**DEVELOPING INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS
PLAN FOR SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Aura Z. Castrellon Acedo

An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate
School of Lindenwood University in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Science in Corporate and Industrial Communications

1998

ABSTRACT

This thesis will focus on the on the study of
developing an institutional communication plan for
supporting international students.

Communications demand comprehension and a wide
diversity of communications skills. Cross-cultural
communications involves understanding the impact of
cultural factors, which could be verbal and nonverbal.

International exchange programs are growing fast.
The number of international students has increased to
almost 500,000 students disperse around the United
States. When these students come to study and learn
to another country they require the most accurate and
honest service.

In the Chapter IV of this culminating project is
provided a plan for any educational institution
developing exchange programs. It also provides a
group of strategies that can be used if the
institution is already working with exchange programs
and needs to institute change in some of its current
procedures.

For an institution starting with foreign programs, this is the appropriate guide that includes discussions of the most significant points as well as the less notable issues that are all, nevertheless, very meaningful for the student when coming to a foreign country and a new school.

The reader might find practical the advice on developing an exchange student's guide and providing the most efficient and effective service. The goal is to develop procedures that avoid any kind of discontent by the student, or any significant decrease in the international students' enrollment. Furthermore, with a good program in place the institution can achieve a great number of satisfied students and get recognition over the competitors.

The last chapter includes complementary information to this plan from an outside evaluator. Also, included is a discussion of the limitations of the culminating project and a suggested topic for further investigations in this field.

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COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF CANDIDACY:

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Dedication

For my mother Zeny and my two sisters: Judy and Maye, the most important people in my life, the inspiration and reason of my achievements. This is also your accomplishment I love you more than anything.

For my friends: Mechy, Gissel, Monica, Ana, Itzel, Deidamia, Karen, Luz, Carolina and Zaida, who have shared with me a great experience during this time at school and showed me what I really mean to them.

I love you all.

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I want to recognize and thank the labor and double work Doctor Michael Castro had correcting my English and helping me revise this culminating project. Without his advise and guidance this thesis would not have the value it does.

Thanks a lot, I will always appreciate your help.

Aura

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Chapter I

INTRODUCCTION

International Exchange Programs

An increasing number of students from several
parts of the world are coming for schooling to the
United States of America. Each year more countries
are represented by students at American Universities.
They come from different parts of the world. "South
and East Asia send by far the largest numbers of
international students to the United States" (Calver,
80). Other areas sending students to the United
States are, in descending order: the Middle East,
Latin America, Africa and Europe. Malaysia, Taiwan,
and Nigeria are the countries with the largest numbers
of students studying in the United States. All areas
in the United States have a significant number of
students from other countries, but the states with the
highest number or international students are
California, New York, and Texas. One of the areas
that is gaining foreign students, has been schools in
the southern part of the Unites States. The fields of

engineering, business and management are the ones that have been constantly gaining the highest number of students (80).

The educational experiences gained can benefit not just the international students, but also their respective countries, American students and the educational institution that they attend.

James Calver says that:

> international students benefit from study in the United States in many ways. Since American higher education is among the best in the world, foreign students may have educational opportunities that are not available in their own countries. In addition, they may have choices of majors and freedom to select courses that are not possible at home. (81)

The experience in a foreign culture can be helpful for them because it makes them more independent of their families and also gives them the opportunity to communicate and interact with different cultures. Experiencing living in another country helps them appreciate more the values of their own country.

In the same way American students benefit from international students because they can gain a better understanding of the foreign students', their people

and country from a non-native perspective. Moreover, they can make friends that, in the future, they can travel to visit and learn even more from the other culture.

Countries are also benefited because the students who come to the United States go back to their country with an education and degree from an American University. Many who are educated in America return home to occupy a position as leaders in corporations or government helping to developing the economies in their countries.

The educational institutions are benefited because they get more students and enriched with a wide diversity of cultures on campus. And also they receive income from those whom they educate and prepare to be successful career people.

One of the biggest barriers in intercultural communications is the language. Despite the fact that two persons may be speaking the same language sometimes misunderstandings and misinterpretations may occur because the message is not understood as it is intended.

> ...communication can begin to break down because of differences in communication

styles, particularly in language usage. Often, the participants forget that meaning of language lies within the person who will determine what meaning to attribute to the words received. Other variables affecting the communication process include the evaluations of the sender by the receiver and vice versa, the noise or distortion factor, and the perception of self. (94)

The language barrier can lead to problems in international students programs. For instance, sometimes the students feel misinformed because of misinterpretations of the terms of the Exchange Programs if wording and communication are not handled with care and precision.

Communications

This section will explore some of the major ideas found in the literature of Business or Organizational Communications - many will serve as a foundation for the program to be developed in chapters 4 an 5 for effective communication within universities and by universities with international students.

Communications is defined as "the process of sharing information, ideas, or attitudes resulting in a degree of understanding between a sender and a receiver"(Mitchel and Larson 310). Consecutively, an

effective message is the one that has similar meanings for both the sender and the receiver.

Illustration 1 on the next page presents a model that details the components of the communication process. The first point will be what is sent, in other words verbal and nonverbal indication. The second point is the mode of the message, how the message is flowing. This stage is very important. It is significant to know if the message is two ways, as it should be, and not one way. The last point includes the reception of the message and its decoding. This is where the meaning accredited by the recipient takes place and can be where a distortion in the transmission process occurs (311).

In the organizational environment,

> the more managers know about the context in which employees interpret actions and messages, the greater the likelihood that they can accurately predict the probable interpretations. Meaning is a product of the interaction of context and content. (Clampit 46)

Communicating, the more managers know about both variables, context and content, the more they will know how the employees will respond to the communication. The mistakes some managers make, is to

Illustration 1
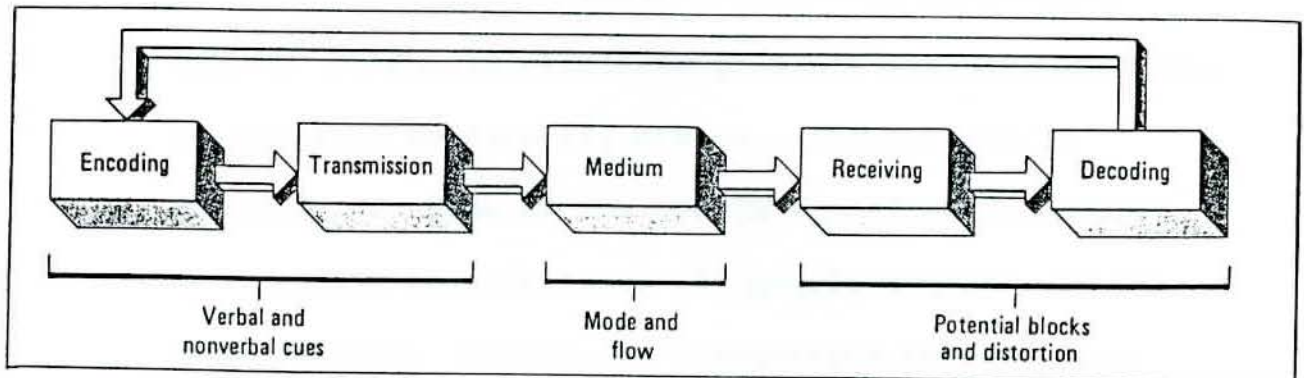
SOURCE: Communicating for Managerial Effectiveness by
Phillip G. Clampitt (1991).

assume others understand what they are saying and will

"know what they mean" without assuring this

understanding through feedback or other means (47).

It is also important in management communication

that "managers must learn to think in terms of the

possible misinterpretations of their messages...one

useful strategy for facilitating understanding is to

use the blackout tactic"(48). This blackout strategy

means that when the manager is transmitting the

message, he makes the statement followed by "I am not

saying Y; I am not saying Z". This procedure will make easy to clarify anticipating and head off misinterpretations. In this manner a manager can help avoid them, but this doesn't mean that they won't occur. It should eliminate possible misinterpretation in the ways he directly states. The manager is blocking out some of the possible misinterpretations.

In all organizations the people communicate for many reasons. People can communicate because they just want to know if the other people have the same opinion, or because they want to learn from others. They may be seeking to give or get technical information or assistance, or simply to share experiences with others.

There are different ways of understanding the purposes for communicating with others. It can be from the organization's position, the work group's position or the individual's position.

A reason for communicating in organizations involves the performance of the tasks. "Tasks can be thought of as demanding certain behaviors of an organization's members. In order to complete these tasks successfully, the behavioral demands must be met" (Mitchel and Larson 296).

When a task is extremely easy and simple to complete by an individual the demands for communication are relatively low. When a task turns more complex or unexpected the communication demands rise dramatically. Those tasks that are not routinely used and very complex, make extremely high demands on the communication process (296).

Those demands in the organization are in terms of the direction of flow of information. It can be downward communication; that is, the communication originates at a high level in the organization hierarchy and is transmitted descending to one or more lower levels. Or it can be upward communication originated at lower levels of the organizational structure and transmitted upward to higher levels. Lateral communications, or horizontal communication is between individuals at the same organizational level. And finally, there is external communications flows that is originated inside the organization and is transmitted outside or vice versa (299).

