



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT, AND CAMPUS RESOURCES

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OUTLINE

- Who are our students?
- Cultural Adjustment Stages
- Resources
- Tips for Advisors

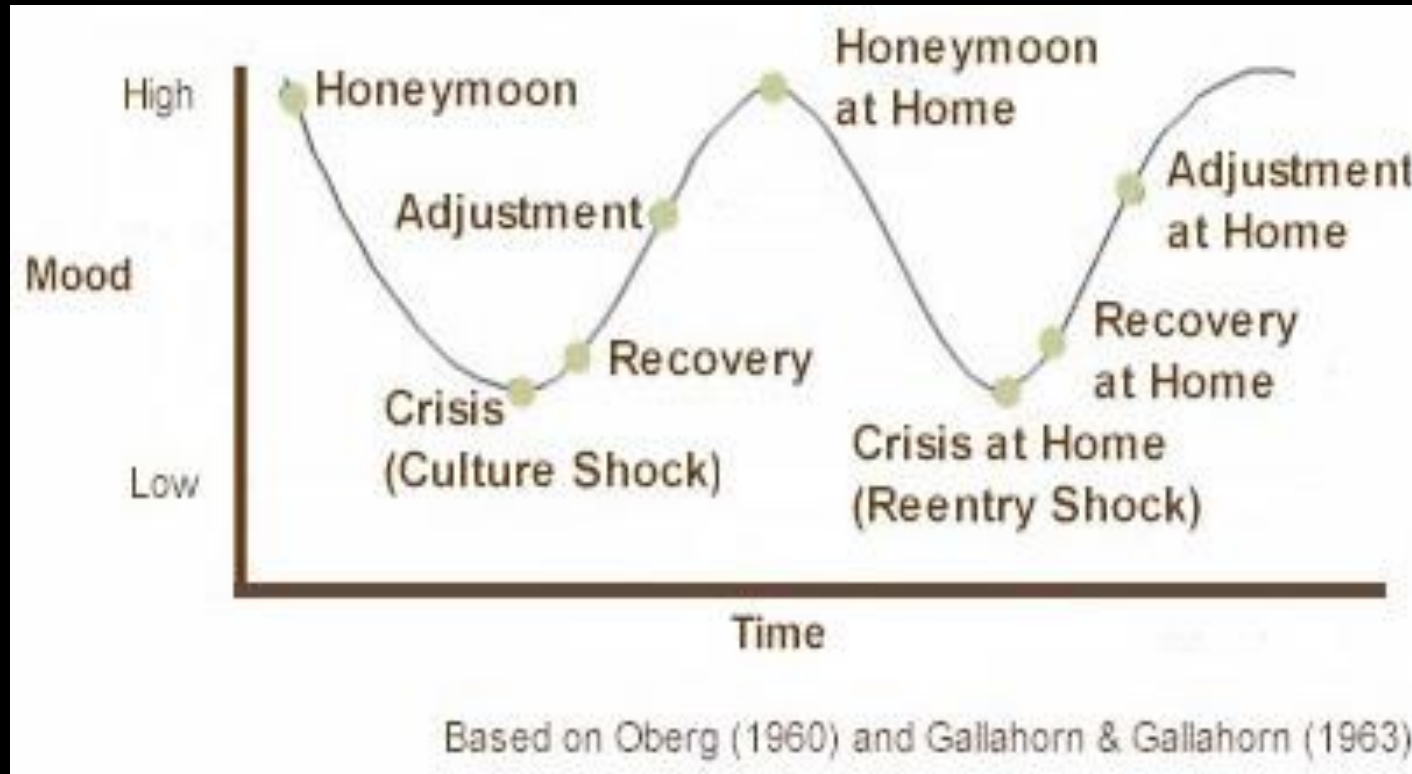
WHO ARE OUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

- International students represent over 115 countries
- 5,289 Undergrad (Top Countries: China, India, South Korea, Taiwan, Iran)
- 4,535 Graduate level students (Top Countries: China, South Korea, India, Taiwan, Singapore)
- Up 4.3% from previous year

