THE GLOBAL IMPACT EXCHANGE

A Quarterly Publication of Diversity Abroad

WINTER 2020 EDITION

FOSTERING EXCHANGE ACROSS DIFFERENCE: IDENTITY & THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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PUBLICATION **INFORMATION**

The Global Impact Exchange

A Quarterly Publication of Diversity Abroad

The Global Impact Exchange quarterly publication serves to advance domestic and international conversations around diversity, inclusion, and equity in global education with respect to the thematic focus identified each quarter.

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Winter 2020 Edition:
Fostering Exchange Across Difference: Identity & The International Student Experience

Published March 2020

International and exchange students contribute to the diversity of perspectives on our campuses and are integral to campus internationalization efforts, all while serving as ambassadors of their countries. Furthermore, the opportunity to study in a foreign country as an international or exchange student has the potential to significantly impact students personally and professionally, providing access to lifelong global networks and language acquisition, amongst countless other benefits. How can international education professionals work with inbound international students to facilitate meaningful global exchanges across the full range of diverse perspectives represented on our campuses and within our communities in the US and abroad? What is our approach to orienting incoming international and exchange students to local realities around race, LGBTQ identities, socioeconomic class, and other diversity-related topics, both from an academic perspective and an interpersonal perspective, to ensure students are equipped with the knowledge and tools to effectively navigate these realities?

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INTRODUCTION

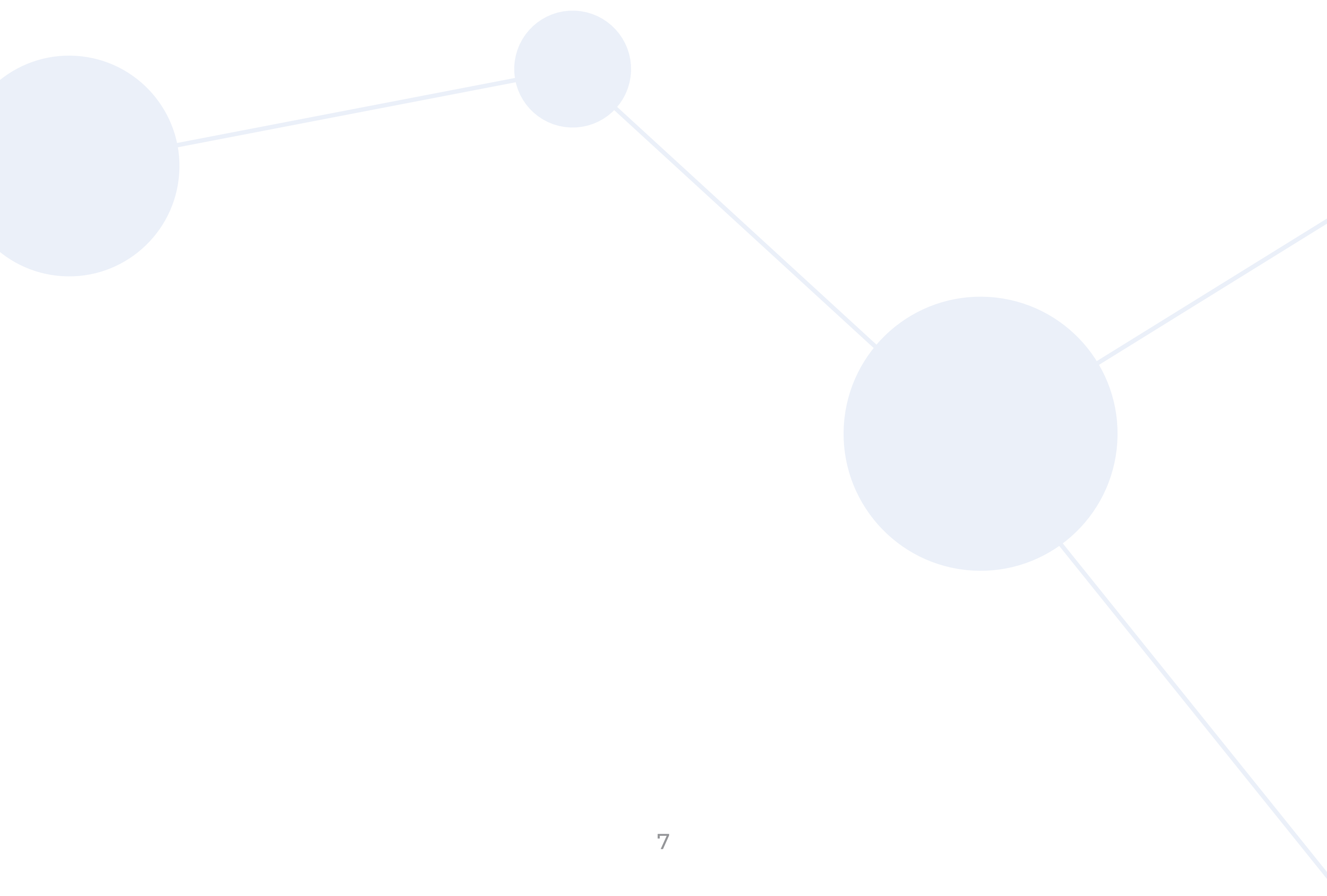
By **ANDREW GORDON**
CEO and Founder, Diversity Abroad

When we launched the call for articles for the winter 2020 edition of the Global Impact Exchange in September 2019 there was no way of knowing COVID-19 existed or how it would impact the world, higher education as a whole and international education specifically. While the world grapples with this rapidly unfolding public health crisis, those of us in international education are coming to terms with how this pandemic is currently and will continue to impact our students and our work. In many ways some of the fallout from COVID-19, with respect to its impact on international students, underscores the timeliness of the theme for this edition of the Global Impact Exchange - *Fostering Exchange Across Difference: Identity & The International Student Experience*. As this global crisis unfolds, international students have been uniquely impacted. For an example, there has been a spate of racist and xenophobic incidents toward international students and others of East Asian heritage in the U.S., U.K., Australia and other countries, leading to new hashtags like #JeNeSuisPasUnVirus and #coronaracism. Or, as universities have shut down campus and shifted toward online learning, a number of international students without economic means have been left with fewer options for housing and food security than their more economically secure peers. Yet, while COVID-19 has highlighted some of the unique challenges international students face, even before the pandemic there was a need for the higher education field to critically examine how to build a climate of inclusion and belonging for international students.

The term “intersectionality” is often employed when discussing the various social identities of domestic students, however when discussing non-resident students who enroll in our institutions from abroad they are often referred to as simply “international students”. In reality international students embody many of the same social identities that domestic students do. They’re students of color, first in their families to go to college, come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, have disabilities, are members of the LGBTQ community and are students of faith. Unfortunately the support systems in place for international students at many campuses are designed solely with nationality in mind versus holistically considering the full range of their identities as we strive to do with domestic students. This approach creates two distinct missed opportunities. First, a student’s success, academically and otherwise, is impacted by the degree to which they experience a strong sense of belonging. Whereas various programs focus on welcoming international students to campus,

without intentionally working to develop a climate of inclusion that fosters a sense of belonging on campus the capacity for success of international students may be jeopardized. Second, for the foreseeable future the majority of domestic students will not participate in credit-bearing education abroad programming. Despite this reality, there are ample opportunities for students to be globally engaged at home. When a campus culture supports a sense of belonging and climate of inclusion for international students, this not only supports their success but positions them to support global engagement and learning for the campus community as a whole.

Thus, the goal of this edition of the Global Impact Exchange is to highlight unique perspectives and best practices for holistically supporting the international students who arrive on our campuses embodying a wide range of social identities. It's our hope that the content of these articles will inspire you to re-evaluate and re-imagine how you engage and support your international students before they arrive on campus, while they're enrolled and as alum with the goal of supporting both their success and facilitating global engagement on your campus.



OPENING DOORS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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With legislative backing for better access to higher education and a shift in attitudes arising from the campaign for equal rights for people with disabilities, it is imperative that colleges and universities expand their vision to include international students with disabilities (ISWDs). Drawing on the author's preliminary PhD research, the purpose of this article is to discuss the main problems faced by international students with disabilities in higher education, common institutional limitations in addressing these problems, and suggestions for improvements including awareness-building measures, stigma-reduction tactics, and collaborative efforts between campus partners. More work is needed to blend our knowledge bases of cultural difference, disability awareness, accommodation legalities, and global higher education service provisions to open doors for ISWDs.