The communications from a group's position usually refers to messages whose primary motivation is the attainment of the group goals. "These goals may or may not overlap with the formal goals of the

organization. The group attains its goals by exerting influence on group members to behave in particular ways"(299). In other words this process is an enforcement of group norms.

The communications from the individual's position means that through the process of communication, an individual can try to persuade someone to change his or her beliefs, attitudes, or behavior in a way that helps the individual attain some personal objective. "Although persuasion is not the only way an individual can influence other people, it is one method that is very important in organizational settings"(300). Also people need to communicate with other people in order to know about their performance and obtain feedback. Individuals also communicate with others to fulfill the affiliative needs. In other words individuals need to share time with other people to communicate, and not just to influence them or obtain performance feedback. Communication fulfills the natural necessity to talk and be with other people.

Corporate Communications and Culture

In corporations the employees should know how to analyze the situation they face at work and choose

good communication strategies. It is very important

to maintain a good level of communication

effectiveness in the business environment. Moreover,

such a standard of communication can enhance

productivity and profitability.

> Perhaps more important is evidence that
> people who understand how communication
> functions in an organization, who have
> developed a wide repertory of written and
> oral communication skills, and who have
> learned when and how to use those skills
> seem to have more successful careers and
> contribute more fully to their organizations
> than people who have not done so. (Conrad 3)

Communicating effectively in the organization demands

a great amount of comprehension and a diversity of

communication skills.

The employees have to understand the relationship

between effective communication and the operation of

the organization. They also need to understand how to

select the most appropriate communication strategies

for different corporate situations because people

communicate more effectively if they adjust their

communication abilities to the situations they

confront (5).

Charles Conrad's description of culture includes

three components:

(1) a system of shared meanings, (2)which
are expressed through a number of symbolic
forms-symbols, rituals, stories, and myths-
and (3) which holds a group of people
together. Cultures differ from each other
in an almost infinite number of ways and
they differ from themselves at different
times. (9)

Cultures provide individuals with framework and

constancy by telling who they are and how they should

act toward other people. Culture impacts behavior,

morale and productivity at work and includes values

and patterns that influence company attitudes and

actions. "Corporate culture affect how an

organization copes with competition and change,

whether in terms of technology, economics, or people"

(Harris and Moran 10).

Another key concept for leadership in

communication is the meaning of Cross-Cultural

Communication defined by Harrys and Moran as:

recognizing what is involved in one's image
of self and one's role, personal needs,
values, standards, expectations, all of
which are culturally conditioned. Such a
person understands the impact of cultural
factors on communication, and is willing to
revise and expand such images as part of the
process of growth. Furthermore, he or she
is aware of verbal and nonverbal differences
in communication with persons from another
culture. Not only does such a person seek
to learn another language, but he or she is

cognizant that even when people speak the same language, cultural differences can alter communication symbols and meanings and result in misunderstandings. (9)

Some cultures encourage a team ambience while others are more inclined to individual effort. Others animate the employees to make decisions that reduce danger by letting them make changes only after a difficult decision making process and questioning every argument that supports change (75).

All organizations have their own kinds of cultures; the reason established by Phillip Clampit is because "First, the human mind is capable of innumerable ideas and beliefs, and in order to function in society people must select a few to live by" (52). If the people did not have beliefs communication would be almost impossible, because the context would be always changing. In other words, culture is a necessity because individuals have to relate to each other and to self in significant forms. "Second, culture is a necessity because it provides an efficient mechanism to coordinate the activities of employees" (53). Such coordination is possible by inductive and deductive approaches. Inductive can be through specific rules, regulations, or tasks whose

description is provided to the employees. Employees must have expectations that they will achieve those stipulations. Deductive approaches are specified strategies of doing things, such as: the customer is number one, or treat the customer with a smile. "Third, an organizational culture is a necessity because of the limits of managerial power...The challenge for the managers is to transform power into duty and conformity into desire" (54).

Communication that knows the culture it is addressing can make employees be self-motivated by effectively setting the beliefs and values. The culture keeps the organization together and at the same time the unity of all the people working in it can be achieved.

Communicating Change

Sometimes it is unavoidable that corporations have to confront change. Change is not usually well accepted by the personnel of the company. Some reforming or change can initiate a new experience improving the different processes within the organization. For example, this might involve

communicating change in technological innovations, reorganizations, budgets -- things that can make a big difference in the improvement of the functions of the company. It is a great challenge for the managers to manage and communicate change. Clampit in Communicating for Managerial Effectiveness establishes that: "Some changes are welcomed, others abhorred. Some are induced out of necessity, others inspired out of vision or prescience. Every change in every organization is a very unique event" (174).

Communicating changes requires a perception of how that change is going to be accepted in the organization and also requires a special sensibility of the culture of the organization. Changes do not always promise success; its success depends on the situation and how complex and variable it is.

There are three approaches to change: the first one is a management orientation. This is used in situations of an agitated business environment or rapidly changing conditions. "The assumption is that those in leadership positions are in a better position to recognize the need for change, to know what needs to be changed, and even how the change should be implemented" (175).

The second approach to change is the employee orientation. In this approach the employees are empowered to have input into changes, either before or while the change is being implemented. In other words, the employee is in the position to suggest changes, and consequently accept and implement the change. And finally, there is the integrative approach, in which the manager has to determine if the situation justifies the management orientation, the employee orientation or a combination of both. Both management and an employee orientation are needed in the organization (178).

All companies and organizations sometime have to communicate change, and both employees and managers need to understand why certain changes are appropriately and necessarily made at different levels and areas in the organization.

Designing a Program

After deciding to make a change in the organization the next step is start thinking of designing a program implementing change to achieve the needed result.

Business can do a lot through communications to intensify their market position, to achieve efficiency and to reject problems.

Companies can develop image if they did not have any before. In this manner, they can project an image related to their marketing intentions. Or, it is possible to fortify the existing image of the company, as well.

The procedures for planning a communication program within the company are: situational analysis, variables specification, program specification and program implementation. These procedures will be examined more deeply in the next chapter of this culminating project. Also to be examined are issues such as organizational behavior, managing cultural differences and strategies and design of targeted programs.

Statement of Purpose

This project will apply many of these principles of communication and management to developing a communication program to attract, support and sustain a community of international students.

The plan to be developed will be designed to be useful to a university that is just beginning to target international students in its recruitment efforts and thus will explore communications issues that relate both to the international communities that are being targeted and to the existing organizational culture within the institution for whom working with international students will represent a significant change.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

After hours of research on this topic, I found nine books, eight magazines, three culminating projects and thesis, and two article of newspaper. They presented a clear and useful information about the subject of student exchange programs and the communication process.

Some of the books reviewed were not completely related to the topic of study, but this does not mean that those books were not useful at all. They had very helpful information, some that was used for this project and other for people who are interested in the broader topics those books cover.

In the case of research gathered from theses and culminating projects, some of them did not have the information I was looking for, and other projects were not available when I tried to review them. Just from three of them was possible to get information related to the topic of study.

Many books and articles have been written about exchange programs and the communication process. Some of them have similar thoughts that, in the end, represented the same idea with different words.

The following section describes useful information drawn from the books researched.

Books

The book Facilitating Communications for Business edited by James Calver, is written for business people who need to enhance their communication skills. It discusses the importance of facilitating communication for business and the necessity of communications skills. Calver reviews the foundations of communication for business.

> The relationship between synergistic exercises and communication can be seen in the patterns among members of the group. Collaborating relationships from democratic communication are indicated by open communications among every member of the group. Dominating behaviors from autocratic communication are indicated by a one-way direction in communication patterns. Avoidance behavior from avoidance communication are indicated by a lack of integration of all members inputs.(52)

Important topics that this book covers that are related to the topic of study is about how to develop intercultural communication skills for the global business community, the conflict of cultural values and the subsequent breakdown in communications.

Sometimes it is hard for both parties, the institution and the foreigner, to understand the diverse cultural patterns, behavior and business practices of the other culture.

Calver establishes that intercultural communications have to "focuses on what happens to the message when the participants are from different cultural backgrounds"(94). He emphasizes the argument that effective communication skills can be developed when all the different variables influencing the communication process between persons of different cultural backgrounds are taken into account.

The book Managing Cultural Differences, written by Phillip Harris and Robert Moran, discusses the importance at globalization and diversity in an information age versus increasing ethnic hatred and racism.

For Harris and Moran culture is a fascinating concept. They say: "Our favorite analogy is to

compare it to a beautiful jewel---hold it to the
light, turn it, and reveal its multiple
dimensions"(1).

The book examines the cultural influences and
impacts on global management and performance,
addressing leadership in global communications, in
cultural change and in cultural synergy.

An important subject in this book is managing for
cross-cultural effectiveness in organizations. The
authors emphasize in the midst of relocation and
transition, as well as how to take advantage of
emerging global market opportunities and diversity in
the global work culture.

It also talks about doing business or serving
people in cultures different than ours, examining the
regions of North America, Latin America, Asia, Europe,
the Middle East and Africa.

Organizations have to globalize in strategy,
structure and people. The book gives insights in this
matter.

