Western Kentucky University
TopSCHOLAR®

Counseling Concepts and Applications for Student Affairs Professionals (CNS 577)

Counseling and Student Affairs

Fall 2011

Succeeding in the U.S. as an International Student [brochure]

Jessica Bledsoe
Western Kentucky University, jessica.sanspree@topper.wku.edu

Kelly Almousily
Western Kentucky University, kelly.almousily@topper.wku.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/cns_apps

 Part of the Student Counseling and Personnel Services Commons

Recommended Citation

Bledsoe, Jessica and Almousily, Kelly, "Succeeding in the U.S. as an International Student [brochure]" (2011). *Counseling Concepts and Applications for Student Affairs Professionals (CNS 577)*. Paper 15.
http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/cns_apps/15

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Counseling Concepts and Applications for Student Affairs Professionals (CNS 577) by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.

Succeeding in the U.S. as an International Student

Kelly Almousily

Jessica Bledsoe

Western Kentucky University

Graduate Course CNS577

Succeeding in the U.S. as an International Student

Some Facts about International Students

- Evidence supports that demands for cultural adjustments frequently place international students at greater risk for various psychological problems than students in general (Sakurako, 2000).
- International students who socialized with Americans the most functioned more comfortably in the American culture, socialized with students from other countries, and participated in campus cultural events (Trice, 2004).

Things to Do Once You Arrive

- Find the International Student Office and meet your advisor
- Get your university photo ID card to access to your dorm room and meal plan
- Login to your university email account to access important information
- Set up a local bank account
- Get a cell phone to keep in touch with family and friends, or for emergencies
- Locate the student center or student union, where you will find many things you may need
- Learn where the bus stops are around your college campus
- Get involved in your campus community through student organizations and intramurals
- Get to know your universities resources

Common Stages of Adapting to a New Culture

Honeymoon stage
- Everything feels exciting & new
- You feel energetic and enthusiastic

Culture shock stage
- You realize the difference between your home culture and the new culture
- Shock increases with language barriers and/or experiences in new culture
- You may feel confusion, anxiety, homesickness and/or anger

Recovery stage
- The stress of culture shock begins to wear off
- You start learning more about the new culture
- You may feel both the 'honeymoon' and 'culture shock' stages

Adaptation stage
- You begin to understand & appreciate the new culture
- Accepting the differences and similarities, things you like & dislike within both cultures

The Challenges of Coming to a New Culture

The process of adapting to a new culture can be challenging, especially when the difference between the two cultures is great. Some common examples you might experience are:

Change: Any type of change can be stressful because it is often unfamiliar. Coming to a new country for school is certainly a big change in your life.

Loss: Entering a new culture can create feelings of loss; loss of contact with family and friends; loss of familiar places, foods, environment, etc.

Values: The differences in values between the U.S. culture and one's home culture can be challenging. These can include moral, social, political, educational, and work-related value differences.

Host country receptivity: The way people in the U.S. treat international students also affects the adaptation process. If one encounters people who express discrimination and prejudice, and who expect everyone to conform to the U.S. way of life, adaptation can be more difficult.

Signs of Cultural Stress

It is natural for someone living in a different culture to feel sad and even lonely sometimes. You will probably miss your home culture, friends, family and routine. Sometimes, however, the stress of adapting may reach a level that requires special attention. If your stress becomes too overwhelming, you should ask your International Student Advisor for help. Some common signs of being overwhelmed by stress can include:

- feeling homesick most or all of the time
- feeling lonely much of the time
- feeling sad or anxious much of the time
- crying more than usual, often for no particular reason
- experiencing a change in sleeping habits
- experiencing a change in appetite
- feeling irritable a lot of the time
- having many minor illnesses, such as colds, headaches, or stomach pains
- having difficulty concentrating

Tips for Academic Success

- Meet and get to know your professors.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Familiarize yourself with your academic spaces, including your libraries, tutoring centers, computer labs, and study areas.
- Ask your library staff to give you a tour of your university library.
- Use academic spaces while studying or when working on class work in order to eliminate any distractions.
- Use tutoring centers to practice your English-speaking and comprehensive skills.

Resources

- educationusa.state.gov
- internationalstudent.com
- internationalstudentguidetotheusa.com
- Social Customs and Cultural Differences
  - www.edupass.org/culture
- Health Insurance
  - www.isoa.org
- Communication
  - skype.com
  - google.com/voice

References

Lipson, C. (2008). *Succeeding as an international student in the United States and Canada*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sakurako, M. (2000). Addressing the mental health concerns of international students. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 78*(2), 137-144.

Trice, A. G. (2004). Mixing it up: International graduate student's social interactions with American students. *Journal of College Student Development, 45*(6), 671-687.

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Counseling Center. (2007). *Cross Cultural Journey for International Students*