Background

Although the percentage of students with disabilities in higher education in OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries is low relative to their overall population, the trend is rising. The rights of individuals with disabilities studying at U.S. colleges and universities are largely dictated by two laws: the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), amended in 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Both laws make it illegal to discriminate against an individual on the basis of a disability and also require colleges and universities to provide reasonable accommodations for all students with disabilities, including international students. Support for ISWDs studying in the US is offered by almost 4,700 accredited U.S. campuses (EducationUSA, 2018). As per the U.S. Department of Education National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 9% of students on U.S. campuses have disabilities (Radwin et al., 2018). Approximately 7% of international students in the United States said they use disability services (Mobility International USA, 2018a). The majority of these students have non-apparent disabilities (Mobility International USA, 2018b).

Student Challenges

ISWDs confront multiple challenges due to their double identities: being an international student on the one hand and being identified with disabilities on the other. In addition to grappling

with the same obstacles as both non-disabled international students and domestic students with disabilities, ISWDs experience a unique set of circumstances. There are external institutional factors to contend with such as the formal documentation required to receive disability support services as well as the wide variation in available supports in different higher education settings (Sparks & Lovett, 2014). More internal personal factors may relate to self-disclosure and self-advocacy skills, including students' understanding of their own disability (Barnard-Brak, Lechtenberger, & Lan, 2010). Because of their diverse cultural backgrounds, international students may be unaccustomed to requesting help or have limited knowledge of disability supports because of a lack of previous experience. Like their domestic peers, we can confidently surmise that there are more international students on campus who could qualify for services but have not sought to do so. Many countries and cultures identify "disability" differently. For example, some international students who are identified with a learning disability in the United States might actually be considered as "non-disabled" in their home country (Korbel et al., 2011). Convincing international students to avail of disability support services or to undergo formal assessment can be difficult because of their fear of stigma or prohibitive costs. There is a greater risk that ISWDs will not integrate successfully into the campus community because disabilities may impact their ability to interact with others, both academically and socially. This leads to feelings of isolation and further marginalization.

Institutional Limitations

Compliance is not inclusion; it is the foundation for inclusion. Though campuses may be in compliance with the ADA, Section 504, and associated legislation, this does not automatically signify that they are fully prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities (Grossman, 2014). Too often, institutions focus on academic and physical accessibility yet forget to develop welcoming campus climates that promote social integration (Shepler & Woosley, 2012). Certainly, not all higher education faculty and staff are sufficiently informed enough to engage with ISWDs in a way that does not serve to alienate, stigmatize, or stereotype them (Hong, 2015). Neither is it uncommon for campus authorities on diversity issues such as race, gender, and LGBTQ to be less aware of disability beyond the standard legal and medical criteria (Shallish, 2017). Campus diversity measures would only be enriched with the purposeful inclusion of disability.
Disability training and education efforts on an institutional level help to solidify their impact among faculty, staff, and students. Furthermore, disability policies must consider that students with disabilities are not a homogenous group that can all be treated the same. Their backgrounds and needs differ, as well as their adjustment to campus life (Murray, Lombardi, & Kosty, 2014). An obvious case in point is the international student. Beyond the learning environment, ISWDs often need additional help with general day-to-day living, acclimating to a new country, and understanding or requesting suitable services. One of the biggest challenges for universities is raising awareness among international students about campus support resources (Wu, Garza, & Guzman, 2015).

Recommendations

While all U.S. colleges and universities may meet official obligations in terms of support services and accommodations, there are those who go the extra mile by offering students with disabilities assistive technology training, adaptive labs, special tutoring and academic advising services, and more. Students with disabilities assimilate better and feel accepted

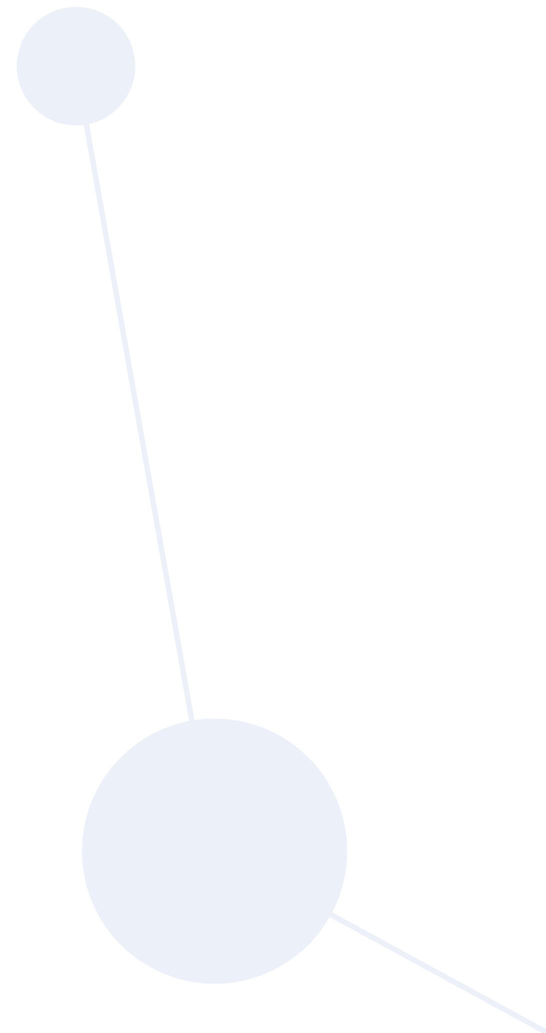
when faculty adopt inclusive instructional practices (Burgstahler, 2015; Evans et al., 2017). Further recommendations to support ISWDs:

- Create marketing and web materials that include the images and voices of ISWDs
- Provide a comprehensive pre-arrival pack detailing what services or disability organizations are available on campus and in the community
- Employ more staff with disabilities in relevant campus units such as international offices
- Empower people with greater user involvement
- Increase cultural awareness and understanding of students' disability needs through compulsory professional training courses and online information for all campus employees. Include international students themselves as part of the training process so that the diversity of student needs is highlighted
- Develop protocols to guide disability support staff when they encounter international students needing services and integrate a system to help identify undiagnosed learning disabilities
- Create working groups to develop strategies for universal design that go beyond accommodations and help all students with apparent and non-apparent disabilities
- Encourage cultural centers and student organizations or networks that support connections between students with disabilities and their allies on campus
- Incorporate skills development in self-advocacy and disability-related communication
- Provide life-skills training

It is important to create an inclusive whole-campus environment where students feel they are in a safe space, have their disabilities seen as part of campus diversity, grow as individuals yet connect with each other, and build community. In this context, disabilities can become a positive aspect of students' identity, leading to greater interest in disability issues, progressive disability services, and more student activism (Cory, White, & Stuckey 2010).

Conclusion

ISWDs contribute to the internationalization of their classrooms, campuses, and communities, yet they must still overcome significant hurdles in their daily access to campus experiences despite many colleges and universities embracing diversity initiatives. If we are to achieve a fully inclusive educational environment and the ideal of comprehensive internationalization, this particular population merits a sharper focus by institutions as well as policymakers, researchers, and practitioners in the international education field. We have work to do.