Another book reviewed was People in Organizations
by Terrence R. Mitchell and James R. Larson Jr. This
book's central theme is that people's behavior is
cooperatively caused by their own personal

characteristics and the setting in which they find themselves.

It touches such aspects as understanding people and organizations. It also talks about communication and a communication model that details the components of the communication process. Other subjects of this book include accomplishing organizational objectives through individual decision making and leadership.

Examining how people in organizations get things done, Mitchell and Larson say that

> decisions have to be made and people have to be influenced. If these two basic activities can be carried out successfully, the organization will be well on the road toward achieving its goals and objectives. (330)

It also shows that, with a good diagnosis of the situation, the basic principles governing the behavior of people in organizations can be applied in a manner that will enhance both individual and organizational effectiveness (472).

Gary Selnow and William Crano wrote the book Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Targeted Communication Programs. This book examines media usage patterns and how persuasive they are in daily life and reviews a communication model. The book is

also about the fundamentals of persuasion and discusses when a communicator must know about the receivers before he or she can design a message, choose a medium or develop plans for the campaign.

The area of this book that was useful for this research project was the discussion of strategy and design of targeted programs, reviewing four essential stages of planning and the rationale for each. Those are: situational analysis, variables specification, program specification and program implementation.

The book also has a section dealing with each of the mass media, but this section was not related to the topic of investigation of this project.

The book Strategic Organizational Communications by Charles Conrad examine areas of critical theories of organizational communications, the impact of communication technologies, ethics and ethical decision making and also organizational culture.

The author gives two definitions of culture. One is viewing culture as something organizations "have", defined as: "the shared assumptions, values, beliefs, language, symbols and meaning systems hold the organization together"(23). Conrad's other definition involves viewing culture as something organizations

"are", so organizational cultures "are intangible, taken-for-granted shared meanings that people assign to their surroundings. Cultures are communicative creations"(27). This definition of culture as something organization "are" is what the author based the book on.

Conrad also examines the role that communicative strategies play in organizational cultures. He analyzes the different dimensions of organizational communications, writing that "through communicating, members of cultures learn who they are, what their roles are, and what kind of actions are expected of them by other members of the culture"(27).

It establishes the reason why organizations have to develop regulations and compensations according to the employees' desires. He includes a lot of examples, illustrations and case studies.

Another book is Communicating for Managerial Effectiveness by Phillip G. Clampitt. This book gives a clear view of the manager's communication abilities, dilemmas and challenges. It establishes that understanding is always the goal of communications and yet nothing could be further from reality. Ideas, he says, have consequences and bad ideas have bad

consequences. When the communication system breaks down, tragedy often is the result. This book includes topics such as managers as effective communicators, understanding how organizations work, and communicating the corporate culture.

It also gives different approaches to communicate change and how to strategically communicate change.

Clampitt also touches on the fact that most organizations to some degree have difficulties with interdepartamental communications, giving suggestions for addressing these problems.

> On the balance, though, the benefits of effective interdepartamental communication far exceed the costs. Misunderstanding can be reduced, antagonisms avoided, cooperation encouraged and sensivity promoted. And, in the end, a supportive communication climate can be developed and maintained.(229)

Another book reviewed was Performance Management by Aubrey Daniels. This book develops an approach to quality and productivity incorporating effective applications of performance at work whether it is a subordinate, peer, boss or one's self. Daniel establishes that "quality has become the primary concern of managers" (1).

Everyone in the workplace can apply what this book says. These are important topics covered in this source: teamwork, employee involvement and participation.

The author determines as performance management components: antecedents, behavior and consequences. He defines *antecedents* as everything that is before the behavior, *behavior* as what is observable, and *consequences* as what occurs after the behavior. Daniels shows how to make an analysis of those components called "ABC Analysis", used as a diagnosis and problem solving tool. (See illustration 2).

An ABC analysis is a problem solving process in which the antecedents and consequences currently operating for both the problem and the correct behavior are identified and classified. The ABC analysis helps us discover patterns among the many possible antecedents and consequences that are associated with the behavior.

Daniels also touches on the issue of pinpointing both behaviors and results. He addresses how to deliver reinforcement to the employees and, also very important to performance, effective feedback as well as evaluating performance change.

The book Marketing Corporate Image by James

Gregory was a book I reviewed that had good basic

Illustration 2

EXAMPLE OF ABC ANALYSIS "NOT LEARNING TO USE THE COMPUTER"

Problem Performance	Antecedents	Consequences	P/N	I/F	C/U
Not learning to use the computer	• Doesn't have the time	• Comfortable with present way	P	I	C
	• Doesn't like the confusing nature of computers	• Can't take advantage of technology	N	I	U
	• Afraid won't learn as quickly as others (look dumb)	• Avoids failing task at hand	P	I	C
	• Others haven't learned either	• Lack of consistency with other offices	N	I	C
	• Hear the others complain it's difficult	• Avoids hassles of training	P	I	C
	• Sees the others struggling	• More time to do other things	P	I	C
	• Sees the others working late to catch up to normal work load	• Might get reprimanded	N	F	U
		• Might get fired	N	F	U
		• Peers may ridicule	N	F	U
		• Peers may support not learning the new material, stick by you	P	F	U
		• Will have limited skills for future employment	N	F	C

Desired Performance	Antecedents	Consequences	P/N	I/F	C/U
Learning to use the computer	• Pressure from management	• Takes time from other things	N	I	C
	• Seeing others learn	• Hard going (difficult)	N	I	C
	• Last one to learn	• Makes mistakes	N	I	C
	• Enjoy a challenge	• Gets behind in regular work	N	I	U
	• See as an opportunity to increase your own market value	• Could set self up for failure	N	F	U
		• May make job easier	P	F	U
		• May get raise or promoted	P	F	U
		• May get a good performance appraisal	P	F	U
		• May get praise from superior	P	F	U

SOURCE: Performance Management: improving quality productivity through positive reinforcement by Aubrey C. Daniels (1989).

information but was not useful for the research of this project. It is a very functional advertising book. It gives different cases of corporate advertising and examples of the most successful corporate campaigns.

The author explored dimensions of corporate communications integrated with marketing communications.

Unfortunately this project does not focus on corporate advertising. But this book can be a valuable tool for any project in which corporate advertising strategies would be required.

James Gibson, John Ivancevich and James Donnelly Jr. wrote the book Organizations. This book presents theories, research, results and applications that focus on managing organizational behavior in small as well as large and multinational corporations.

It presents the three common characteristics of all organizations: behavior, structure and processes. The authors cover topics such as globalization, cultural diversity in the workplace, and total quality management (TQM).

The authors define diversity as: "the vast array of physical and cultural differences that constitute the spectrum of human differences" (Gibson, Ivancevich and Donelly 43).

It is also emphasizes management's ability to capitalize on diversity.

> Managers will have to study socialization much more closely and intervene so that the maximum benefits result from hiring an increasingly diverse workforce. Studying the ethnic background and national cultures of these workers will have to be taken seriously. (43) See illustration 3.

Socialization is suggested as an integration strategy because it can achieve "congruence of organizational and individual goals, and also transmit the organizational culture" (45).

Organizations also provides information about the structure and design of organizations, and explores how to manage effective communication processes and organizational change.

This book is very well organized and presented valuable and complete information in its context.

Illustration 3

Learning about Diversity

Learning about other ethnic groups, races, and religions has become an important organizational issue in terms of showing understanding about the totality of other people. Let's simply list a number of points that students, managers, and people in general should know about.

- What race are Hispanics?
  Black, white, brown? The correct answer is all of the above. Hispanic refers not only to a race but also to an origin or an ethnicity. There are Hispanic segments—Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Salvadorans, and others who are different in their indigenous ancestry, origins, accents, and many other characteristics.

- What is Confucianism?
  Confucianism is the major religious influence on Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese cultures. Confucianism emphasizes response to authority, especially parents and teachers; hard work; discipline and the ability to delay gratification; harmony in relationships; and the importance of the group.

- Does the term African-American apply to all blacks?

(Billy E. Barnes/PhotoEdit)

No. Black Americans came from cultures others than just those in Africa.

Caribbean, Central American, and South American cultures have provided the United States with many talented blacks. Just as there is in the general population, there is great variety in lifestyle, career choice, educational level attained, and value systems across segments of the over 30 million Black American (includes African and other cultural backgrounds) population.

Should a manager know what the terms Hispanic, Confucianism, and African-American mean? We think so and believe that cultural and religious awareness are going to become more important as the workforce increases in terms of race, ethnic, and religious diversity. Managers and leaders in organizations need to develop a style and pattern of behavior that appeals to and reaches all segments of the diverse workforce. Although the United States has never had a homogeneous culture or population, it is now not possible to ignore the mix of diverse workers, colleagues, customers, suppliers, and owners facing the organization.

Source: Adapted from John Naisbitt, *Global Paradox* (New York: Morrow, 1994), pp. 227–35; Marlene L. Rossman, *Multicultural Marketing* (New York: AMACOM, 1994), pp. 46–52.

SOURCE: Organizations by Gibson, James L., John M. Ivancevich and James H. Donelly Jr. (1994).

