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ROLES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISORS: LITERATURE AND PRACTICE IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

International student advisors are responsible for a myriad of functions ranging from student arrival services, orientation to the academic norms, communicating cultural information and academic expectations, to ensuring that international students are familiar with the pertinent institutional and governmental policies. This paper provides a systematically conducted literature review in the field of international student advising regarding shifting roles of advisors, issues and challenges in the profession, needs of international students, and recommendations for those in the profession.

INTRODUCTION

International student advisors are vital to the overall welfare of international students at institutions of American higher education. International student advisors provide information, programing, and services to students and scholars who come to study or work in the United States. International student advisors work not only with the diverse group of individuals called “foreign” or “international students,” but also with American students, faculty, and staff, with citizens of the local community, with officials of U.S. and foreign government agencies, and with a variety of agencies that sponsor foreign students and scholars both within and outside the U.S. (International student advising, 2011). These roles and the definition of international student advisor have not changed much since the early 1970s:

Foreign student advisor is a person officially designated or appointed ... for advising foreign students and for coordinating special series offered foreign students. The

actual title for the advisor may vary; i.e. foreign student counselor, Dean of Foreign students. ...In some institutions the advisor may work alone while in other others he [she] may have a professional staff. All of the professional staff of an Office of Foreign Student Affairs may be considered foreign student advisors since this allows for inter-university comparison (Williams, 1974, p. 14).

The diverse backgrounds of students demand that international student advisors be responsible for a myriad of functions ranging from student arrival services and orientation to the academic norms, to ensuring that international students are familiar with the pertinent institutional and governmental policies in colleges and universities. Advisors help acclimate international students to the new culture in the new land. Language difficulties of international students, housing, culture shock, and familiarity with teaching methods are some urgent issues that the foreign student advisors must mitigate at colleges and universities (Austell, 2013; Bu, 2003; Curtin, Stewart, Ostrove, & Joan 2013; Davis, 2011).

International student advisors are administrative leaders in what are often called the “Offices of International Programs” at universities. To better understand and address the needs and issues of international students related to housing, immigration, admission, meal plans, or traveling in and out of the country, advisors are required to have cross-cultural knowledge. Advisors who have culture-specific knowledge, intercultural sensitivity, and communication skills create an easy, friendly, and productive work environment (Davis, 2011).

The international student population rose from 547,867 in 2000 to 819,644 in 2013 (Open Doors, 2013). The growth was primarily driven by a 30.1% increase in Chinese student enrollment in the United States, making China the leading sending country in 2013. In the context of the significantly growing number of international students and scholars in the U.S., the roles and responsibilities of international student advisors are changing to meet the needs and goals of students, scholars, and faculty in the university. This paper highlights major literature in the field of foreign student advising, focusing on the shifting roles of advisors, the issues and challenges in the professions, and the dynamic needs and natures of international students.

The guiding questions for this project include: What are the recent developments and the current responsibilities of international student advisors? What are the skills and qualifications required for international student advisors? What are the gaps between the issues foreign students are facing and the roles of student advisors in U.S. colleges and universities? What professional networks are available for the international student advisors?

METHOD

Search engines such as Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), Google Scholar, Journal Storage (JSTOR), ProQuest, and Education Research Information Center (ERIC) were used to retrieve articles and dissertations related to international student advising. The researcher did not limit the search time frame because professional

research in the field of international students is limited. The major search keywords or phrases were “international student advisor,” “international student advising,” “international student office,” and “foreign student” for full texts and abstracts.

Information inclusion criteria for this study were: (a) a study directly related to international student advising, (b) a document highly related to international student administrators, offices, and services. Articles related to international students in other disciplines such as teaching and learning, culture, language, adaptation, and so on were excluded. The entire search displayed 384 articles (including reports and dissertations) related to international students and their advisors dated from 1960 to 2014. In closer examination, there were only two books (e.g. Davis, 2011; Young, 2013), five research articles (e.g. Austell, 2013; Davis, 1961; Katz, 2011; Rosser, et al., 2007; Wood & Kia, 2000), and nine doctoral dissertations (e.g. Boyd, 2008; Bratichko, 2009; Chow, 1963; Clark, 2002; Collamer, 1974; Di Maria, 2012; Frazier, 2004; Sparaco, 2012; Williams, 1974) that particularly focused on international student advising.