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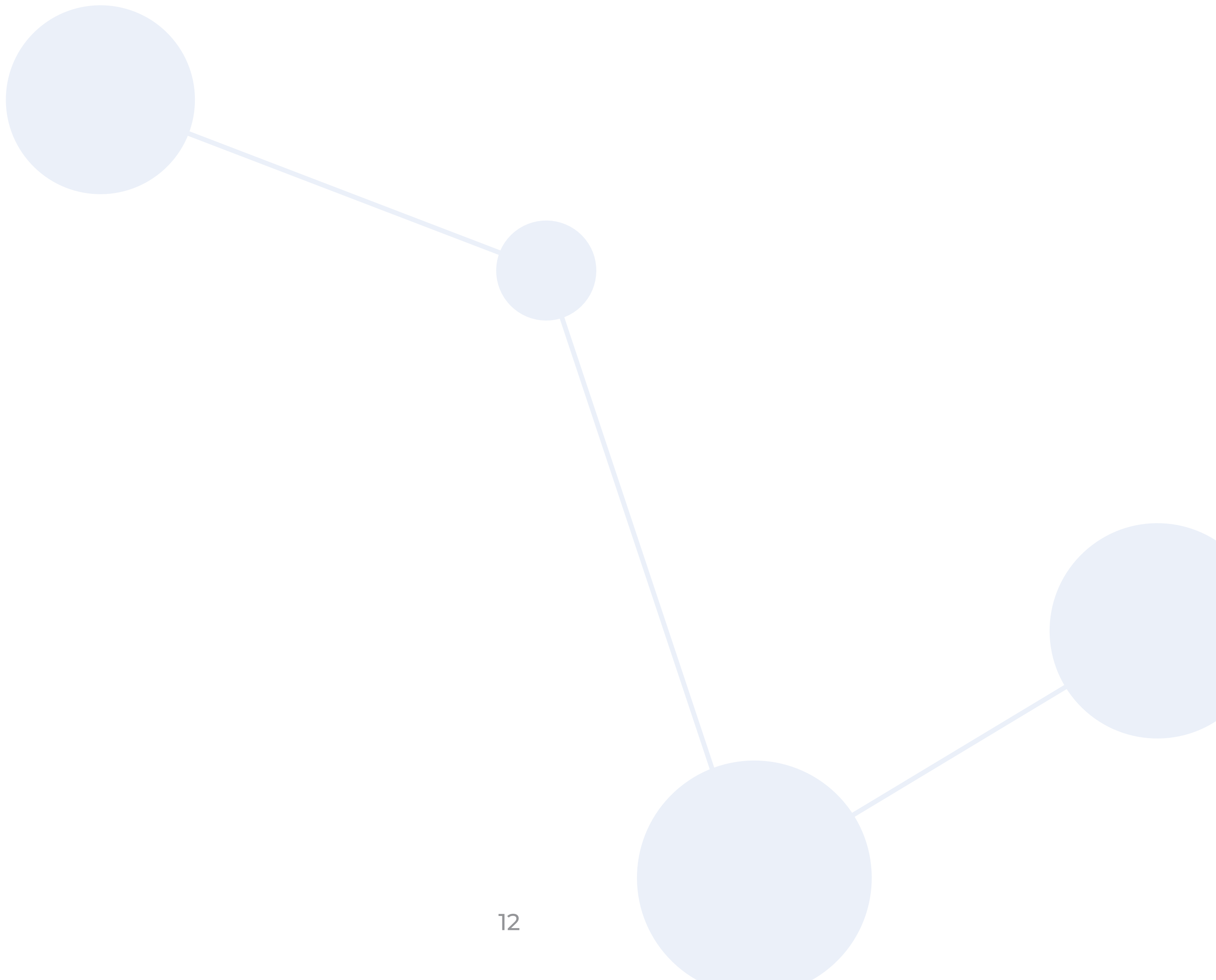

BUILDING A SHORT-TERM CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMME FOR STUDENTS FROM FOSTER-YOUTH/WIDENING-ACCESS BACKGROUNDS TO EXPLORE SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS, IDENTITY, AND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

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The University of Southern California and the University of Strathclyde are research-intensive institutions with socially progressive missions and a strong commitment to their local communities. Both recognise the value of international experiences for students, as well as the challenges to participation for many students from low-income, foster-youth and other potentially disadvantaged backgrounds, often termed 'widening access' students within the UK.

Piloted in late summer 2019, they have developed a fully-funded, short-term cultural exchange programme which provides a rich intercultural learning experience. This article discusses the outcomes and lessons learned from the inaugural visit of Strathclyde students to USC.

Institutional contexts

The University of Strathclyde was founded in 1796 as a 'place of useful learning' open to all regardless of gender or class. Based in Glasgow in Scotland, the public research university has a strong commitment to widen access to higher education (HE). Within a UK context, under-represented students include those with experience of the care or foster youth system, a group who have potentially the lowest participation in HE of any young people (Harrison 2019a): 43% of school leavers enter higher education across the whole of the UK (UCAS, 2017), compared to just 6% of those leaving care in England (Harrison, 2019b). There is also considerable emphasis on neighbourhood disadvantage. Though the gap is closing, those residing in the least-deprived areas in Scotland are over three times more likely to enter HE on leaving school as those from the most-deprived communities (SFC, 2018). Strathclyde admits more than a 1,000 students from deprived neighbourhoods annually; one in eight young, full-time entrants from such communities studies at the University.

The University of Southern California is one of the world's leading private research universities. Based in Los Angeles, it has a strong commitment to its immediate neighbourhoods. With a similar focus

on those from foster youth backgrounds through the Guardian Scholars programme, nearly two thirds of students receive some form of financial aid, and 14% of the undergraduate population are first-generation college students.

The pilot exchange programme

Following contact between the leaders of both institutions and a research visit to USC from staff at Strathclyde in November 2018, there was agreement to develop a short-term exchange programme specifically targeted at disadvantaged or under-represented students—those likely to face the most barriers in accessing existing mainstream opportunities.

Within the UK, there is evidence of a correlation between outward mobility and improved academic and employment outcomes. Graduates who were mobile during their degree were less likely to be unemployed, more likely to have earned a first-class or upper second-class degree, more likely to be in a graduate-level job, and earned 5% more than their non-mobile peers. In the case of disadvantaged and black and minority ethnic students, who are generally underrepresented in mobility, the difference in outcomes was particularly pronounced. On average, graduates from more disadvantaged backgrounds who were mobile during their degree earned 6.1% more, and those in work were more likely to be in a graduate-level job than their non-mobile peers (Universities UKi, 2017)

Given the other commitments of those targeted for the experience, the exchange was deliberately of short duration. Students with caring responsibilities, part-time work, and long-term tenancies are unlikely to be able to participate in extended international opportunities. All costs were covered, and students were provided with cash for expenses. Thought was also given to the potential inexperience of the travellers, with detailed guidance and pre-visit briefings arranged. Participants were selected through a competitive application process open to undergraduates on low-income scholarships, those resident in deprived neighbourhoods, carers, or foster youth, with priority given to applicants with no international experience or for whom the opportunity would be transformative.

The exchange was a blend of independent and group learning, workshops, and knowledge exchange opportunities led by two Strathclyde staff members and colleagues from USC. Alongside meeting students and staff at USC, the visitors explored issues of community engagement and widening access, visited local schools, City Hall, and community cooperatives. They undertook additional academic work via a bespoke online module and developed presentations on their learning which were delivered on the final morning. Reflective essays, blogs, and video diaries were submitted on their return to the UK.

Outcomes and the student experience

All students reported extremely positive outcomes from the visit, noting increased confidence and changed aspirations: Several were contemplating PhD study, with others aiming to seek additional international opportunities. Comments included:

> *I am a lot more confident to talk to and ask questions of professional organisations, this has helped me to understand to a deeper level, things that I wouldn't have questioned before ... Generally, I have also picked up new life skills ... I learned how to exchange currency, how to navigate a foreign public transport system, how to behave in certain social situations, how to tap into other cultures and political systems as well as many others.*

> *During our discussions, it was undeniable the sense of community we were beginning to find within each other, and I learned how to properly open up for the first time amongst a group of strangers which I could not believe. It has truly been the most remarkable, inspiring and life-changing experience and I will cherish it forever.*

Others focused on their learning and commonality between the two locations:

> *It was clear that issues found here in Scotland are evident in California . . . I witnessed a high homeless population present there and this issue is evident in Glasgow too. I heard about impostor syndrome for the first time and it was highlighted that each of us can achieve anything so we should not allow the opinions of others to distort how we view ourselves.*

Having seen their efficacy within USC, the students are now lobbying for student spaces on campus for different groups and for the creation of a widening access student society:

> *Being designated a space is being valued and held worthy of establishing a community, this would be huge for the Black student society in Strathclyde.*

It was important to participants that the exchange was an opportunity solely for access students. Many had only applied under those circumstances and would not have done so if the offer was funding to take part in a wider programme alongside those paying for themselves. This was because of concerns about fitting in or being judged for inexpensive clothing or luggage and travel inexperience.

Many of the discussions during the exchange revolved around issues of identity in relation to social class and ethnicity. By specifically engaging in these areas, students learned about equality and diversity, concepts such as imposter syndrome, minority stress, and micro-aggressions, and the dynamics of under-representation in the campus, local, and national contexts of the US and UK. The students became more aware of their own identities and were able to articulate their sense of difference and belonging within their institution. This became a key feature of the exchange, of great value to both students and staff, one which will be replicated in the return visit of USC students to Strathclyde in 2020.