Theses and Culminating Projects

One of the theses reviewed was Getting noticed-College recruiting using a media, by Walter John Flick. This project is a very good source for those

who want to know more about developing electronic documents to recruit potential students.

The purpose of this project was "to create an electronic version of the Lindenwood College catalog that can be distributed to prospective students" (1). It was focused more on how to develop a electronic program rather than how to recruite students.

Another thesis is <u>Student satisfaction with a Community College</u> by Carla Denise Noto. This was a study that surveyed students to determine their level of satisfaction with counseling services offered at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley.

After surveying a large sample of college students, Noto concluded that students

> consistently indicated that they are most concerned about and most likely to seek assistance for career planning, financial and academic concerns, and difficulties in negotiating the university system. (121)

The author also reported that college students are setting higher goals for themselves and have become more professionally oriented and competitive. This competitiveness may result from students' fear that they may be unable to achieve the same standard of living enjoyed by their parents.

The author also talks about academic and personal counseling, gender and race differences, but just addresses whites and black; she doesn't talk about foreign students.

Noto applied surveys and based the results of her study on them.

Another thesis reviewed was College Admissions videos and viewbooks by Dennis L. Weiser. This culminating project is focused on how videos and viewbooks influence students and help colleges with the admission of students.

In the introduction Weiser talks about what students are seeking when they decide to go to a College. He says that:

> students take large leaps of faith when they select a college. They know that regardless of their choice they greatly influence their own outcome. They know they will not be able to tell accurately how much they are doing and how much is being done to them. Therefore, students buy their education, even as confident as they may be in their own abilities and willingness to study, sight unseen. (Weiser 10)

This culminating project was a very deep study of the effectiveness of critical viewbook and videos based on a comparison of different colleges.

Another two culminating projects were sought for review, but it was not possible to fin them. The names of thess projects are: Investigation of a program that manages cultural diversity to determine its relationship to a profitable and efficient business operation by Joan Hubbard. And the other one was Effect of cultural differences on international marketing by Lena M. Jones.

Newspapers

An article titled "Expert laments how little we Americans know about Asia" by Dale Singer reported that Americans need to know much more about a region like Asia that has a very strong force on their lives.

The expert bringing out this dilemma is Lucien Ellington, a Professor at the University of Tennesse at Chattanooga.

He suggests an improvement in the education of American professors on learning more about the Asian culture. He recommends programs "to increase knowledge about Asia among American teachers from kindergarten on up and, by extension, knowledge among their students as well" (Singer B4).

Ellington propose several steps to avoid

ignorance about the Asian culture.   They are:

- Teaching   about   other   cultures   by
  concentrating   on   their   basics   books   and
  philosophies.
- Promoting   the   study   of   Asian   languages
  with   qualified   teachers,   not   with
  volunteers or through televised courses.
- Requiring   study   in   Asian   culture   for
  prospective teachers.
- Including multicultural lessons in every
  course.
- Encouraging   foreign   travel   by   teachers.
  (B4)

He establishes that is important for professors

to know about Asian culture.   For by teaching American

children about Asia they will not be in culture

knowledge disadvantage with Asians themselves.

Americans will prosper more in dealing globally if

they show knowledge about other cultures besides their

own.

Another article "Lindenwood, Wash U. look abroad

to buoy MBA ranks" written by Terry Winkelmann for the

St. Louis Business Journal reports on enrollment,

particularly, for the Master of business

Administration (MBA) and based on Saint Louis,

Missouri colleges and universities.   The article also

covers the expected increase in the number of international students.

An obstacle to obtain more students for the MBA degree is the competition and corporate downsizing. "With fewer layers of middle management come fewer demands for MBA students, agreed Oliver Hagan, Dean of the division of Management at Lindenwood University" (Winkelmann 10B).

Winkelman reports that the choices in educational programs are growing and more schools are advertising, making future students aware of all the new varieties of programs. Some colleges emphasize the physical aspect of their campuses. Others, recruit by the stressing the "superior knowledge of their faculty" or by promoting financial value, as in "an accredited degree for a reasonable price"(10B).

Some colleges like Maryville University are formalizing "an incentive program that would reward friends and co-workers who refer students to Maryville" (10B). "The decline in domestic interest (in MBA Programs) is much sharper than the international decline"(10B). This is one reason why colleges are going after foreign students.

Lindenwood's Hagan expects the number of international students at his school to double this year, following increased marketing overseas. And while Washington University has long been recruiting in Hong Kong and Japan, this year the school toured South America for the first time. (10B)

The competition between colleges is increasing. And one of the ways they can offer their services is with more students enrolled. And an increasingly important part of the student body are international students.

Magazines

The article "Problems faced by international students in American colleges and universities" by Ranjani Selvadurai discusses de dilemma of international students in American academic institutions.

Selvadurai comments about the history when the "international studies were first introduced into the American higher education system because of the impact of societal factors and not because institutions deemed these studies to be inherently valuable"(27). The United States is the major host nation to

international students. Every day more international students come to receive an American higher education.

The main barrier faced by international students is the language, because for most of them English is not their first language. But they also cite poor academic advisement as a major reason for failure to graduate on schedule. In some cases foreign students without proper academic counseling have been misled in many ways (28).

Some other difficulties mentioned are adjusting to the style of American education. Some students are accustomed to a different evaluation process in their countries. Other problem areas include the relevance of American curricula to internationals students' academic needs, and also economic problems appear to be a personal difficulty experienced by international students. Acculturation also is a significant part of the barrier, because students have to adopt another culture as a result of continued contact with it (30).

The author of this article discusses each one of the barriers and how circumstances can be improved to achieve better international student satisfaction.

Holly B. Thompson and George H. Tompson, wrote the interesting article "Confronting diversity issues

in the classroom with strategies to improve

satisfaction and retention of international students".

It identified behaviors that international students

consistently use that incapacitate, rather than

facilitate, their own academic success. It suggests

practical strategies that faculty members can use in

their classes, also techniques that can facilitate the

learning process of any student (53).

> Attracting international students has become
> a priority for U.S. universities regardless
> of size or location. Recruiting foreign
> students, however, is not the only area of
> concern; enrollment does not guarantee their
> graduation. Though national statistics on
> retention rates are not as readily available
> as enrollment data, experts in this field
> speculate that the attrition rate for
> international students approximates that for
> U.S. students. (53)

One reason why international students have

difficulties is because sometimes they use tactics

that would work in their countries and when they try

to implement them they will not work and will be

ineffective in the United States.

This investigation tried to identify those

aspects that make it difficult for the international

students to achieve their goals and integrate to the

social community in the United States. It also shows

the reader what the students think, as well as their point of view.

The article "International Students and language support: a new survey" by Fiona Cownie and Wendy Addison discusses the results of a survey on English language support for foreign students. They establish that English language support is the most important academic support service that any educational institution can offer to their students.

International students have a great value for institutions of higher education, a major reason why they have to look for strategies to bring and keep more students. "One of their more noticeable strategies has been to recruit more international students, since these students pay full-cost fees and are therefore an important source of income"(Crownie and Addison 221).

For the international student it is very important to have a proficiency in English. With adequate English skills it is possible for them to enroll in a regular course of study. "Support in English language and study skills is one of the most important services which universities can offer their international students"(221). English language study has to be an

important part of a responsible recruitment strategy for any educational institution, and the staff people involved must be regarded as a valuable component of such strategy (222).

The object of the survey made was twofold, partly to discover factual information about the provision of language support to international students and also to explore the experience of the providers of such services.

Of the respondents 95% were members of the English language teaching group, personally involved in the delivery of language support to foreign students. The results showed that only 29% of the respondents thought that the provision of language support at their schools was adequate and only 45% of them thought their institution was sympathetic to the provision of language support (230). The insecurities which lie behind these statistics are likely to have a deleterious effect on the service which is offered to students. "If institutions are serious about offering high quality language support services to their international students, one of the central issues which they should address is the institutional position of language support staff" (230).

The magazine Journal of Education for Business gives the article "An assessment of the service quality provided to foreign students at U.S. business schools", by Chuck Tomkovick and Jamal Al-Khatib. The authors examine the factors that influence the service quality perception of international students in United States business schools(130).

The authors establish that:

> if one of the defined goals of a college or
> university is to maintain a positive
> provider-consumer relationship with current
> students as well as to develop a strategy
> for attracting prospective foreign students,
> then one aspect administrators at both the
> university level and the business school
> level should pay special attention to is
> facilities maintenance. (132)

Prospective students usually do not have the opportunity to visit the institution. For this reason promotional material is the tool to transmit the positive aspects of the physical facilities and other subjects of interest for new students.

The article conclude by saying that:

> the development and reinforcement of a
> service quality orientation for the
> administration, faculty, and staff, along
> with the availability of modem equipment and
> maintenance of the schools' physical

facilities, are key in improving students' perceptions of quality. (135)

The next article is "Colleges use various ways to add foreign students to their enrollment figures" by Liza Irizarry. She reports several strategies colleges employ to enroll foreign students to their educational programs, and discusses recruitment methods of colleges.