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

- Four stages of cultural adjustment
 - 1) Honeymoon
 - 2) Crisis Phase*
 - 3) Recovery
 - 4) Home
- Overall, cultural adjustment affects different students directly
- Most importantly, observations and asking questions are imperative in supporting students during their cultural adjustment stages

CULTURAL ADAPTATION



STAGE 1-HONEYMOON

- Characterized by exhilaration, anticipation and excitement
- Student observes difference in new environment, but largely focus on positives
- When misunderstandings mount up, student is likely to experience second stage

STAGE 2-CRISIS*

- Also referred to as the Hostility stage
- *Culture Shock
- Characterized by frustration, anger, fear, changing in eating habits, self-doubt, acute homesickness, sometimes physical illness
- Students need patience, and persistent support during this stage so they can begin to experience stage three of cultural adjustment
- Suggestions for coping?
 - Calling home
 - Taking care of yourself (eat, sleep, exercise)
 - Talk to someone
 - normalizing
 - improving English skills (when applicable)

STAGE 3-RECOVERY

- Also known as the Humor stage
- Student is able to laugh at misunderstanding and seems more relaxed in new setting
- Experience differently by everyone based on backgrounds, strengths/weaknesses



STAGE 4-ADJUSTMENT

- Student feels “at home” in new environment
- Still holds cultural traditions, yet able to learn and grow in new “home”

OTHER REMARKS ON CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

- Return stages
 - Stage 1-Honeymoon at Home
 - Stage 2-Crisis at Home
 - Stage 3-Recovery at Home
 - Stage 4-Adjustment at Home

ADJUSTMENT TO CAMPUS- ACADEMICS

- Differences in Education system-lecture vs. participatory
- Receive questions about how to participate, not clear on how this will effect grade
- Role of instructors/professors/advisors
- Communication-office hours, e-mail, phone
- Adjustment to teaching methods will not happen in a few weeks

ADJUSTMENT TO CAMPUS-A “COLLEGE EXPERIENCE”

- Expectations of purpose of going to college varies culturally
- Many students' previous understandings of a full US “college experience” may not be favorable
- Staff mentors can help show students opportunity for involvement
- Non-US universities often do not place same value on ideas of student development
- Building a well-rounded portfolio of experiences may be misinterpreted as not focusing on academics
- Encouraging Students to understand value in:
 - Joining student organizations
 - Participating in community services
 - Self-reflection
 - Broadening friendship circle beyond culturally similar friends
 - Students may battle parents on some of this...



HELP-SEEKING CULTURE

- Pressure from parents sometimes silences students
- Counseling is often stigmatized, but acting as a bridge to counseling can help
- Students may rely on home-country contacts for information

ISSS RESOURCES

- Pre-arrival communication and shuttle service
- Orientation
- Newsletters
- Welcome appointments, response team
- Intentional programming-Football 101, Interconnect, Amish trip, Native American Pow Wow...

CAMPUS RESOURCES

- Counseling Center
- Registered Student Organizations (RSOs)
- International Hospitality Committee (IHC)-International Friends Program
- Writer's workshop
- Career Center
- Illinois Leadership Center*

WAYS ACADEMIC ADVISORS CAN HELP

- Open lines of communication
- Encourage students to become involved
 - Socially or academically, strengthening relationships will help students feel more comfortable in their new environment
- Recognize that students not only experience cultural pressure, but pressure from parents as well
- Normalize the situation
 - International and domestic students face many of the same difficulties. Look for the bigger picture
- Acknowledge cultural differences, but not always as an excuse
- Keep ISSS in the loop for trends you might notice – good or bad!

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

- Tell us about your initial cultural adjustment experience?
- What were your needs during your adjustment period on campus?
- What do you wish you had known when you arrived?
- What resources did you seek out to help with cultural adjustment?
- What did you find helped you most during the cultural adjustment phase?
- What type of relationship did you have with your advisor? What kind of advice would you give your advisor to support a student during their cultural adjustment period?
- Did you experience reverse cultural adjustment? Can you tell us about that?
- Do you still encounter any difficulties with cultural adjustment?