international students in adapting to campus life and American culture (IIE, 2015a). Similarly, NYU strives to engage international students and provides them with practical assistance and advice (New York University, n. d.), and USC celebrates the contributions and engagement of international students (USC Student Affairs, n. d.).

Multicultural competence, as defined by Pope and Mueller (2011) also enhances awareness by student affairs staff of the barriers faced by international students in accessing support services. Barriers to seeking counseling services, for example, include differences in culturally acceptable ways of dealing with personal problems, language barriers, lack of knowledge of counseling services, and stigmas towards counseling in some cultures (Lee, 2014). As mentioned previously, students from some cultures are often reluctant to disclose personal information in group counseling settings that involve students from the same country for fear of how they will be perceived (Lee, 2014). Student affairs staff with knowledge and awareness of this phenomenon can proactively address this by offering alternative counseling formats that protect students' privacy. In addition, Mesidor and Sly's (2014) study that identified Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior as a predictor of students' intentions to seek mental health services led to the conclusion that students need to be made aware of such services and how to access them. In addition, awareness of Barrera's (1988) three models of social support (as cited in Baba & Hosoda, 2014) is likely to ensure that student affairs personnel cultivate support networks to enhance the socio-cultural adjustment of international students. All of these practices requires *intentionality*, defined by Harper (2011) as "reflectively and deliberately employing a set of strategies to produce desired educational outcomes" (p. 288) to foster holistic student learning, the foundation of best practices in student affairs.

Ensuring the satisfaction of international students also requires awareness of their motivations and expectations for their study abroad experiences (Cadd, 2012). Many international students seek not only to enhance their foreign language proficiency, but also to develop cross-cultural skills and experience (Asgari & Borzooei, 2014; Cadd, 2012). While interaction with native speakers is perceived as instrumental in achieving both of these goals (Cadd, 2012), a study by Wilkinson (1998) suggested that studying abroad does not guarantee opportunities for such interaction (as cited in Cadd, 2012). This is problematic, as interaction with domestic students is also believed to enhance socio-cultural adjustment and decrease stress among international students (Hechanova-Alampay et al. 2002, as cited in Baba & Hosoda, 2014). Such interaction is also believed to create a sense of belonging for international students (Baba & Hosoda, 2014), which is in keeping with Strange and Banning's (2001) model of campus environments that incorporate inclusion, safety, involvement, and community (as cited in Renn & Patton, 2011). Therefore, deliberate measures such as those undertaken by Purdue University, which provides multiple opportunities for interaction between American and international students as well as domestic student mentors (IIE, 2015), help to ensure the achievement of international students' learning goals.

The tripartite model of multicultural awareness (Sue et al., 1982; Pedersen, 1988, as cited in Pope & Mueller, 2011) is particularly important in meeting the needs of Asian students because their cultures are so vastly different from American culture (Baba & Hosoda, 2014). As mentioned previously, Yeh and Inose (2003) found that international students from Asian countries had the most severe acculturative stress because they come from societies where interdependence and close connections are valued (Baba & Hosoda, 2014). This is in contrast to American culture, which places great value on independence and self-reliance (Baba & Hosoda, 2014). Hofstede's Theory of Cultural Dimensions sheds further light on this, which characterizes many Asian cultures as collectivist (Hofstede et al., 2010). In such cultures, the interests of the group are prioritized over those of the individual, and

unyielding loyalty to and dependence on groups is expected. In return, groups provide protection and security against life's hardships, and are a major source of identity for many Asian students. According to Hofstede et al. (2010) the majority of the world's cultures are collectivist, and students from such cultures are reluctant to speak up or stand out from their groups in order to avoid shame and save face. Shea and Yeh (2008) have also noted that emotional restraint, hierarchy, and harmony are paramount in Asian cultures (as cited in Lee, 2014). Hall and Hall (1987) have described Asian, Arab and Mediterranean cultures as *high context*, where context and indirect communication is preferred over verbal communication. It is conceivable, therefore, how these cultural characteristics may prevent Asian students from seeking out counseling services at U.S. universities, and it underscores the need for student affairs personnel to have sufficient multicultural competence to accommodate these cultural characteristics.