Articles related to international students are found in the following higher education journals: *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *Journal of International Students*, *Journal of International Higher Education*, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *International Education Journal-Comparative Perspectives*, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, and *TESOL Quarterly*; however, no articles from international student advisors’ perspectives were discovered. In addition, the scope of these publications is much broader than just international student affairs (Wood, 2000). Open Doors, an annual publication of the Institute of International Education (IIE) on demographic data and trends, is a useful resource on international students, but it does not present data on advising.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Question 1. What are the recent developments and current responsibilities of international student advisors?

Development of International Student Advisor as a Profession

The first documented “Advisor to Foreign Students” was appointed at Oberlin College in 1910 (Wheeler, King, & Davidson, 1925; Davis, 2011). In early days, faculty members were advisors of international students in all colleges; that changed after the mid-1970s to meet the specific needs of international students (Bu, 2003). Receiving the Carnegie Foundation Grant, the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA: Association of International Educators) was established in 1948 with 250 members. Today NAFSA has more than 10,000 members from many institutions of higher education in the U.S. (NAFSA, 2011).

The call for international student counselors began in 1925 (Chow, 1963; Collamer, 1974; Davis, 2011). Institutional hiring preferences of international student advisors have changed from hiring an individual who merely has the desire to help and

knowledge of intercultural sensitivity, to a person with a background in counseling or formal training in intercultural communication (Katz, 2011). Colleges often prefer to hire young, enthusiastic, bilingual individuals as international student advisors. Some have taught English as a foreign language overseas, some have participated in study-abroad programs; some are former Peace Corps volunteers, while others were international students who chose to remain in the United States. Today, an effective advisor is required to have a constellation of skills. Interestingly, the field is predominantly made up of Caucasians and women (Davis, 2011).

In the early 1970s and 1980s, faculty most often handled advising international students. The majority of advisors in the 1990s were faculty holding doctoral degrees. Prior to World War II, international students did not come in great numbers to study in the United States (Miller, 1973). No unique demographic and academic requirements exist in this profession. In the early 60s and before, international student advisors were mostly males. According to Frazier's study (2004), this trend has changed with two-thirds of foreign student advisors being females. In Davis' study (2011), 82.3% of 300 international student advisors were females. From the early days, the majority of the advisors were white. Frazier (2004) found that 82 percent of participants reported themselves as white, less than three percent African American or Latino/a, and less than five percent Asian Americans. In his study, Davis (2011) reported that 86 percent were of European descent.

In recent decades, the role of advisors involved mostly dealing with student immigration issues such as visa regulations, on- and off-campus employment, and government-reporting for close monitoring of student activities and progress (Wood & Kia, 2000; Young, 2013). In the U.S., NAFSA is currently the only professional network of international student advisors, with Study Abroad and Foreign Student Advisers (SAFSA) of the European Association for International Education in Europe. NAFSA has been offering training for advisors to "develop skills to help them interpret the common requests F-1 (student visa category) students during the course of their program, research the regulations and other concerns such as issuing I-20s (admission document), maintaining status, employment, practical training, travel and reentry, and program extensions (International Student Advising, 2011).

Foreign student advising has been considered a part of student affairs in many institutions of higher learning. Along with international student advising, colleges and universities have started to include several international scholar exchange programs, study-abroad programs, and international student programs under academic or student affairs, depending on the number of international students, faculty, and scholars.

Recent research on international student needs highlights the issues and brings a significant change in shaping the roles and responsibility of foreign student advisors. Major issues international students have experienced in colleges are language anxiety, culture shock, initial adaptation, psychological changes, and academic issues (Austell, 2013; Bista, 2011; Cutin et al., 2013; Han, Han, Luo, Jacobs, & Jean-Baptiste, 2013).

