Title of the poster:

International Students: What’s missing and what matters?

Abstract:

As we continue to move forward in a growing global marketplace, the need for cultural awareness and diversity is increasingly important. Education is said to be the great equalizer and college campuses tend to often represent a melting pot of culture, ethnicity, and individual differences.

The study was conducted at a southern, large-sized institution. Several international students expressed firsthand knowledge of the challenges of moving to a new country to pursue graduate studies. Our rather casual discussion lead to the purpose of this project: to evaluate the differences amongst the diverse groups of residents living in graduate housing, and identify ways of strengthening cultural awareness and building a sense of community.

Mixed method was used to collect data regarding diversity, cultural awareness and expectations of international students. Common theme that emerged from discussion was that international students are interested in program related to academics, sports and local culture. They also feel they there is lower visibility of the programs offered. Based on the need expressed recommendations and conclusions were made.

As opposed to popular assumption that international students tends to interact with folks from their own culture, our study shows that they are interested in learning and participating in local culture. Higher education institutions should provide the opportunity of interaction with domestic students both socially and academically as quickly as possible, so international students don't bond and form their own cohorts within their own culture.

Keywords: International students, diversity, cultural awareness
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