4. Practical Implications

The extent to which international students benefit from their study abroad experience depends on many factors including their ability to adjust to their new environment and prior knowledge of the host culture (Cadd, 2012). Baba and Hosoda (2014) recommended that universities educate international students on American culture and provide training in cultural social skills. Student affairs personnel must help international students adapt to the academic norms and expectations of the host country, and counselors should involve faculty in working with students to help clarify academic expectations (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). Research indicating that students in the integration mode of Berry's (2005) acculturation framework showed the lowest levels of acculturative stress suggests that incorporating aspects of the home and host cultures is an effective way to counter acculturative stress (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). This approach is known as the *cultural adaptation approach* and is likely to minimize adjustment difficulties (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). In addition, intentionally fostering connections with host nationals are effective buffers against the effects of acculturative stress as host nationals are significant sources of

information and guidance on local cultural practices (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015).

As stated previously, international students tend to underutilize counseling services when compared with domestic students (Lee, 2014; Mesidor and Sly, 2014). An important step in overcoming this obstacle is ensuring that international students are made aware of the services that are available to them (Lee, 2014). However, because some researchers suggest that certain international students may be reluctant to disclose personal information in group counseling sessions that involve individuals from the same country, they should be provided with options such as groups with domestic students or individual sessions (Lee, 2014). During screening for such services, student services personnel should address these issues as well as issues of confidentiality (Lee, 2014). In addition, student services personnel should employ intentionality, and enact proactive, deliberate interventions (Harper, 2011) when they perceive that students are in need of support, as there are many cultures where students are reluctant to articulate their emotions directly (Hall & Hall, 1987).

Finally, every effort must be made to help international students to develop diverse social networks (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). Student affairs personnel can facilitate this by helping them develop social skills, offering guidance on how to make friends in the U.S., and direct them to places to meet and meet new friends (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). Many scholars recommend that U.S. universities provide multiple opportunities for international students to interact with new people, including American students and professors in order to help create a sense of belonging (Baba & Hosoda, 2014; Sivakumaran et al., 2013). Opportunities to interact with domestic students, as mentioned previously, are particularly important to enhance cultural understanding, and to that end, *decisive intervention* is sometimes necessary, as substantive learning does not necessarily happen on its own (Laubscher, 1994, as cited in Cadd, 2012). Baba and Hosoda (2014) also recommended that universities provide courses in cross-

cultural differences and intercultural communication training for domestic students. Contact with domestic students, according to Sullivan and Kashubeck-West (2015) is likely to help international students achieve the goals of increasing their linguistic and cultural knowledge, while also minimizing feelings of isolation and loneliness. Therefore, student affairs personnel should strive to train student mentors and also provide multiple opportunities for cross-cultural contact such as clubs, activities, and conversation circles (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015).

Implications for Leaders

It is incumbent upon academic leaders, including university presidents and Boards of Trustees (BOTs) to ensure that all activities within their institution are mission driven. BOT's, according to Hendrickson et al. (2013) have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that their institutions serve the public good by adherence to their missions and contributing to intellectual, social, cultural, and economic advancement of society. Hendrickson et al. (2013) have also asserted that the advancement of institutional missions depends more on the university presidents than on anyone else within institution. Since institutions of higher education in the U.S. are increasingly incorporating internationalization into their mission statements, in acknowledgement of their responsibility to prepare students for citizenship in a globalized world (Hendrickson et al., 2013), it follows that an inward flow of international students forms an essential component of this strategy (CIGE, 2012). However, as stated previously, sheer numbers of international students on campus will not necessarily generate an international atmosphere (Knight, 2011), so deliberate, intentional strategies need to be employed (such as those at Purdue University, NYU, and USC) to ensure integration between international and domestic students. To this end, institutions need to make international students feel welcome and valued, rather than being perceived as a source of income in otherwise indifferent and/or hostile institutions (Kinginger, 2008, as cited in Cadd, 2012).