Shifting Roles of International Student Advisors

Administrative staff members at international programs address diverse issues and concerns of international students, faculty, and study-abroad students. The advisors are integral to the university's internationalization efforts without clear and consistent structure to this profession (Sparaco, 2012). Services and resources for international students are not consistent. The role of the international student advisor as defined by the university or college is not uniform in the U.S. (Davis, 2011). For instance, depending on the number of international students on campus, advisors are expected to handle various tasks and responsibilities, such as immigration documentation (I-20s and visa update), orientation, housing, and course advising. In a qualitative study, students were asked to define the roles of advisors on their campuses (Clark, 2002). From the student perspectives, Clark's study (2002) summarized the roles of the international student advisor as "a facilitator for international student activities; an advisor on immigration issues; an advocate for various personal needs; an academic advisor; and as a staff member" (p.87). Student participants in the study shared the view that they like to have their advisors involved in the student-run social and cultural programs. Students also expressed their interests in receiving help from advisors and staff in the international programs when new students come from their home countries each semester (Clark, 2002). However, the majority of student participants viewed the role of the advisor as counseling students on immigration issues, including visa renewal, traveling, I-20s, and on-campus employment regulations (Clark, 2002). Students also viewed the role of the international advisor as assisting students in their personal needs and problems no matter if they are on- or off-campus students (Clark, 2002).

Sparaco (2012) has mentioned that international students do not receive enough support from their advisor and staff members of international offices at the hour of need. For instance, mostly off-campus international students are deprived of immediate help from the Office of International Programs when they are sick, face threats, or are in an emergency. Institutionally, advisors may not be obligated to serve off-campus international students. The advisors of international students are required to direct their attention for international students towards the available support services of the campus.

The role of international student advisors is no longer limited to advising students and assisting them in adjustment and academic problems. The consequences of the unexpected events (such the 1993 truck-bombing on the World Trade Center in New York, and the 9/11 attack in 2001) shifted the roles of advisors into new directions. As a result of these events, a centralized database was developed for foreign student enrollment, biographical record, and visa information (Malkin, 2002), which is known as the student exchange visitor information system (SEVIS). Consequently, the role of advisors has shifted from student advocate to government enforcer (Rosser et al., 2007; Sparaco, 2013). Today, the role of international student advisor is no longer limited to cultural adjustment and immigration rules, but the advisor has

become responsible for:

an ever-increasing set of bureaucratic...regulations of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), regulations of other federal and state entities such as the U.S. Department of State, Internal Revenue Service, Social Security Administration, and the various registries of motor vehicles. (Davis, 2011, p. 12)

Issues and Challenges in the Professions

Studies show that the international student advisors perceived an overload in their professions because of new immigration changes and an increasing number of crimes related to international students (Boyd, 2008; Bratichko, 2009, Davis, 2011). SEVIS is the common platform in which advisors update activities of individual students. Bratichko's study (2009) found that the implementation of SEVIS "shifted ISO [International Student Offices] functions away from personal interactions with international students and attention to their cultural adjustment, and toward data monitoring and government reporting" (p. 98). An increased overall workload and increased levels of stress and anxiety were among negative social impacts of SEVIS. On the positive side, SEVIS resulted in increased participation of the ISOs in the process of institutional decision making on their respective campuses (Bartichko, 2009).

Although the university campuses perceive international students as a potential financial resource, administrators often undervalue the roles of advisors on campus. Sparaco (2012) found in her study that "The professionals in the study spoke at length about their frustrations at feeling disenfranchised, overworked, underpaid, and even invisible in a profession that has historically lacked shape and continuity within U.S. higher education" (p. 76). In many colleges, the office of international students is isolated from the larger institutional mission (Sparaco, 2012) excluding other student services such as counselling, international education or study abroad.

In addition to technical and administrative issues, research has indicated low job satisfaction of the international student advisors in the United States (Frazier, 2004; Sparaco, 2012). Many advisors leave their jobs because of shifting roles, technical changes, resistance to change, lack of policy level authority, and no roles in decision making (Rosser et. al, 2007). Davis (2011) found that 75.7 percent of 300 advisors reported "their duties went beyond foreign student advising" (p. 84). Other responsibilities of those full-time advisors were related to student affairs, admissions, recruitment, study abroad, English as a second language teaching, or administration (Davis, 2011).

Question 2: What are the skills and qualifications required for international student advisors? What resources do they need in their advising offices?

Skills and Qualifications of International Student Advisors

Many advisors hold a bachelor or a master's degree (Frazier, 2004). Studies indicated that a good advisor is expected to have a desire to help students, counseling

skills, formal knowledge of cultural differences, and knowledge about federal and state regulations related to international students (Davis, 2011; Wood & Kia, 2000; Sparaco, 2012).