She establishes that "recruitment methods for international students vary from word-of-mouth to formal" (Izarri 22).

One of the ways that a college can recruit is while traveling the faculty or staff person from the college can do some informal recruiting. He or she can hold informal interviews with the potential students and learn about the expectations they have and also provide information and answer questions.

Some institutions have international students advisers and sometimes other staff people dedicated primarily to expand international students enrollment. Also some colleges are adding an Office of Planning and Enrollment, with the idea to increase the number of international students and give information and support to them. Supplementary efforts would be when

members of the staff are formally sent to visit specific countries (23).

For a very targeted international recruitment some colleges include a brochure, an Internet Web page and targeted mailing systems.

"Enhancement of the educational experience for all students is the most often cited benefit of enrolling international students" (22). Arlene Eckerson, Director of English as a Second Language at Fulton County Community College in Johnstown, said "she thinks students from other countries provide invaluable opportunities to resident students" (22).

Lisa Benavides wrote the article "Foreign-students numbers falling" describing a decline in international students' enrollment patterns concerning local colleges in Boston.

> The number of foreign students studying in the U.S. is following a downward trend, leaving some area colleges concerned that a key source of revenue is being lured to other shores in ever-increasing numbers. In addition to the cultural benefits they bring, foreign students receive no financial aid from most colleges, making them "full price" tuition payers. (1)

In the year 1995 only .3% more international students studied in the United States compared with the year before.

Other countries know the revenue that foreign students represent and the competition from other countries such as England, Japan and Australia is increasing for the same students the United States is after (2).

Benavides reports some deciding factors for the students are improving in regards to non-American countries: immigration difficulty, finding information about schools, visa problems, schools are perceived as very friendly, a climate of unwelcoming attitudes. Meanwhile in the United States some offices that help foreign students have been cut in federal aid. Her information is based on the opinions of students interviewed.

Dell Pendergrast, deputy associate director for education and cultural affairs at the U.S. Information Agency said, "the U.S. needs to take action now. The trend is clearly of concern because the U.S. has always assumed we were the central magnet for students in the world and we can no longer say that," he said.

"We are hurting ourselves and the American economy" (3).

The last article read "Communicating is bigger challenge in cross-cultural world" by Kathryn Wage. It discusses the growing need for cross-cultural communication and ways of building awareness and communication skills.

The need for a better, clearer communications is growing. Cross-cultural communication is becoming indispensable because the people and businesses of the world, as well as the countries are becoming more interrelated.

Each time that there is an inter-cultural situation in which is necessary to communicate, people feel challenged. It is very complicated to acquire the necessary skills. Besides competency in the language, it requires competency in the culture of the people (Wage 23).

> Too often, we complain or criticize when misunderstandings occur. As we deal globally we would do better to explore beyond the apparent communication gap and look for the factors that influence language and interaction such as tradition, role definition, religion and folk-beliefs. (23)

To improve cross-cultural communications and achieve cultural interaction three important key concepts are important: awareness, understanding and commitment. With these an adequate communication process can be achieved.

Most of the sources reviewed had information that in one way or other were related to the topic of study. Some of them coincide in their thinking and reach the same conclusions. The strategies each educational institution should use with international students are basically the same. They can be applied in the way the institutions decide, but with the same goal of facilitating internal communications relating to exchange programs.

The ideas that basically emerged from the sources as a group are: the international students when coming to the United States to study should be required to show proficiency in the English language. In this manner the studies will become much easier for them, and also communications will be effective.

Also some sources agreed that while the number of international studies is growing, but there also are regions in which the number of foreign students is declining because those institutions are not paying

the required attention to them.   The support service available is not adequate.

Almost all the sources that discuss international exchange programs agreed that international students are a big source of revenue for the educational institutions.   And to maintain the growing number of students, they agreed effective support services should be provided.

The next chapter will review the most significant sources that provide the clearest most related information, useful in this project.

Chapter III

SELECTIVE REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF RESEARCH

After reviewing several sources of literature, the following four were found to be the most significant. These sources are two books: <u>Managing Cultural Differences</u> by Phillip R. Harris and Robert T. Moran; and the book <u>Organizations</u> by James H. Gibson, John M. Ivancevich and James H. Donnelly, Jr.; and two magazine articles: "Confronting Diversity issues in the classroom with strategies to improve satisfaction and retention of international students" by Holly B. Tompson and George H. Tompson; and the article "Problems faced by international Students in American Colleges and Universities" by Salvadurai Ranjani.

Business Communication Review

The book of Gibson, Ivancevich and Donelli focused mainly on the behavior, structure and processes in organizations. It presents a realistic view of people working in organizations.

Organizations have to focus on a continuous basis on the improvement of communication within it. Managers, to accomplish better communications, are advised:

> first, they must improve their messages the information they wish to transmit. Second, they must seek to improve their own understanding of what other people try to communicate to them. In other words, they must become better encoders and decoders. (Gibson, Ivancevich and Donelly 424)

There are several techniques recommended by the authors to improve communications in organizations.

Following up

This technique basically involves "assuming that you're misunderstood and, whenever possible, attempting to determine whether your intended meaning was actually received" (424). It is important to make sure the message has been interpreted in the correct way. Sometimes the meaning of a message can be different in the mind of the receiver.

Regulating information flow

If the information provided to a person could be regulated classifying it by importance, the

information overcharge can be avoided and
communications improved. Always the communications
can be classified in both quality and quantity. "The
idea is based on the exception principle of
management, which states that only significant
deviations from policies and procedures should be
brought to the attention of superiors"(424).
It means that if the information is arranged by
priority order, just the most significant information
is the one given to superiors, avoiding information
overflowing.

Utilizing feedback

Feedback is an important factor in effective two-
way communication and a way to know if the receiver of
the message has answered to it as is expected; in
other words, if the desired behavior has been
performed in the right way.

> The point is that developing and supporting
> mechanisms for feedback involve far more
> than following up on communications.
> Rather, to be effective, feedback needs to
> be engaging, responsive, and directed toward
> a desired outcome. (425)

Feedback is important in any organization, regardless the form of communication it uses. It is a very effective way to communicate and perceive the way of thinking of others.

Empathy

"Empathy is the ability to put oneself in the other person's role and to assume that individual's viewpoints and emotions" (425). It is important to effective communication to place oneself in the place of the receiver and predict how the message is going to be decoded, in other words how the message is "filtered through the receiver's perceptions" (425).

In communications empathy is very important "for vice presidents to communicate effectively with supervisors, for faculty to communicate effectively with students, and for government administrators to communicate effectively with minority groups" (245). Understanding is the principal goal of communication, and with understanding communication barriers are decreased.

Repetition

In simple words repetition involves providing the same information in different words several times. This ensures that the message is effectively communicated. It is established that "Introducing repetition or redundancy into communication… ensures that if one part of the message is not understood, other parts carry the same message" (425).

Encouraging mutual trust

Sometimes because of the lack of time, feedback and upward communications along a chain of command become hard to achieve. For this reason it is important to create "an atmosphere of mutual confidence and trust"(425).

Encouraging mutual trust results in a "high source credibility among subordinates, [and] no loss in understanding results from a failure to follow up on each communication" (426).

Effective timing

People are exposed to many messages at the same time. Moreover, some of those messages are not

received. "Because of this problem many organizations use "retreats" when important policies or changes are being made" (426). This practice removes people from the normal interruptions and fragmentation of the work day, calls special attention to the issues to be discussed, and allow full focussing of attention on them.

Simplifying language

One barrier in communications can be using complex or overly technical language. If the receiver does not understand the message, then there is no communications. What can happen is that a simple concept is interpreted as a very complicated statement. "Effective communication involves transmitting understanding as well as information" (426).

Effective listening

An important aspect in communication is to know how to listen with understanding. "One method of encouraging someone to express true feelings, desires, and emotions is to listen" (426). If someone does not have the ability to listen, this skill can be learned.

Cross-Cultural Communications and Change

All the employees in organizations should learn about the influence of culture and be effective cross-cultural communicators, whether they have to work with minorities in their own society or with foreign people encountered at home or abroad (Harris and Moran 14).

An important factor should be considered in strategic cross-cultural communication planning: "Mistakes of corporate representatives because of language or intercultural incompetence can jeopardize negotiations and undermine customer relations" (14). Learning to manage cultural differences is a way in which people can become more global and cosmopolitan in their outlook and behavior, as well as more effective personally and professionally (16).

Any organization, for an improvement in cross-cultural communication, should develop and implement change strategies. These will help the whole organization in the search to achieve better communications by always innovating and, at the same time, adapting organizational objectives, processes, and procedures in accordance with the change.

The change in the organization has to decide one or a combination of a six possible categories:

1. Structure

2. Technology

3. Tasks

4. Processes

5. Environment

6. People

Once it is decided which of these categories or which combination of them focus the change, these steps should be followed:

1. Identify the changes that can improve the effectiveness.

2. Create a willingness for the change.

3. Make easier the innovation internally.

4. Reinforce the new stability in the organization (74).

During the change process in organizations people "may already be suffering from information overload, experiencing a sense of powerlessness and loss of individuality; and they expect innovative and involving communication about the change" (74).