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INTERSECTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL AND FIRST-GENERATION STATUS: A CASE FOR COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS

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First-generation college students are commonly referred to as those students whose parents have no post-secondary educational exposure (Cataldi et al., 2018; Ishitani, 2006; Pascarella et al., 2004; Warburton et al., 2001). Although increased attention has been given to the unique needs of first-generation college students in higher education institutions in the United States (US), typically international students, especially those who fall within the definition of first-generation status, are often excluded from the overall conversation about support and interventions for first-generation students. Yet as stated by Gesing and Glass (2018), international students are who have first-generation status "are a harbinger for the coming wave of global student mobility" (p. 26); thus, understanding and supporting the intersecting identities of first-generation international college students (IFGCSs) is critical in global higher education.

In this scholarly essay, we illustrate how both international student and first-generation status provide similar challenges at U.S. institutions, making a case for collaborative efforts in supporting this traditionally segmented population. Furthermore, the void in IFGCS research and tendency of first-generation programmatic efforts to focus primarily on domestic students will present a compelling argument to explore this overlooked demographic characteristic.

Adjustment and Support for International Students

Current literature related to international students tends to focus on issues of adjustment and transition to U.S. colleges and universities. Overall, undergraduate international students may deal with issues related to stress, anxiety, and depression as a result of difficult transitions to their U.S. institution (Brunsting, Zachry, & Takeuchi, 2018). Transition difficulties may arise as a result of English language difficulties and socio-cultural adjustment (Briguglio & Smith, 2012; Edwards, Ran, & Lie, 2007; Li, Chen, & Duanmu, 2010; Yao, 2016a, 2016b). For example, Yao (2016a, 2016b) found that English language proficiency affected Chinese international students' overall sense of belonging, especially when students reflected on their relationships with domestic students. The role of culture was also salient in George Mwangi's (2016) study on Black international students'

sense of belonging at a historically Black college and university (HBCU). In this study, participants shared that although they had an overall positive collegiate experience, they still preferred to socialize with other foreign-born Black students as a way to feel more connected to their overall campus community.

Despite transition and adjustment challenges, international students still find value in attending college in the US and cite peer leaders such as resident assistants as being helpful (Yao et al., 2019). Brunsting, Smith, and Zachry (2018) recommend that institutions create courses related to academic and cultural transitions to the US as a way to increase international students' successful connection to campus, such as first-year experience programs tailored specifically for international students (Yan & Sendall, 2016). Overall, focused programmatic efforts will likely lead to more positive transition and adjustment for international students. In adding focused programming, international students may participate in co-curricular activities such as student organizations, which have been found to increase international students' sense of belonging to campus and promote interactions with domestic students (Glass & Gesing, 2018).

Adjustment and Support for First-Generation Students

According to their February 2018 report analyzing three datasets from the National Center of Education Statistics datasets, Cataldi et al. (2018) reported approximately one third of undergraduate students are first generation and the first in their family to attend college. First-generation students are twice as likely to drop out than continuing-generation students, with 33% and 14% attrition rates, respectively. Furthermore, Engle and Tinto (2008) reported "low income, first-generation students were nearly four time more likely to leave higher education after their first year than students who had neither of these risk factors" (p. 2). First-generation students may have greater difficulty academically and socially adjusting to college (Bui, 2002; Engle & Tinto, 2008), which has been attributed to first-generation students exhibiting non-competitive pre-college characteristics (Cataldi et al., 2018; Engle et al., 2006; Radunzel, 2015). For example, Engle, Bermeo, and O'Brien (2006) found that first-generation students felt that high school did not prepare them for the rigorous college coursework. The additional academic rigor could be due to the first-generation students enrolling in fewer advanced placement courses than continuing-generation students (Radunzel, 2015).

Due to first-generation college students' parents often lacking experience navigating various college processes, institutional agents become the source of information and guidance. The social connections are especially beneficial for racially minoritized first-generation students as they experience two competing cultural environments, resulting in feelings of isolation (Jehangir, 2009; Kuh et al., 2008; Oldfield, 2007). However, first-generation students tend to live off campus and work while enrolled, thereby limiting their ability to make connections within the college environment (Engle, 2007; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Pascarella et al., 2004). Oldfield (2007) recommends first-year orientations specialize in addressing first-generation college student by showing them how to locate campus resources and connecting them with a peer and faculty mentor that can assist them with the college transition.

Implications for Higher Education Institutions

While specialized programs address the unique needs of target groups such as international or first-generation students, they may not be the most effective and efficient at addressing the intersecting

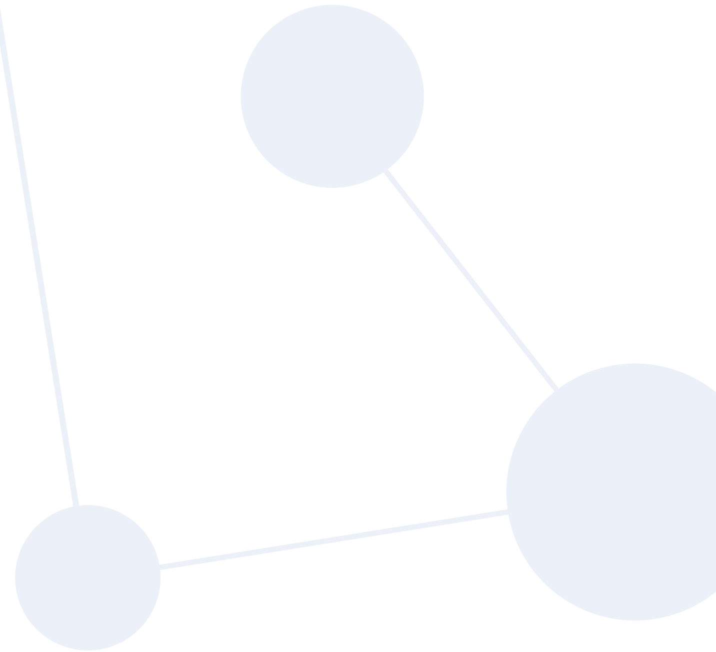
identities that many students bring with them to college. Rather than serving the two populations separately, there can be value in recognizing the intersection of identities. Why not shift from siloed organizational operations to a more collaborative culture allowing first-generation demographics to be served within the international student identity?

While the intersection of the two student identities has received minimal attention (Gesing & Glass, 2018; Glass, Gesing, Hales, & Cong, 2017), research demonstrates that first-generation status significantly impacts an international student's college experience (Glass et al., 2017). For example, Glass et al. (2017) found faculty interactions to have greater influence on IFGCSs' sense of belonging when compared to non-first-generation international students. Furthermore, faculty whose curriculum invited diverse cultural perspectives in the classroom had a greater influence on IFGCS' sense of community than non-first-generation international students (Glass et al., 2017). Given faculty strongly influence IFGCS' college experience, institutions may consider including faculty members who identify as first-generation to participate in international student orientation. This will allow for IFGCS to connect with faculty in a smaller, more casual environment prior to the start of the semester. By creating these relationships with faculty early, IFGCS may exhibit help-seeking behaviors when faced with academic challenges during the semester. Additionally, offices dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion may consider offering workshops to faculty on the importance of diversifying their curriculum and teaching methods. This may encourage faculty to choose content that will invite students from diverse backgrounds to engage and feel connected in the classroom.

Given that first-generation identity within international students is proving to be a growing demographic characteristic, individuals responsible for institutional programming may consider broadening their conceptualization of international students to include intersecting identities, such as first-generation status. Most importantly, although many international students in the US may not be first-generation college students, the reality is that most are likely the first in their family to attend college *in the US*—thus expanding the first-generation college student label for some international students. As a result, many parents and families may need information about processes and practices that are assumed in U.S. higher education. A suggestion would be to include a virtual orientation for families of international students as a way to bridge the many gaps in understanding that may exist. In providing a virtual orientation, families may receive information that will provide them resources for supporting their children while at the same time providing them ease of mind by gaining some insights on the inner workings of a U.S. institution. These virtual orientations could be created as a collaboration between multiple campus offices, including new-student orientation, first-gen initiatives, and international students and scholars office.

In addition, virtual pre-orientations can be provided for new incoming IFGCS, as international student travel is highly regimented by the government. Institutional programming dedicated to familiarizing incoming first-generation students could be incorporated into the virtual IFGCS sessions. As a result, IFGCS could receive virtual tours of the campus, descriptions of campus resources, information on student organizations, tutorials on how to register, ways to connect with professors, and academic success tips. Furthermore, professors and academic advisors may consider conducting virtual pre-orientation sessions with IFGCS and their families. This will allow both the student and family to familiarize themselves with the U.S. educational culture, which can be especially important for IFGCS.