Academic leaders have the ability to ensure the needs of international students are met in a myriad of ways. They need to ensure that all constituents, such as professors, counselors, academic advisors, and the international students' office work together on behalf of international students from the time they arrive until they graduate (Baba & Hosoda, 2014). This implies that they need to rectify the traditional dichotomy between student affairs and academic affairs and ensure that they engage in effective collaboration to optimize student learning (Magolda & Quaye, 2011). Leaders also need to establish training and assessment structures for professors, counselors, and staff to ensure that they can accommodate the different learning and interaction styles of international students (Baba & Hosoda, 2014). This training should also encapsulate training in and assessment of multicultural competence, deemed by many scholars to be an ethical mandate for student affairs professionals (Reynolds, 2011).

Finally, academic leaders are tasked with justifying their investment in support services for international students in an increasingly competitive environment, where institutions are increasingly competing for government funding while being judged based on their contributions to the economy (Sum & Jessop, 2013). To this end, leaders can cite Asgari and Borzooei's (2014) contention that ensuring international students' satisfaction helps institutions gain competitive advantage. This argument, combined with the fact that in an increasingly globalized world and economy, businesses and organizations worldwide are demanding employees who can think critically and creatively, communicate competently, and engage in innovation (Asgari and Borzooei, 2014), adds support to the case for recruiting and supporting international students on U.S. campuses. Finally, it is worth remembering that in the 2012-2013 academic year, international students contributed more than \$24 billion to the U.S. economy Chappell (2013, November 11).

5. Conclusion

This paper explored the importance of meeting the needs of international students at U.S. universities and its implications for student affairs personnel. While the numbers of students studying abroad is increasing exponentially worldwide (Cadd, 2012; Lassegard, 2013; Sivakumaran et al., 2013), and the U.S. is emerging as a top destination (Chappell, 2013, November 11), the problems they face upon arrival must be adequately addressed. Challenges such as socio-cultural adjustment (Ward & Kennedy, 1993, as cited in Baba & Hosoda, 2014), acculturative stress (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015), and the underutilization of mental health services (Lee, 2014; Mesidor & Sly, 2014) were identified as major difficulties for international students studying in the U.S. The paper also noted the importance of understanding the goals and motivations of international students (Sivakumaran et al. 2013) and addressing the specific needs of Asian international students, a major focus of recruitment for many U.S. institutions (CIGE, 2012).

Implementing these practices, the paper argues, necessitates multicultural competence on the part of student affairs practitioners (Pope & Mueller, 2011) and modeling services on best practices such as those at Purdue University, NYU, and USC. The paper argues that Sue et al.'s, (1982) and Petersen's (1988) tripartite model of multicultural awareness (as cited in Pope & Mueller, 2011) serves as a useful foundation in addressing the adjustment issues of international students, in facilitating access to services, and in helping international students achieve their desired goals. The paper recommends that student affairs personnel take deliberate measures to ease the adjustment of international students, by ensuring their engagement into campus life and culture and by helping them to develop extensive social networks. University leaders including presidents and BOTs need to ensure adherence to the internationalization component of their mission statements by establishing training and assessment structures for faculty and staff and ensuring collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs. Leaders can also point to the economic benefits in justifying financial support for international student support services.

The current generation of U.S. college students has been described as the most diverse generation in the history of American higher education (Levine & Dean, 2012). However, as stated previously, Levine and Dean's (2012) research revealed that race is still a significant source of tension on college campuses. That said, there is less of a multicultural divide and less polarization in racial attitudes on today's college campuses than there was 20 years ago, and a majority of undergraduates believe that more diversity on campus would lead to an improved education in general (Levine & Dean, 2012). This makes a powerful case for the continued recruitment of international students to U.S. colleges and universities. The presence of international students leads to what Pope and Mueller (2011) have described as a *paradigm shift* that provides opportunities to gain knowledge about other cultures and re-examine pre-existing world views and assumptions. However, the presence of international students on U.S. campuses entails an ethical mandate for student affairs practitioners to attain multicultural competence so that they can meet the needs of all students on campus (Reynolds, 2011).

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