Three different models can be employed to bring about change: power, rationale and reeducative. But

one of the most practical methods for change is the force field analysis, developed by the psychologist Kurt Lewin.

> This conceptual model is based upon the understanding of "life space". Just as each individual lives in his or her own private world, employees function within a unique organizational space, and citizens within a distinctive national space. (75)

The steps that the force field model takes in consideration are:

Describe the change: what is planned to change.

Identify the change: what kind of change is going to be done.

Self-Analysis: What is motivating or behind the change and why is it related to the organization.

Cultural analysis: What is requiring a change, why the organization will benefit from the change, and what are going to be the effects of this.

Inventory resources: who are the people involved in the promotion of the change.

Diagnosis of driving/resisting forces: what strategies are going to be used to increase the driving forces and decrease the restraining forces.

Prepare the case: anticipate arguments against the change and counterarguments in the presentation, presenting benefits in cost.

Communicate the case: how can the people implementing the change be involved in the planning process for it.

Channel resistance: is there any strategy to gain support of those who are reluctant to accept the change.

Project ahead: if the objectives of this change are understood and accepted, what are some of the probable consequences of this plan.

Action plans: how the plan for change is going to be implemented, who is to do it, where and when is it to be done.

Evaluate change: is the change plan working effectively, is modification or alteration needed (75-77).

For the intercultural situations in which change is implemented, Harris and Moran suggest tips for fostering change. The most relevant are:

- Include in the planning process everyone who is affected by the change.
- Set realistic time frames for bringing about the change, neither too long nor short.

- Avoid data gaps between the change efforts at the top, middle and lower levels of the system.
- Realize that effective relations are condition for change, not an end.
- Apply change intervention strategies appropriately.
- Identify personnel capable of diagnosing the need for change.
- Wait for the right time when individuals or institutions are ready for change.
- Promote collaborative efforts between line and staff in planning and implementing the change.
- Maintain a realistic, long-term perspective relative to change.
- Collect data to support the change and evaluate it.
- Set measurable objectives and targets relative to the change that are both tangible and immediate. (77-78)

Change is more acceptable when it is understood and the people in the organization are trained for it. This is the main point for a successful communication plan.

Negotiating with the American culture

When people communicate with each other, they have a tendency to assume things about perceptions, judging and reasoning patterns. "Correct assumptions facilitate communication, but incorrect assumptions lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication" (42).

Harris and Moran consider that the most common assumption is projective cognitive similarity; that is, when one assumes that the other person perceives the same way he or she does. When American managers communicate with managers of other countries, they have more difficulties than when they communicate with managers of their own culture (43). This is because, based on different cultural conditioning, assumptions are more likely to be incorrect.

They have to learn about the culture, the perceptions, and customs to have a basis for making correct assumptions. In this manner the communication can become easier, and understanding the other countries' rules can reduce cultural gap differences.

> Awareness of cultural influences is essential for transferring concepts, technology, or ideas. Depending on the cultures, there may be an overlap of values in a specific area, and therefore, the problems related to transferring ideas will be minimal. However, in some instances the gap will be significant and cause serious problems. (43)

Graham and Herberger suggest a group of characteristics describing the style of the American negotiators. They establish that:

- American managers think that they can deal with any business situation by themselves.

- For human relations Americans use informality and equality, to make people feel comfortable.

- Americans are not very proficient with foreign languages.

- When Americans are negotiating they get irritated if the person who makes the decision is not present.

- Americans when negotiating like to go straight to the point.

- Americans expect to work with honest information.

- Americans like to talk about the issue, not to keep in silence.

- They are persistent even is the answer is "no".

- Americans take every negotiation one task at a time, analyzing them sequentially.

- When an agreement is made and a word is given, they expect this agreement to be honored no matter what.

- Americans try to not change their minds even in difficult moments (43-44). (See Illustration 4).

Illustration 4

The U.S. negotiator's Global Report Card	
Competency	**Grade**
Preparation	B-
Synergistic approach (win-win)	D
Cultural I.Q.	D
Adapting the negotiating process to the host country environment	D
Patience	D
Listening	D
Linguistic abilities	F
Using language that is simple and accessible	D
High aspirations	B+
Personal integrity	A-
Building solid relationships	D

SOURCE: Managing Cultural Differences by Phillip Harrys and Robert Moran (1996).

Every time a foreign country does business with American people, it is important to take into consideration Americans' most common characteristics in order to avoid misunderstandings. In the same manner, Americans must understand and learn about the culture they are dealing with. In this manner, cross-cultural communication will be effective and it will help to facilitate decision-making between different cultures.

Foreign exchange programs review

The movement of students to foreign countries to get a degree or simply to learn a foreign language has a long history.

> It was not until the end of World War II that many nations began to recognize education as a national priority with a conscious intent to strengthen economic growth, maintain political stability and increase national prestige. (Ranjani 27)

As the number of international students coming to the United States for an education is continually increasing, managing diversity is an increasingly important concern. "However, teaching styles and strategies have not necessarily responded to meet the changing needs of the diverse student population" (Tompson and Tompson 53).

In the year 1974, 154,000 international students were enrolled in U.S. universities and by the year 1994 the number of foreign students had tripled to 450,000 students. Although the number of international students has been growing so fast, the increases have varied from region to region (53). The higher education community has shown little interest in the special needs of those students or on the

impact of such growth on the colleges and universities.

This responsibility in the development of the international students through education has effected the enlargement of international dimensions of American higher education (Ranjani 27).

Educational institutions in the United States do not just have foreign students because they are a source of revenue, but they also are considered a source of cultural diversity, enlightenment and fount of valuable insights to discussions in the classroom.

High attrition rates for international students should not be surprising because most of the students coming have to make a transition to a new learning environment while they are coping with the stress of adjusting to a new country (Tompson and Tompson 53).

Despite the benefits of educational interchange being considered of value, there remain differences of opinion about institutional responsibilities to foreign students and the students' individual obligations.

To help international students deal with entry to a new culture and get over the culture shock, the instructors must know how to confront diversity

issues. This is because what can be an effective solution with an American student may not be effective or even appropriate for an individual from another country (54).

Different observations of foreign students.

Faculty observations

Some faculty members notice that the most noted behavior of international students within the class is their reluctance to participate in discussions sufficiently, even though the students know that in the class syllabus is established that a percentage of the final grade is based on participation in class. "International students will rarely debate issues in class, disagree with the opinion of a classmate or instructor, or challenge the status quo" (Tompson and Tompson 55). Obviously, this behavior does not bring any positive effect on the student performance.`

Another difficulty of foreign students noticed by faculty is that they do not often ask for explanation of issues or assignments that are not clear to them. Foreign students tend to work and study in groups with only other foreign students in class (55). This can raise issues about whether work submitted is the

student's own, and charges of plagiarism. Research show that when the international students "had violated ethical guidelines regarding scholastic integrity, this behavior was rated as having the most negative impact on performance" (55). See Table 1 for information mentioned above.

Another issue is that international students place greater emphasis on academic and professional goals than on nonacademic matters (Ranjani 28). This is because they rate themselves lower than average, because they are in a nonnative country and cultures are different. This makes them harder to socialize.

Table 1

International Student's Inappropriate Coping Behaviors

Legend for Chart:
A - Student behavior
B - Faculty reporting the behavior (%)
C -Impact of negative Behavior [a]

A	B	C
Little class participation	77	4.3
Not asking for clarification on assignments	69	3.5
Sitting only with international students	66	3.4
Studying only with international students	58	3.0
Breach of ethical standards of scholarship	24	4.9

SOURCE: Journal of Education for Business. Confronting diversity issues in the classroom with strategies to improve satisfaction and retention of international students by Tompson and Tompson (1996).

Student Perspective

For the students one of the critical and difficult aspects when coming to a foreign country is to develop a social network.

In Table 2 students reported that "loneliness and the fear of not "fitting in" kept them mentally preoccupied until an acceptable level of stability in the social domain was achieved" (Tompson and Tompson 55). That is why international students are always in groups of others from the same culture or with other foreign students who they identify with. This loneliness and fears of not fitting in make them not willing to sit or ask to study with American students and, ultimately, to not participate in class.

The second primary adjustment factor is the language. No matter how many years an international student spends studying the English language, they consider that to study and comprehend studies is always going to be difficult, because they come from a country where English is not the native language.

"It should be recognized that standardized tests are useful indicators, but they are less reliable and valid for students from other cultural and linguistic

backgrounds than for students of the United States"

(Ranjani 28).

Table 2

International Students' Most Difficult Adjustment Areas

Adjustment issue
1. Social isolation
2. Language skills
3. Knowing norms, rules, and regulation
4. Overcoming stereotypes
5. Transportation
6. Clothing norms
7. Weather differences
8. Food differences
9. Oral presentation assignments
10. Personal finances

SOURCE: <u>Journal of Education for Business</u>. Confronting diversity issues in the classroom with strategies to improve satisfaction and retention of international students by Tompson and Tompson (1996).

Language also provokes the international students

to always sit near another international student, most

of the time one who speaks the same language, because

they can ask each other about what has been discussed

in the class, about lectures and assignments.