Lastly, first-generation initiatives can be purposeful in their attempts to invite international students to their programs. A strong domestic emphasis coupled with a broad first-generation college student conceptualization tends to overlook international students, thereby making them feel unwelcome. Overall, broadening the conceptualization of international students to be more inclusive of first-generation identity has the potential to mitigate college acclimation issues by increasing sense of belonging, reducing cultural capital gaps, and expanding on campus networks.



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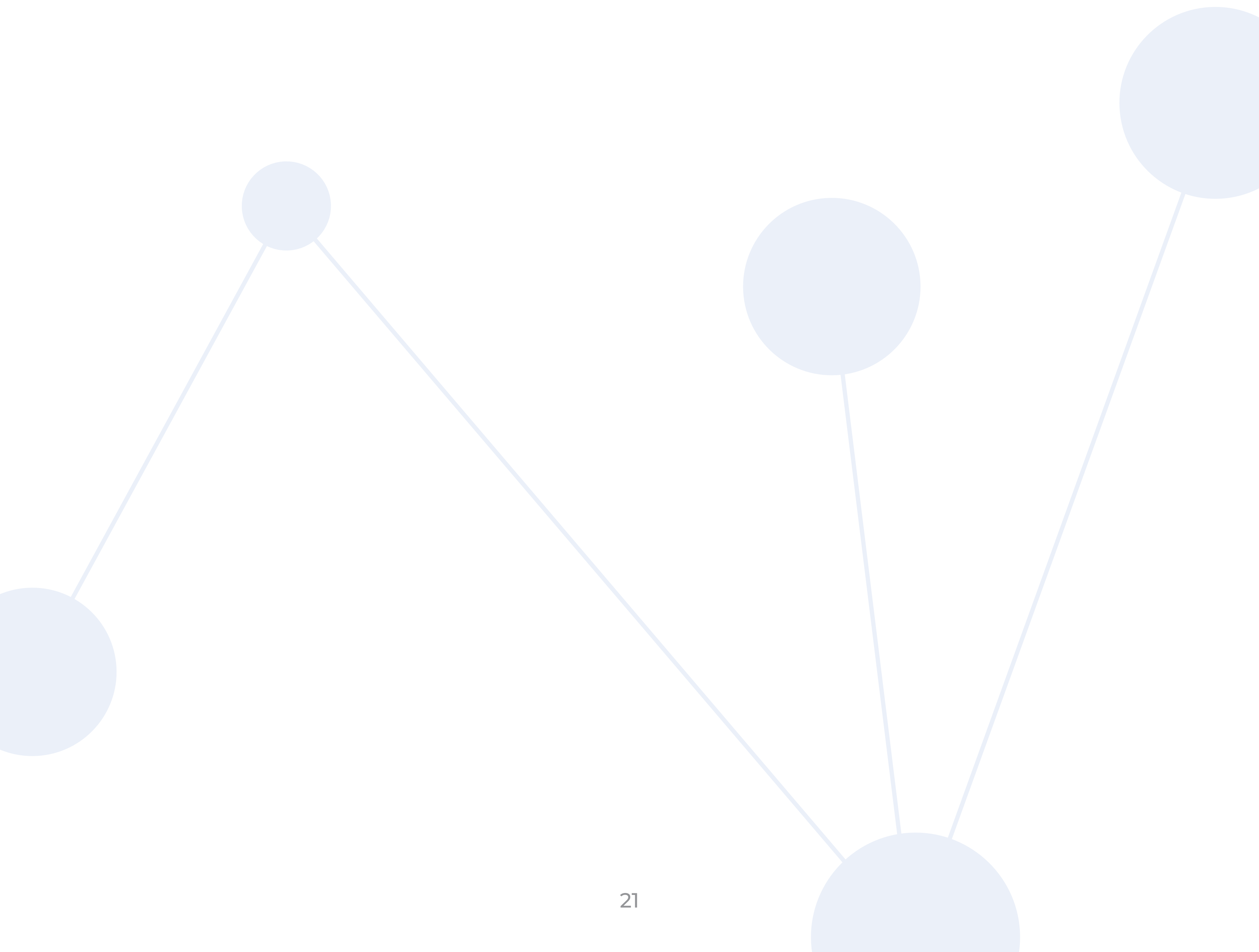

SOCIOECONOMIC DIVERSITY AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES: QUESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

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Despite the impact of class identity on students' educational experiences (Jack, 2019; Lee, 2016), few studies have examined the experiences of international students. Yet we know that socioeconomic obstacles pose challenges to college access, success, retention, and persistence (Goldrick-Rab 2017). How do international students, particularly low-income students, make sense of their socioeconomic identities? What barriers to inclusion do they face? This article provides an opportunity to critically analyze the experiences of low-income international students.

Class Identity in U.S. Higher Education

Researchers have firmly established the impact of social class on students' access, adjustment, identity development, persistence, sense of belonging, and trajectories beyond graduation (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2013; Elkins & Hanke, 2016; Goldrick-Rab, 2016; Jack, 2019; Martin, 2019). *The Chronicle of Higher Education* published nearly 20% more content on social class in the decade leading up to 2018 than it did between 1995 and 2005.[1] Colleges and universities continue to expand programs focused on first-generation and low-income students. Yet these conversations center only on domestic students; social class identity is largely absent in studies about international students' experience.

According to the 2019 Open Doors report, personal and family funding is the primary financial resource for 57% of all international students, with 83% of undergraduates most likely to rely on personal savings and family support. A World Education Services survey showed that 21% of international students had less than $10,000 available per year to fund their studies (Lu & Schulman, 2015). Financial challenges, including legally demonstrating proof of funding for a full year of academic study before coming to university, shapes whether students initially seek out information about financial aid, post-graduation career options, or campus services (Choudaha, Orosz & Chang, 2012; Glass, Streitwieser & Gopal, 2019). In addition, international students contend with acculturation,

[1] Results from a subject search for keywords "socioeconomic" or "social class" in *Chronicle* archives for the corresponding periods.

language development, bias, stereotyping, and government regulations.

Barriers to Access and Success: Basic Needs

Another significant barrier to academic success and sense of belonging for low-income international students is basic needs insecurity. Basic needs insecurity is a growing area of concern with important implications for research and institutional policies. Basic needs insecurity, such as food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness, affect students of diverse social identities, but recent studies demonstrate that international students, students of color, female, low-income, and first-generation students are more likely to experience food insecurity (Broton et al., 2018; El Zein et al., 2018; Gaines et al., 2014; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015, 2017; Martinez et al., 2018). Food insecurity is the limited access to nutritious or variety options and lack of affordable food options, exacerbated by transportation issues, food deserts, limited income and underemployment, and high costs of living including on-campus dining options (Gaines et al., 2014). Basic needs insecurity negatively impacts students' academic and psychosocial experiences including sense of belonging and the in- and out-group dynamics between low- and middle-high socio-economic students. Students who are food insecure are at greater risk for poor academic performance due to chronic hunger and lack of a nutritious and well-balanced diet (Martinez et al., 2018). Additionally, food insecurity is related to poor mental health among college students (Martinez et al., 2018).

Housing insecurity is defined as any challenge that negatively affects an individual's housing stability, ranging from the inability to pay rent or utilities, limited access to dependable and safe housing, the need to relocate regularly, and homelessness (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017). Students who experience housing insecurity also combat related chronic stress and depression (Martinez et al., 2018). For some international students, this insecurity can be exacerbated[2] by school closures, limited access to credit and co-signer or co-guarantor for housing, ineligibility for food or housing assistance programs and federally funded aid, and limited access to private credit to defray basic costs (El Zein et al., 2018). For others, financial precarity is a result of home country currency volatility, increasing immigration costs (e.g., SEVIS, SEVP, and OPT), underemployment due to visa restrictions, political or environmental circumstances that affect their sponsorship and/or ability to travel, and tenuous funding support. Low-income international students are at greater risk of insecurity, while international graduate students are further at risk given the lack of available campus resources, such as housing (El Zein et al., 2018). Fundamentally, food and housing insecurity can impede student retention and degree completion, thus serving as critical barriers to students' access and success in higher education (El Zein et al., 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015).