In addition to a college degree, an emphasis on cross-cultural understanding of international students is valued. Studies have focused on intercultural sensitivity, intercultural competence, and global competence as required skills among advisors of international students (Davis, 2011; Young, 2013). Byram (1997) defines intercultural competence as an:

ability to see relationships between different cultures—both international and external to a society—and to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or for other people. ...It also encompasses the ability to critically or analytically understand that one's own—and other cultures'—perspective is culturally determined rather than natural. (p. 89)

Davis (2011) found that ethnocentrism (tendency to judge another culture by the values and standards of one's own culture) was the dominant paradigm of international student advisors. Davis (2011) also found that intercultural sensitivity was “most significantly associated with political orientation, longevity in foreign student advising, study of intercultural relations, educational attainment, and support for gay marriage” (p. 155). Fahim (2002) mentioned that knowledge of another culture, people, language, religion, and other bi-cultural characteristics helps advisors form a positive worldview and foster a rich cross-cultural experience. Advisors may assume cultural stereotypes of behavior and norms of particular cultures or social groups and may ignore some values and views by being unfamiliar in student backgrounds (Fahim, 2002; Schaetti, Ramsey, & Watanabe, 2009).

Office of International Student Advising

The mission of the Office of the International Students and Services is to provide the highest-quality services to international students. This can be achieved through university websites by posting plenty of information related to housing, immigration, admission, on- and off-campus employment, and academic culture. By taking this step, advisors of international students reduce their workload while simultaneously helping students access information quickly and effectively (Bista & Foster, 2011). The following are selected colleges and universities with resourceful information available on their websites. These colleges have listed basic information to deal with the related issues and concerns of international students.

- a) International Student Advising at Manhattan College, New York: http://www.mancol.edu/student_life/isa/
- b) International Student Advising at Austin College, Texas: <http://www.austincollege.edu/academics/international-programs/international-student-advising/>
- c) Directorate of International Student Advising (DISA) at the Penn State University: <http://global.psu.edu/DISA/>

d) International Student Advising at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore: <http://www.umes.edu/intl/>

e) International Student Services, Texas A&M University: <http://international.tamu.edu/iss/aboutiss/aboutiss.asp>

f) International Programs at California State University, Northridge: <http://www.csun.edu/international/about/staff.htm>

Question 3: What are the gaps between the issues that the foreign students are facing and the roles of student advisors in U.S. colleges and universities?

The Gaps: Problems and Issues Related to International Students

International programs is the only department that ensures the well-being of international student experiences by offering information and resources related to college orientation, housing, transportation, and other academic resources. As administrative leaders, international student advisors can build a good rapport with other academic units, administrative staff, faculty, and students. With the increasing international student enrollment on campuses, advisors are required to prepare more resources to address the needs and issues of international students in the U.S. The gaps between the issues international students are facing and the roles of student advisors are explained in the following categories.

Knowing International Students. Issues and challenges related to international students and their education are not a new phenomenon. Mostly faculty, staff, and American students do not acknowledge the fundamental differences between international students and local students (U.S. students) in terms of academic course requirements, visa restrictions, employment, and other privileges (Bista & Foster, 2011). International students must maintain full-time student status (they cannot drop out of school or reduce the required work load); their employment is limited to part-time work and so on. International students are individuals with their own culturally conditioned beliefs, perceptions, expectations, and understanding, which influence their living and learning in the U.S. (International student advising, 2011). Young (2013, p. 5) acknowledges that “international students are students like any others..., but they have some special concerns” related to immigration, adjustment, American culture, and services from the institutions they attend.

Limited Advising for Diverse Students. Advising international students may be different from advising domestic students because they come from different academic backgrounds and may have different experiences linguistically, culturally, and academically in American colleges and universities. In addition, international students undergo a series of challenges related to adjustment, language, immigration rules, and academic behaviors because of their cross-cultural differences (Austell, 2013; Bista & Foster, 2011; Curtin et. al, 2013). Although colleges have worked hard to improve existing support systems for international students, these systems of sup-

port are not enough to address the actual needs of international students.

Academic Concerns. Many international students do not clearly understand American college culture and faculty expectations (Bista, 2011; Bista, 2012). They mostly rely on their homeland systems in making academic decisions, which led them to experience stress and hardship (Clark, 2002; Bista & Foster, 2011). New students always ask questions such as “How many credits should I enroll in? What kind of classes should I take?” The first year of arrival is a learning experience regarding all facets of college life for international students. Advisors and support staff may consider this issue and create ways to communicate information before students arrive in the U.S. (Clark, 2002).