To deal daily with norms, rules and regulations

of a foreign country in which sometimes the responses

to them are not the same, is also difficult for

international student. For instance, foreign students

perceive the classroom atmosphere in the United States

as much more informal than they are accustomed to in

their countries. Furthermore, they think that American students speak out more frequently, sometimes without being called on by the instructor, and they interact using more familiar terms (Tompson and Tompson 56). In some countries it is considered unacceptable to be so informal during class and full participation in wide ranging discussions is not usual.

Poor academic advisement for international students is one of the major reasons for failure to graduate on schedule. International students are misguided in many ways. Sometimes they are placed in inappropriate programs of study while others are placed in two year colleges when they should be in a four year institution. The poor academic counseling has contributed to poor academic accomplishment and sometimes changing of majors by international students (Ranjani, 28). The academic mentors must know about the addressing of foreign students needs and guide them in their education.

The style of the American education is different than other educational systems. Ranjani establishes: "When the students have to face a diversified requirements of a general education in the United

States, the sudden change in academic life often leads to apprehensions and confusion" (29). International students are most of the time trained to listen more than speak out in class.

The evaluation system in the United States is different than the other countries use. The American system tests the students by multiple choice and short answer questions. They are more used to essay-oriented examinations. This difference creates tension among international students (29).

If the students are mislead and not informed about the differences in education systems, factors such as course structure, course content and academic standards, can create impediments in the achievement of goals of the international students.

The importance of American programs accommodating to international students' academic needs has elicited different point of views:

> Some argue that international students, although certainly welcome to study in the United States, should not expect the system to make accommodations for them. Those who support a policy of curriculum modification, on the other hand, argue that an institution with a high enrollment of international students has an obligation towards curriculum modification. (29)

Economics can pose problems for international students. Sometimes international students face economic problems, even if they are supported by their families or institutions. "Self-help is nearly impossible for these students because of restrictions imposed by United States immigration laws" (29). Thus, if income at home changes, or unexpected expenses arise, international students can be forced to terminate their education and return home.

Another difficulty international students face is the acculturation process, in which they have to learn and adopt a new culture and how to live with it. They have to get involved with a new cultural environment completely different where they come from. They have to get adjusted to different social patterns that become really difficult for them. The student's adaptation difficulties vary from one country to another. "Prejudice, impatience, religious and political attitudes on the part of both native and international students often interfere with socializing" (30). International students commonly get unsatisfied and unsociable because they have a feeling of lack of belonging.

Most of the foreign students who arrive to the United States for an education come from countries with cultures in which the family ties have a very important meaning and they have distinct etiquette patterns, different food habits and religious beliefs. For this reason, sometimes it is traumatic for them to confront a liberal culture with independence beliefs. For some international students who had the opportunity to share their lives for a period of time with a host family, the shock has been easier to handle. They learn from each other and they start understanding the foreign culture and customs.

In the research of Geert Hofstede he identifies dimensions that describe how national culture affects values and attitudes. In particular, the individualism-collectivism dimension implies that, while American score extremely high on the individualism factor, other cultures emphasize collectivism (Tompson and Tompson 57).

> Countries such as Japan and Singapore, which score high on the collectivism factor, use teams more frequently to accomplish tasks and consider effective group-work skills more valuable than individual work...students who have previously been rewarded for meeting outside of class to discuss assignments or to prepare for a case are not

likely to change their behavior without solid justification. (57)

No one other than the educational institutions themselves are in a position to help international students feel a stronger sense of involvement in the larger academic community. These institution should have the commitment to create and maintain an environment of understanding between the international and American students, giving strong services to international students (Ranjani 30).

Many adaptation problems of international students are relatively unknown to faculty in colleges and universities of the United States. Giving adequate services to foreign students will benefit all educational institutions. The enrollment of students will be higher. The revenues for the institution will increase and their finances will be satisfying. Foreign students will be fulfilled and will get involved easily and entirely in the American culture. At the same time they will enrich culturally and academically American students when interacting in amusement activities and during classes.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Based on the findings of research made during this project and the works detailed in Chapter three, this chapter is going to be an Institutional communication plan for supporting international students.

In this plan is included change strategies for those organizations who already have a plan for international students, but want to implement a new one to improve their service. Those organizations will have to implement change in some of their procedures, explaining how to achieve change successfully.

An institution that just beginning to recruit international students, and want to provide the best possible service, should take in consideration the points suggested in the plan.

This plan can be used by any educational institution as a guide to implement an efficient and effective communication service for foreign students.

Once an Institution is dealing with foreign students it is involved with cross-cultural communications as well, and has to understand that international people have different expectations of education, and have different cultures. When people from different countries are communicating, the transmissions have to be as clear as possible, avoiding any kind of misunderstanding and miscommunication. Miscommunication is the principal source of discomfort that international students have about the service provided them by their institutions.

An organization experienced in working with international students must still consider implementing change in their exchange programs' functions involving the people working within the organization. By improving services and training those who deliver them, they can execute a new plan improving some of their actual practices.

An organization that is starting to target foreign student can use this plan as a guide for developing their own comprehensive plan. They will find both general advice and which are the main demands of foreign students, what services to offer to them, all the important information they need to know

about the place the institution where is located,
about the school itself, its classes, and student
community so they will be satisfied with the school
service give to them.

If Change is required

If the institution wants to implement a new plan
in which the service offered to foreign students need
to be improved, they will have to make some changes to
the actual service submitted.

The organization has to decide where the change
is needed. It is important that the change has to be
in accordance with the objectives, processes and
procedures of the organization.

The change can be made in one or more of these
six categories: structure, technology, tasks,
procedures, environment and people. Let us give the
example that the organization implementing the plan
needs to make some changes in tasks and processes.

It is very important to create willingness for
change among the employees, allowing them some
individuality, making them feel a sense of power, in
order to make easier both their involvement and the
innovation internally in the organization.

To bring change into the organization it is important to:

1. Describe what is planned to change. For example, to change the different tasks each person is performing, or change to improve a better internal communication into the organization. It is very important to comprehend the reasons for change and anyone in the organization who must be informed about what is going to be changed.

2. Make a self-analysis of what is motivating the change, what has caused the decision to implement a new plan. For example: failure in students' enrollment, complaints directly from students, necessity of raising the number of students, etc. The self-analysis should include all the possible reasons motivating change.

3. Identify why the organization is going to profit from the change. Maybe they will raise their revenues with more enrollment, or maybe they will gain a better name among the other colleges or schools, or maybe they simply want to build diversity in their colleges

-- each institution has different objectives when implementing change.

4. The institution has to do a listing of resources, involving those people who are going to be working with the promotion of the change. The most common areas that deal with international students are The International Office, the Dean of International Programs, Dean of International students, the Financial Office, and the Presidency of the College. Most of the time those are the positions involved with foreign students; obviously, sometimes those positions are not called the same or in some institutions the International Students Office is the only one involved with them.

5. Identify the strategies that are going to be used to increase the acceptance of change. In this manner, all the limiting forces are going to be decreased through giving strong motives for change.

6. Prepare arguments to support the decision for change. If some counterarguments are presented, strong foundations will support the change. Also it

is important to show on paper all the possible benefits and a prognosis of cost-benefits.

7. When the plan is communicated, the people implementing the change have to be involved in the planning process. In this manner, all kind of suggestions and point of views can be clarified before it is implemented and the people will have a complete knowledge of the reasons and benefits of it.

8. Once the project is understood, discussed and accepted, repeat the possible consequences and objectives of this plan.

9. Finally, put in action the plan. In this step, the plan is going to be implemented. Describing who is going to perform each function, what are the tasks each one has to complete, and when they have to be done.

10. It is indispensable, for an effective accomplishment of the plan, to have a continuous evaluation process in effect during the time it is in practice. This can give the opportunity to make

modifications or improvements, and to fill in the data gaps that may arise between the change efforts and the different positions involved. These practices will help the plan to be successful achieving its objectives.

It is very important when planning and implementing the change to promote collaborative efforts among all the personnel involved while always maintaining a positive and realistic long-term perspective about the change. But the most important thing is to achieve understanding, so the accomplishment of the communication plan can be palpable.

Institutional communication plan for supporting International students

When educational institutions work with exchange programs it is not just a matter of enrolling students and providing them the education they are looking for.

There are many factors besides that. Recognizing this is the key for a successful exchange program service.

When students come to a foreign country to study, the language is not the only barrier for them. They have to face several barriers and new things; they wouldn't have to if they wouldn't have made the decision of coming to a foreign country and stayed in their native land. In other words, it is a double experience. It is an adaptation experience and an educational experience as well. Furthermore, the function of the college or university is as an educator but not just of the major the student is getting. The school has to have the commitment to giving the most fulfilling service concerning the students' overall needs.

> Students not only expect knowledgeable and
> qualified faculty but also frequently need
> teachers or mentors who will help them with
> the sometimes troublesome transition to a
> new school, a new country and a new culture.
> (Tomkovick and Al-Katib 131)

The following is a guide that can be adjusted to any college or university that want to give effective service to their international students.

Each one of the following points is primary. All of them have been found in research about the principal international students' demands and some of

them have been reinforced through my personal experience as an international student.