Class, Identity, and Campus Experiences

Socioeconomic status influences how international students ascribe meaning to experiences and relationships (Glass, Streitwieser, & Gopal, 2019). Before low-income international students arrive on campus, they may already experience feelings of exclusion, stigma, shame, precarity, and embodied trauma. Once on campus they additionally encounter racism, discrimination, value conflicts, and micro-aggression. Some students may

[2] Beyond eligibility, we also recognize barriers to access include socio-cultural stigma and fear of accessing resources due to the politicized anti-immigration foment in the US that often depicts immigrants as ex-ploiting the country's resources.

experience a loss of social status and self- respect, as their social standing at home may not be recognized in the U.S. context (Kim, 2012). This has implications for international students' sense of belonging, willingness to engage with diverse peers, and relationships with and faculty. Basic needs insecurity has deeply deleterious effects on international students' psycho-emotional wellness, academic success, and sense of community. It can also exacerbate students' loan indebtedness by forcing students to borrow in order to afford essential supplies. This has further implications for students' goals, choice of academic program, and post-graduation plans.

Implications for Praxis

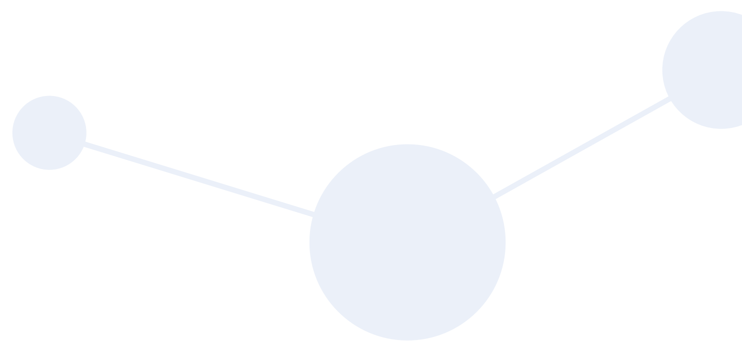
How can low-income international students and practitioners offer insights from the field to inform institutional strategies that are responsive to the socioeconomic realities of low-income international students? Better understanding of the socioeconomic identities and needs of international students has the potential to enhance students' engagement and outcomes, both in and beyond the classroom. We can begin with the urgent need for campus-wide efforts to address basic needs insecurity. Strategies and recommendations for best practices exist in three main categories: emergency support and short- and long-term strategies.

Emergency strategies address immediate basic needs but do not redress the structural and systemic barriers to food and housing access. Strategies might include emergency funding for students in need, campus food pantries, and additional meal access at campus facilities, particularly toward the end of the semester and around school breaks when students are at greater risk of food insecurity (El Zein et al., 2018; West, 2019).

Universities must also address systemic and structural barriers such as rising costs of attendance (e.g., textbooks, housing, dining plans). Campuses can partner with food assistance organizations to destigmatize and demystify access to local resources. Potential options to redress housing insecurity include subsidized and rent-controlled housing for both undergraduate and graduate students, emergency housing for students in transition, and extended housing when school is not in session. Students' and practitioners' perspectives are vital to developing inclusive solutions that address the growing chasm between college affordability, access, and security for low-income international students.

Recommendations for Future Research

Despite the growing importance of basic needs studies in the US, few studies analyze the experiences of international students, especially first-generation and low-income international students (El Zein et al., 2018; Glass, Streitwieser, & Gopal, 2019). Additionally, among the few multi-institutional studies on basic needs insecurity among college students, there is no disaggregated data available on international students (Gaines et al., 2014; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015, 2017; Martinez et al., 2018). More studies are needed to understand how in-college challenges, such as food and housing insecurity, affect students' postgraduate transition and success.



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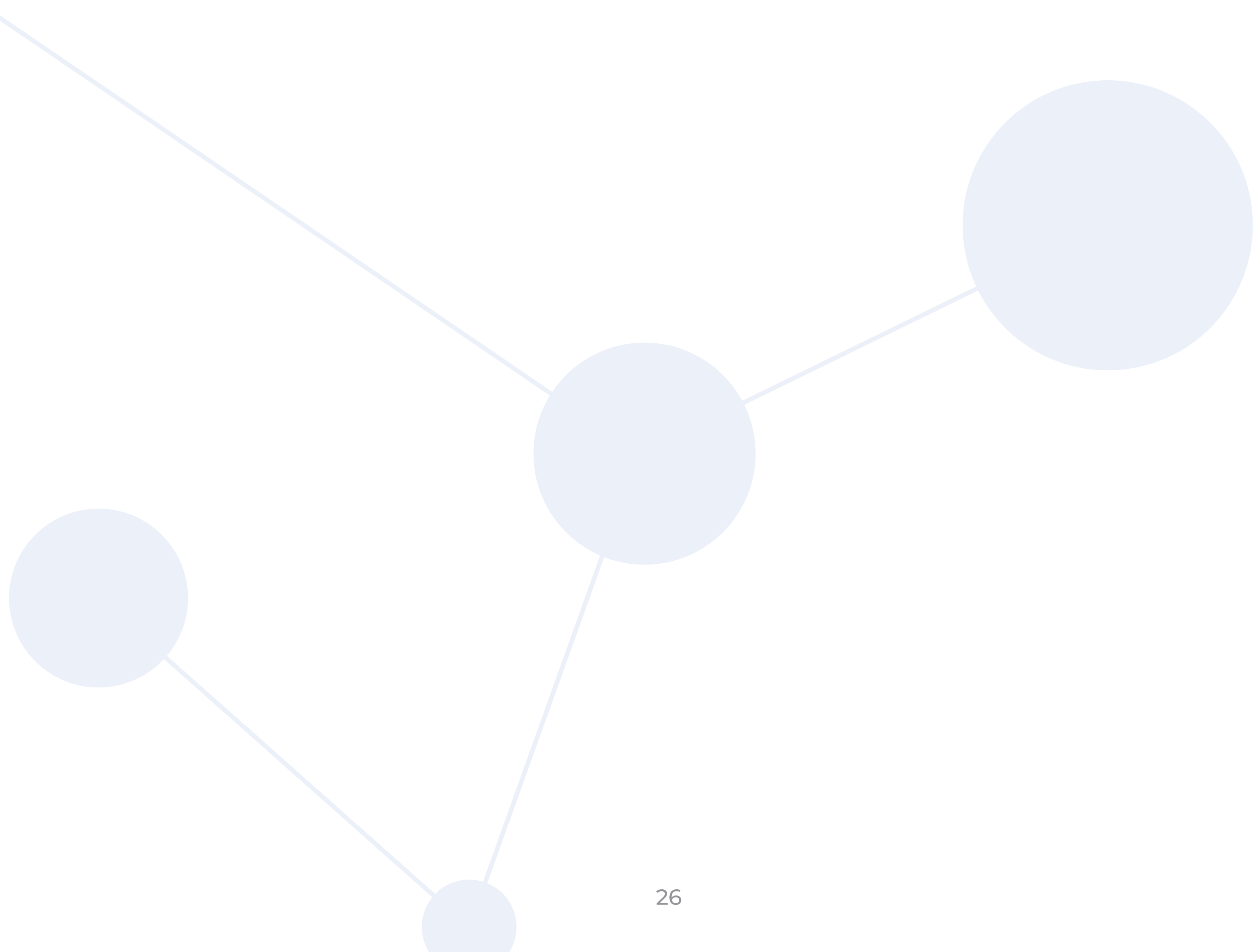

CHINESE STUDENTS AND THE USE OF ENGLISH NAMES IN U.S. ACADEMIC COMMUNITIES

ELIZABETH SIEGLE

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According to Open Doors, there were over 360,000 Chinese students studying at universities in the United States from 2018-2019 (Institute of International Education, 2019). Because many of those Chinese students use English names, it is important to understand their reasons for and the impact of using those names to discover the best ways to aid their transition to our campuses. This research examined how Chinese international students make meaning of their use of English names with respect to their self-identity and their sense of belonging in collegiate contexts.

The name-pronunciation effect suggests that "easy-to-pronounce" names (and their bearers) are judged more positively than "difficult-to-pronounce" names (Laham, Koval, & Alter, 2011). The practice of Chinese learners choosing or declining to adopt English names is related to Chinese learners' perceptions of themselves, their own culture, and their experience learning English (Edwards, 2006). By choosing an English name, which increases their memorability and, therefore, value to others, the students are reformulating a sense of themselves. The name change process may cause students to feel disoriented and culturally lost because the appropriation of a host name marginalizes their Chinese identity (Xu, 2018).

The current research examined how Chinese international students made meaning of their use of English names with respect to their self-identity. With a greater understanding of their lived experiences, U.S. academic communities can create stronger support systems to foster sense of belonging for international students.