Han (2010) investigated immigration patterns of international students and the influence of American higher-education experiences on their attitudes and views. His study suggested that if advisors and support members of international students do not pay close attention in offering support on the U.S. immigration policies, quality of higher education, English language, and other issues, there would be little positive change in the lives of international students.

Isolation and Discrimination Problems. A significant social interaction between domestic and international students on campus is essential for a positive college experience. Due to language barriers, many international students feel isolated, alienated, and discriminated against (Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2013). Many American students cannot adjust or appreciate international students’ life styles because of language barriers and other cultural ties (Clark, 2002; Fass-Holmes & Vaughn, 2014).

Schreiber’s (2011) study revealed that domestic students perceive international students as unapproachable when they are together in large groups of co-nationals because of the language barrier. Most of the contact the domestic students had with international students occurred in class or in an on-campus job, rather than in a social setting. Therefore, international student advisors may create programs that bridge this gap by offering opportunities for social, cultural, and academic integration for both domestic and international students.

Language Problems. The most significantly researched area on international student affairs is academic language skills—especially speaking and writing. Students with good verbal and written communication feel more comfortable in their daily lives, and feel more motivated in class participation and other college activities. Studies have shown that those with higher skills in English are better in their adjustment to the academic environment (Bista, 2012; Fass-Holmes & Vaughn, 2014; Ya-Hui, 2011). Difficulties in communication have been associated with different accents, slang, idioms, and use of core academic vocabulary (Bista, 2011; Ya-Hui, 2011). Fass-Holmes and Vaughn (2014) acknowledge a stark need for programs and services (orientations, academic and immigration advising, one-to-one English tutor-

ing, social and cultural events) to address linguistic and academic issues of international students. They report that “as more international undergraduates attend any American university, the number who struggle academically likely will increase,” (p. 70) because of multiple issues related to their adjustment and academic progress.

The role of advisors is to work closely with international programs such as the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, and mitigate language-related problems of international students. Currently, the institutions of higher education in the U.S. have developed language-related programs such as conversation partners, community fairs, host family, and other activities to encourage foreign students in language and cross-cultural communications. In Colombo’s study (2011), language competence and social relations appear as key factors that impact the well-being and academic satisfaction of graduate international students. Findings indicated that graduate foreign students more often consulted peers, academic advisors, and class professors when writing for their courses.

Culture Shock and Support Systems. Naturally, international students being away from home experience culture shock when they encounter a new land, a new language, and a new custom. A majority of international students face adjustment challenges that sometimes lead to depression and culture shock (Han et. al, 2013; Rose-Redwood et. al, 2013). Cheung (2010) reported that among 202 Chinese students who had been living in the United States for an average of 1.7 years, the prevalence of having depressive symptoms was 47.5%. Cheung (2010) found that although Chinese students experienced anxiety symptoms, they chose not to use psychological counseling and mental health services to deal with emotional and personal distress. The study showed that Chinese students who were more likely to seek help from mental health professionals were married students who also had a positive attitude towards seeking psychological help.

Hsu (2011) studied international students’ experiences of adaptation to American academic and social cultures in the U.S. With 115 international students participating from 32 different countries at a four-year university, he found that globalization has significantly influenced the students’ transition experiences in academic learning and sociocultural life. Integration of international students with domestic students as their friends, classmates, and roommates is important in enhancing their academic and personal goals.

International student advisors participate in assisting students who have feelings of helplessness and irritability, and fears of being cheated, feeling discriminated against, or feeling alienated. To address such issues, the Office of International Programs and Services can host several community-related programs both on- and off-campus to include domestic and international students. In such opportunities, students participate in cross-cultural interactions and exhibit programs related to students’ home culture and language in which these students not only participate, but also share with other students who have different social and cultural backgrounds.

Importance of Effective Advising

Professional advising for international students helps students develop and achieve their personal, educational, and career goals while they are in the U.S. Tin-chu (2009) writes that “advising is also a decision-making process which guides students in realizing their maximum potential through communication and information exchange” (p. 22). When international students are aware of, or are familiar with, their student status, college work, academic course work, and immigration rules, they can build a strong rapport with faculty, students, and other staff in the college. Nazarenko (2006) reported that students do not receive adequate advising from the international office or individual faculty advisors. Asian and Latin American students, according to Nazarenko (2006), self-reported that their concerns and issues related to adjustment and academic programs were not addressed by their advisors.

