

Office of Academic Advising NEWSLETTER

November 2022



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Understanding Culture Shock in International Students

Thanksgiving

Freedom Wall

Share what you're grateful for this Thanksgiving with the Messiah Community. Click [here](#) then click the plus sign on the right side bottom to leave an anonymous message! No need to sign up or log in.



Upcoming Important dates

- October 31-November 4:** Advising Week
- November 7:** Start of Registration for Seniors
- November 9:** Start of Registration for Juniors
- November 11:** Start of Registration for Sophomores
- November 15:** Start of Registration for First Years
- November 23-27:** Thanksgiving Recess
- December 9:** Last Day of Classes for Fall Semester
- January 9:** First Day of Classes for Spring Semester

'Understanding Culture Shock in International Students' gives insight into the factors affecting culture shock, the different stages of cultural adjustment for international students, and the role advisors have in assisting these students through each stage. Author Brandie Yale from the University of Houston notes that all international students go through culture shock at varying degrees. Even seemingly mild cultural differences have the potential to overwhelm international students and with the attempt to blend in, they may hide their discomfort which leads to further confusion. To alleviate and mitigate culture shock and support student success, it is important for advisors to be aware of the factors and stages of adjustment so they may identify intervention points and strategies in assisting international students through their process of adapting to a new cultural environment.

The article notes "cultural distance" and "personality traits" as the two main areas that affect individual experiences of culture shock. The gap between a student's home culture and the host country or the "cultural distance" can influence their social interactions. The greater the gap the more likely will these students have difficulty interacting with their peers. Meanwhile, research by McAbee and Ayman (2016) showed that extroversion and conscientiousness are personality traits that help individuals adjust more easily to new cultures.

The next section of the article outlines the Stages of Cultural Adjustment. The first one is The Honeymoon Stage characterized by excitement as individuals explore new cultures but at the same time students may neglect studies during this stage, so it is important for advisors to guide them by preparing them for the next stages of adjustment and by creating opportunities for them to learn social rules of the host country. The next phase is The Culture Shock Stage characterized by irritation and frustration as students begin to experience wider "cultural distance". Advisors may have a hard time recognizing this stage due to cultural differences in communication and emotional expression. Advisors may need to direct these students to international student services or counseling resources. The next phase is The Gradual Adjustment Stage where students begin to learn and gain a deeper respect for the culture of the host country. It is also at this stage that students start learning coping strategies for stress and loneliness. Listening and empathizing with students are some of the things Advisors can do to help students through this stage. Lastly, The Adaption Stage is characterized by acceptance and adaptation. In this stage, students are no longer negatively affected by the "cultural distance", they have fully settled in and in turn can act as ambassadors to new international students coming in that are still in the early stages of cultural adjustment.

Yale (2017) ends by saying that "Learning to recognize the stages of culture shock will help advisors assist students moving through the process of adapting to their new environment."

For more information click [here](#) to check the full article.



International students make up only 5% of total higher education enrollment in the U.S. At the undergraduate level they make up only about 3% of enrollment, and at the graduate level their proportion is higher at 12%.



Office of Academic Advising

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Important Updates

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Verse of the Month

Philippians 4:4-7

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

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