Navigating an International Identity on College Campuses

The author conducted hour-long interviews of six Chinese undergraduate university students who reported lacking a true sense of belonging in their U.S. academic communities. For example, Patty expressed, "I feel like at school I still feel myself as an international student, even though they can't really tell, I still feel that I am not American." Rebecca shared, "I definitely do not define here as home…The sense of belonging is not that strong." With regard to sense of belonging while using their Chinese names, Lily proclaimed, "Yeah, I would feel very left out. And not many people can pronounce my Chinese name." Jack said that using a Chinese name might affect his ability to make friends because he would have to teach them how to pronounce his name. Overall, the students communicated that intentionally choosing an English name improved how others accepted them, thereby increasing their sense of belonging.

There was a difference in the students' identities that emerged based on the name they chose. Patty explained, "Sometimes when they call me Patty, I feel like I have the responsibility to act more like an Asian-American or act as an American student. So, I will dress more like American students and post Instagrams more in the American style." Lily echoed, "When I speak English, I feel like I'm always imitating someone because I'm pretending to be an English speaker." Jack viewed his English name as a symbol for "extrovert" and felt more outgoing when using it. Rebecca said her identities, when using her English or her Chinese name, are "quite a lot different." Courtney explained how her identity changes are more related to language changes than name changes, "I generally feel like my identity is very unified ... I feel that when using Chinese, when using my mother tongue, I am generally more personable and using more private languages, and I would be more creative in a more artistic sense. When I'm using English, I'm more assertive and I'm trying to be as eloquent as possible." Each student reported feeling a dual identity, depending on which name they embodied, although the expression of the two halves were unique to the individual. The theme of change based on name or language use was consistent.

The students expressed a respect for Chinese students who use Chinese names in the US, and several stated they would do the same if their Chinese names were easier to pronounce. Patty said of students who use their Chinese names, "I'm really proud of them because they're just trying to be who they are, and that is probably because their names are easier to pronounce." Commenting on her peers who use Chinese names, Lily explained, "I respect them. I think they are luckier to have names that are easier to pronounce . . . I think they maybe put more emphasis on their cultural identity . . . There are so many other Chinese elements about me other than the name." The consensus was that people could use whichever name they preferred. However, students also emphasized others "being lucky" for having an easy-to-pronounce Chinese name.

Profoundly, students asserted that their Chinese names were how they experienced their true self. Patty said about her Chinese identity, "It's not just the Patty that I show them but also who I am, who I really am." Jack said about friends who want to know his Chinese name, "I appreciate their effort to know me by me," indicating that he associated his truest self with his Chinese name. Rebecca felt less of a connection to her English name and may not recognize that people are calling out to her. The students compared using an English name to American people using nicknames and thought of their Chinese names as formal. The students continued to feel a deep association with their Chinese names and identities despite having adopted English names for social reasons.

Strategies for Supporting Inbound International Students

The study revealed several implications for international education professionals, including a greater understanding of Chinese students' name choices. The Chinese students felt more comfortable in U.S. academic communities because they were free to choose a preferred name without question by others. By increasing people's understanding of how students make meaning of their names and the names' importance to their identities, educators may be more motivated to learn how to pronounce the given names correctly.

When considering the implications, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of this study, including its relatively small sample size of six students. The research reflected only the experiences of students at liberal arts colleges that do not have as considerable Chinese student populations as some larger schools do. Because

the participants were non-native English speakers, they may not have been able to answer the interview questions as fully as they would have if using their native language. Understanding that broad generalizations should not be concluded given the small sample size and limitations, there are key takeaways from the research that inform the recommendations.

International educators should implement approaches to improve international students' sense of belonging on campus. Allowing students to indicate their preferred name in the university system will give them comfort knowing their name of choice is accepted. It is also crucial to ask students their preferred name when first meeting them and to later remember the name and its correct pronunciation to affirm the students' name choices. The international office could offer a "cross-cultural interactions" workshop for staff, faculty, and students. Basic name pronunciation should be embedded in this workshop as a part of campus trainings for student orientation leaders, residence life staff, student facing administrators, and faculty professional development. Knowing that their school is prioritizing student identities in such a way can contribute toward an increased sense of belonging for international students in campus communities.

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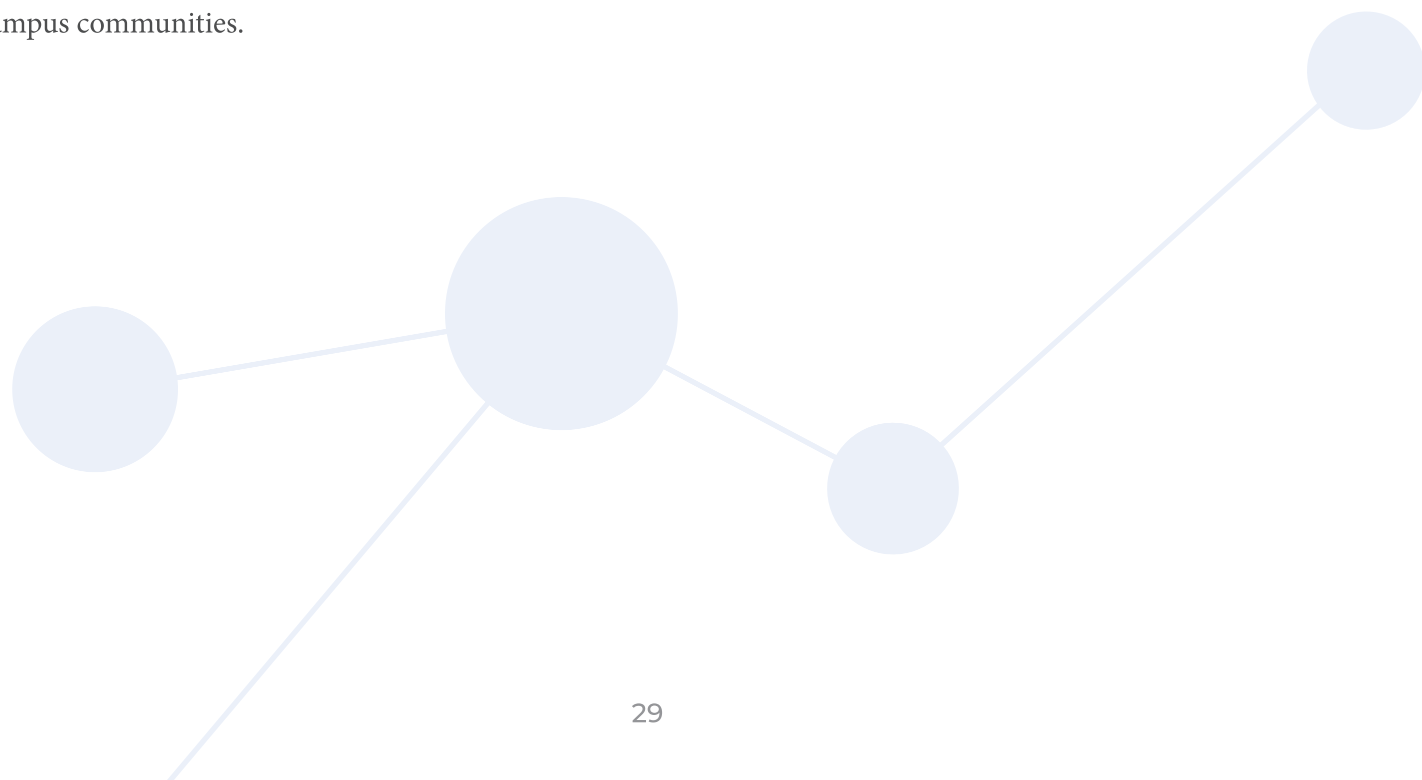

MEANINGFUL IDENTITY CONVERSATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS THROUGH WORKSHOPS, ORIENTATION, AND STUDENT LEADER TRAININGS

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Despite the diversity of international students in the US, there are minimal formal conversations about identity, diversity, and inclusion for international students on college campuses.