Classroom teachers and other faculty related to international students may not understand all of international students’ problems and issues because many of the teachers and faculty do not have study-abroad experiences (Bista, 2012). Therefore, it is the advisor of international students who communicates with international students, faculty, staff, and other important community members in the university.

Question 4: What are the professional networks for the international student advisors?

Professional Membership in Organizations

International student advisors and other international education administrators can receive information in the field from several professional associations relevant to international student advising and other issues. For instance, NAFSA: The Association of International Educators is the primary professional association for midlevel administrators in all areas of international education programs, with more than 10,000 members around the world. Other professional associations related to international education are: Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA); Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL); American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO); American College Personnel Association (ACPA); and College and University Personnel Association (CUPA).

In addition to professional membership, there are a number of ways to enhance the knowledge and skills of foreign student advising. For instance, the NAFSA Advisor Manual, available online for the registered advisors of international students, is the most useful resource. Advisors and support service staff of international students can develop an appreciation for cultural and human complexity by doing some international travel or participating in study-abroad programs, especially cross-cultural communication skills. Individuals emerging in the field can participate in cross-cultural fellowship program, study abroad, or an internship in an international student services or study-abroad unit. Such activities help develop team work and conflict resolution through a community organization.

An advanced college degree in student affairs, international education, or global education also helps to develop a sound profession by conducting relevant scholarly research and sharing it with others in the field. Some popular fields of scholarship that have relevance to international student advising are area studies, intercultural studies, international education, educational administration, and college-student personnel.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

International students in American colleges and universities come from different countries with diverse social and cultural backgrounds. To meet the needs and issues of such students, an effective advisor of international students requires a variety of skills: knowledge of cultural differences, language skills, and religions, along with knowledge of state and federal regulations. Skilled international student advisors with a good work ethic always provide appropriate services to students and scholars during their stay at colleges or universities. Such advisors are valuable to the institutions as well as to the students.

The first-year college experience is the most difficult time for any international student, and it is essential to advise new students about American college culture: grading, classroom participation, assignments, and concepts of cheating and plagiarism. Students express their frustrations in a number of ways regarding housing, insurance, transportation, employment, I-20s, and immigration policy. To mitigate such concerns, colleges and universities should evaluate the needs and expectations of international students as well as their perceptions of advisors.

A team built on strong collaboration with faculty, staff, and students is essential to meeting the needs of international students. The roles of advisors are diverse, and advisors should, therefore, be well-informed, helping international students as mentors. The Office of International Students and Services can include plenty of information related to international students on a college or university website or in an International Student Handbook.

In addition, international student advisors can explore more opportunities to integrate international students with home students instead of limiting them to some college activities and programs like “conversation partners.” Advisors can foster additional possibilities for sharing their concepts and thoughts with concerned faculty, instructors, or staff in other departments. In collaboration, students can build the programs that are needed to support other international students. Students and advisors can collaboratively develop opportunities for community-based programs serving domestic and international students.

Likewise, the role of international student advisors should not be limited to advising or decision making regarding only student activities and programs. Instead, advisors should know what students really need to enhance their college experience in the U.S. by being facilitators for students, involving students in program design, program selection, and decision-making. In other words, students should be involved

in each activity the advisor wants to direct, thereby ensuring each program is geared towards the needs and issues of international students.

Finally, international student advisors and staff members in the Office of International Students should be up-to-date, with various issues and risks for international students. With adequate knowledge of cross-cultural understanding, international student advisors may deal with students from diverse cultures, religions, and languages successfully. By working with students and other academic departments, advisors can bridge the gap between academic and social support needs of international students. The college and university can provide advisors with professional training or offer organized professional development and overseas travel to gain knowledge of the diversity in the world.

This study is limited to existing literature related to international student advising. The opinions and suggestions are also based on previous studies; therefore, a definitive conclusion may not be drawn. The experiences of international students and their advisors may vary based on available resources on campus, size of campus, student population, and location of campuses, even within the U.S. Conducting a more comprehensive study with multiple measures (surveys of both students and advisors) could provide valuable information on the role of international student advisors. Future research can examine the professional identities of international student advisors, including those in other countries (advisors in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia), and compare it to the context of the U.S.

NOTES

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