An International Graduate Student's Experiences About Diversity

As an international student who came to America four years ago from China, there have been some challenges for me to navigate between my identity in China and in the US. I have struggled with language as a non-native speaker of English and have felt marginalized due to my language and my minority status. Coming from a racially homogenous society in China, diversity is rarely discussed. I only knew that diversity means people of different races, but I learned inappropriate terms for people through American movies. As a learner of English as a second language, I remember giving a presentation in which I used stereotypes about certain racial groups that I had learned through movies. The instructor stopped me in that moment and explained to me why the stereotypes I was using were biased. Therefore, as an international student, I wish I could have had knowledge of diversity and inclusion issues before starting my classes in America. Since coming to the US, I am now a graduate student working with international students. In a previous institution where I worked, I observed a student leader training for international students. During that training, the facilitator provided knowledge about identity and diversity and inclusion. Also, there were several activities at the end of the session to help student leaders to engage and understand their identity deeply, thereby gaining identity and diversity knowledge, which they could share in turn with incoming students at orientation. In conversations with students who were in this diversity training, they mentioned that this training helped them with conflict resolution skills, provided them with appropriate language for discussing diversity in their personal and professional life, and assisted them in forming friendships with students of various identities. In addition, as mentioned by George Mwangi (2016), the students in the training noted more freedom to ask questions and share personal experiences of marginalization than if the training was with domestic students due to the sensitivity of the subject.

Future Implications: Diversity Trainings Through Orientations and Workshops

In the future, this diversity training for student leaders could be expanded to be a beneficial formal diversity training during international student orientation before classes begin at a university. Another potential is to create educational programming workshops to be delivered to

international students. These academic workshops can include information about positionality, identity, and diversity in the US. They can also detail the history of the US as it pertains to diversity and inclusion and provide appropriate language when discussing diversity. By delivering formal workshops, international students can understand diversity and inclusion without the stereotypes that may be present in media outlets or in lived experiences. After a formal informational section, the workshops can then be opened up for questions, thus providing a safe space for these students to ask questions or express doubts without the pressure of being surrounded by domestic students or a faculty member. International students can also present personal concerns that they may encounter, such as micro-aggressions, and the speaker can provide ways for the student to navigate these situations or resources on campus to assist them. For instance, a common micro-aggression is a faculty member may ask a student in class to speak on behalf of all citizens from their home country; therefore, the workshop speaker could present ways for the student to respond that emphasizes that one person does not represent all lived experiences of citizens from a certain country. Another example of an addressed micro-aggression might be how to respond to and educate classmates that group identities together such as merging all Asian identities. Therefore, given the confidentiality of the workshops, they can create a safe space to share instances of micro-aggressions and provide ways for international students to advocate for themselves.

Overall, trainings are useful for incoming international students to learn about their own identity as well as diversity and inclusion. In my own experience as an international graduate student, I took a course devoted to diversity and identity. Through this course and the training it provided, I now understand my positionality and the aspects of my identity that are both privileged and marginalized. This has impacted how I advocate for myself when marginalized in the workplace or in my personal life and has deepened my understanding of the US. I hope this same diversity training can be extended to other international students in the future, particularly at the beginning of their academic programs in the US.

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SUPPORTING BLACK INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT HISTORICALLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS

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The American Council on Education report *Creating Global Citizens: Challenges and Opportunities for Internationalization at HBCUs* (Davis, 2014) includes the guiding question: "How are international students integrated into campus life?" This essay looks at how HBCUs/HBIs can integrate and acclimate "Black" international students from the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa (CSSA) by fully engaging their voices and identifying their acculturation needs. The issues HBIs face consist of a lack of acknowledgement and understanding of "Black" international students' diversity by faculty and staff and the transitional shock that "Black" international students experience on campus. Higher education professionals working with CSSA students need to think more deeply and critically of our role in supporting these during their sojourn in the US Drawing from the literature, the authors present practices to engage with, include, and support CSSA students on U.S. campuses.

As the number of "Black" international students at HBIs increases, staff in student affairs, international student offices, counseling centers, etc. need to look at their acculturation needs. Unlike other international students who are more visibly different from the African American students at HBIs, "Black" international students (students from CSSA) represent an invisible minority or a "Black within Black" student population (George Mwangi & Fries-Britt, 2015, hereafter [GMFB]).

Two key issues affecting the acculturation of black international students are: (1) lack of identification and recognition of who "Black" international students at HBIs are (George Mwangi, 2016; GMFB, 2015; Onyenekwu, 2017); and (2) the transition shock and sense of identity that "Black" international students experience (Boafo-Arthur, 2013; George Mwangi, 2016; GMFB, 2015).

The most surprising item impacting how HBIs work with and assist "Black" international students is the lack of awareness of this sub-group. Using George Mwangi and Fries-Britt's (2015) research label of "Black within Black" to identify black international students underscores campuses' need to be intentional about learning the diversity of "Black" students (see also Onyenekwu, 2017; Scruggs, 2011). Schools need to connect with and provide services for their "Black within Black" population. "Black" international students expect more of a welcoming environment at an HBI but do not always feel welcomed by students, faculty,

and staff, leading George Mwangi and Fries-Britt (2015) and Onyenekwu (2017) to recommend that faculty and staff become educated on this aspect of diversity: “Black within Black” students do not experience their education or share the same concerns and challenges as other students at the same institution.

Another issue that affects acculturation is transition shock. Bennett (1998) defines transition shock as “a state of loss and disorientation precipitated by a change in one’s familiar environment that requires adjustment” (p. 216). “Black” international students find themselves navigating the HBI campus that should be familiar but is not, while outside the HBI campus “Black” international students must come to terms with the feelings associated with changing from being in a majority population in their home country to being a minority in the US.

George Mwangi explores “Black” international students’ sense of belonging further as it relates to identity formation. In her study, many of the interviewees expound on this sudden realization that they are now a minority or assigned minority status in the US. The “Black” international students self-identify, in order, in terms of nationality, status as an international student (foreigner), and then as “Black” (George Mwangi, 2016). “Black” international students face racial discrimination from non-Black domestic students and other non-“Black” international students as well (Boafo-Arthur, 2013). This ascribed minority status and the resulting discrimination do not match with “Black” international students’ own self-identification (Boafo-Arthur, 2013; George Mwangi, 2016).

Recommendations for HBIs

Dipeolu, Kang, and Cooper (2007) state that unconventional, innovative methods are useful in attracting international students to counseling, specifically when “tailored to [a] diverse student population” (p. 66). In their study of support groups, these authors found that such groups can promote the development of a broader social support system, which can in turn provide a critical buffer against adjustment stress. Support groups foster information sharing among CSSA students regarding problem solving and the availability of campus and community resources. Support groups are also positively associated because they present advantages over individual counseling: Groups can instill hope, modify feelings of being alone, impart information, assist students in feeling needed and useful, help them to develop socializing techniques, promote interpersonal learning, and provide a sense of community and group. We recommend that counseling centers create sub-groups specific to “Black” international students to remedy acculturation issues that CSSA students may be reluctant to discuss in front of others.

When international students are not able to achieve a sense of belonging in their campus environment, outcomes can include anxiety, hostility, lowered self-esteem, social withdrawal, and depression (George Mwangi, 2016). Thus, it can be important to connect with a cultural or religious organization in the local community that is not campus affiliated. Outreach programming, when offered to international students, can help them manage the many issues that they face, such as language and cultural barriers associated with academic and social adjustment, and the emotional toll often linked with the processes of acculturation (Nilsson, Berkel, & Flores, 2004). Student affairs and international student services

offices can help facilitate these connections (Ting & Morse, 2016).

Student government associations (SGAs) and graduate student associations (GSAs) can bridge the gap between "Black" international and African-American students at HBIs (Ting & Morse, 2016). Student affairs and ISSS can assist SGAs and GSAs in facilitating and "encouraging collaborations between "Black" diaspora student organizations . . . on events that can create greater dialogue and learning from each other" (George Mwangi, 2016, p. 1032). Scruggs (2011) writes about the necessity to cross or joint sponsor programs because students are not typically part of more than one "Black" diaspora group. George Mwangi (2016) likewise notes that international students can adjust more positively if they have social networks, especially those comprising relationships with other international students (unicultural or multicultural networks) as well as with native students, staff, and faculty (bicultural networks). When cultural activities are created, organizers should consider reframing those activities to reflect and integrate a global or diasporic perspective which is inclusive of "Black" international students (George Mwangi, 2016).

"How are international students integrated into campus life?" (Davis, 2014). The emergent issues identified at HBIs will need higher education professionals to implement suggestions provided based on the literature, such as collaboration among university offices and staff to support "Black" international students (Boafo-Arthur, 2013). HBI administrators need professional development tailored to understanding CSSA students and navigating the administrative maze of collaborating on programs (Onyenekwu, 2017). Based on the limited research and current lack of programing for CSSA students on many campuses, additional research and identification of best and promising practices is needed.

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