The college or university has to take in consideration every time it handles the enrollment of an international students the following:

Information about the State and Culture

The information given to an international student about the place where he or she is coming to live and learn about another culture is the gateway for them to their new experience, prompting planning and creating expectations before they come.

Including in this introductory material such aspects as the weather, the people, the location of the college, special holidays are very important. With such information the student can be mentally prepared and have expectations of the other culture. If, for example, the location of the college doesn't offer any transportation service, the student may have the option of getting their own transportation and can make the necessary arrangements in advance. The material could include "tips" informing about transportation facilities the college offers to those students who do not have cars. It can communicate also

that American students often have cars and when international students establish friendships with them offer them rides, thus encouraging forming international friendships.

Introductory materials should address the fact that they will have to confront a totally different culture, and will have to acculturate to it. It should call attention to different social patterns, forms of habits, different religious beliefs, etc. For example, American culture is very liberal; once they graduate from high school young men and women often leave the house and parents to be independent. This is not seen so early in other countries. These are significant topics that, if addressed, can make an introduction to the place they will be living and studying in interesting and useful to international students.

Some of them have the opportunity to share with a host family, so they can absorb more easily the culture and have a closer interaction with Americans.

There are some schools who offer this choice to foreign students in order to facilitate the adaptation of the students to the culture and at the same time

provide and environment within which they can improve their English skills.

College rules and regulations

International students should know under what rules and regulations they have to live. Every educational institution has different internal rules and regulations.

For example, some colleges, for the vacation breaks such as spring break, Christmas break or breaks between semesters or quarters, don't allow any student to stay in dorms. It is an important point the international students should know, so they can think about something to do or some place to stay for those days. Sometimes the schools let students stay, but they have to be informed of and budget for increased housing costs for those days.

Such policies have to be clearly established, so the students can be prepared and not find out late, when it is likely to be a problem.

Financial Information

The information given to international students about financial matters has to be very precise. The money they are going to invest in their studies is

very important. Education is expensive and often requires careful budgeting by families. For this reason a clear and detailed explanation of the costs is necessary. If the institution gives English language courses the costs should be detailed. Or if the institution have different programs of special interest, its materials should describe the differences in costs and a brief abstract about each program.

The most significant factor is that international students have to receive the most accurate and honest information about costs. The discussion should address both University and personal expenses, because once the student is here he or she handles a budget that shouldn't change or be modified.

If the institution offers scholarship to international students, that information also should be provided along with any other type of financial aid or arrangements available through the institution.

In this matter, some schools provide economic help to foreign students offering work and learn experience on campus. This usually involves working at the library, cafeteria or different offices in the college, so they can credit the money they make to

their tuition. Such experiences can also help the students learn about the new culture.

Students should be informed that if they want to get a job off campus they have to wait until they have spent nine months studying, so they can make arrangements with the Naturalization and Immigration Services to apply for a work permission. Gaining the opportunity to have corporate work experience, take leadership development workshops or participate in summer internships enrich the students learning and cultural experience significantly and strengthen the skills necessary to achieve successful careers.

International Students Office

Students should know that the first place they have to go in the enrollment process is the International Students Office. This office serves as a central and main source of information for the international student. It must provide by mail, if necessary, all the paperwork needed to fill out from their own country and once they get here. This office should be in charge of picking up the student from the airport and guiding them to their respective rooms. It should also give them a tour around the campus

showing all the different offices, buildings and facilities.

Once the student is here, the person in charge of this office should lead the student to their respective advisor for registration.

Besides all these functions, this office should be the place where students go to for any questions or concerns. This office could send a monthly newsletter with the information students need to know about events, free days, holidays, etc. They as foreign students don't know eventualities like this and they deserve to receive constant information so they can be prepared. Such a newsletter can help international students feel like a part of the campus community.

An effective way of receiving feedback from the students, to know if they have any concern or problem, or if they have something positive to say about the service or the school, would be by monthly emails or mail. In this manner, a positive feedback about the services can be obtained and a continuous improvement can be achieved.

Some colleges have buildings and installations off campus in which students take classes. If it is the case, the international Office can offer the

service of taking those students to those locations if the classes they are taking are offered there.

Or it can offer the service once or twice a week of transportation to any place they need to go to buy any personal care items. Not all the international students have the advantage of having a car. This can be a great help for those students with this problem.

Advisement for students

With good academic counseling international students can be well directed. With good advice they can be placed in the right program of study, and take the subjects that are most useful for them. With good advice they can know if some credits can be transfered and avoid changing of majors because of a poor academic performance.

Good advising is crucial to foreign students. The National Association for Foreign Students Affairs suggest that "foreign students' academic progress be closely supervised throughout their stay in the United States" (28).

A mentor with knowledge and experience pertaining to international students has an idea of the needs of those students and with close contact with the student

both can design a course of study related to the students' international career needs.

English language requirements

If it is required to take and pass a standardized English test with a specific score, it has to be established so that the students can prepare to take the test to prove English language proficiency. The development in classes will be easier and favorable with English language proficiency.

It should be communicated if the college offers English language-training programs as an effort to give effective service. "An essential service for international students is the establishment of a variety of intensive English courses to be taken before or concurrently with the academic studies" (Ranjani 28).

If the student has a good proficiency of English the classes and the interaction with other American students will be easier as well as studying.

College equipment and facilities

Informative material could sell the school if it includes accurate information showing the up to date

facilities the college or university offers. It should also cover the equipment quality and any advantages compared with other schools. Facilities as such gym, sport courts, computer laboratories, library, clubhouse, cafeteria, etc, are of interest to prospective international students.

If the school offers competitive equipment and facilities this can attract students, appealing to their interest on being part of a school that offers an up date resources.

> For presently enrolled students, campus facilities can make a strong and lasting impression that can ultimately influence other perceptions as well. Prospective foreign students may not have the luxury of a campus visit prior to enrollment, so all promotional material made available to applicants should emphasize the school's positive aspects and appealing physical facilities. (Tomkovick and Al-Katib 133)

College recreation activities

Most of the colleges provide every week recreational activities in which all American and International students can participate. These are important for international students, so they can interact and learn about the American culture and can

have some time to socialize and develop a social network.

About the classes

Some points about the American education should be issued, so foreign students can have a better understanding about the class approach.

- The course structure, content and academic standards are different.

- The American evaluation process is based on quick thinking by multiple choice and short answer examinations (29).

- The professors are trained to confront diversity in the classroom, because of the big quantity of international students. Some of them develop workshops and seminars to increase understanding of international students and to develop supportive response patterns to them.

- The classroom atmosphere and faculty-student affinity is informal. The students have the freedom to talk and speak out during the class. And the professor promotes students' participation in class. Most of the time participation is a percentage of the final grade.

- During the class it is important to work individually or if there is group work the professor expects the international students to relate with American students.

These are important points the international students have to be prepared for because they always attempt to sit with other international students or some of the same nationality.

Miscellaneous

Simple issues that can be irrelevant for the college are essential for international students. For example, as soon as the student arrives one of the first things he or she have to do is to open a bank account where they can have their money secure. They will surely need a State identification card that can be accepted everywhere they go. They will need to get school identification for the cafeteria or to have access to the college's library's books. Small details like these are very important and relevant to international students who arrive in a foreign land. For this reason, they should be informed about them and ready to do what is necessary once they arrive.

Gathering all of the above types of information into a special catalog or brochure for international students can be a convenient way to offer an efficient and effective service to students. It should concentrate on most of the points established above adapted to the college or university's objectives, rules and regulations.

The format given to the catalog is particular of each college. It could be offered for a very targeted recruitment of international students having an Internet Web page, a targeted mailing system or a simple brochure containing these crucial aspects for foreign students.

> Institutions of higher education should assume the obligation of creating and maintaining a wholesome atmosphere that will create a mutual understanding between international and native students by establishing strong services to international student. (Ranjani 31)

This chapter presents a complete list of significant indications that provide a basis to create an efficient and effective plan to improve the support and services offered to international students.

It is of crucial importance that all the information included in the plan for better

communications in exchange programs has to be as honest and accurate as possible. Shaded truths should be avoided, as they lead to mistrust and bad relationships.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

While it is true that the number of international students in the United States is growing, it is also true that the service provided to them has to be the most efficient and effective as possible.

If the quality of service is not good, as was mentioned in chapter II in the magazine article about the rate of increase of international students falling in Boston decreases like this can occur in other areas as well.

Most of the sources researched agreed that international students are a great source of revenue for colleges and universities in the United States. This is one major reason why they have to try to continuously improve the service given to them.

There are so many ways to continuously improve exchange programs and receive feedback from international students about the service; ways extremely important to achieve success.

Visual documentation with the most accurate and honest information is indispensable when developing institutional communication programs for supporting international students. Documents such as catalogs, brochures, pamphlets, information in the web sites are very useful when effective and efficient communications need to be achieved.

It is important in international business to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations caused by the language. Everything has to be clearly explained so the information can be decoded appropriately and the message understood. Katherine Wage in the article "Communicating is bigger challenge in cross-cultural world" establishes that:

> When placed in inter-cultural situations our "knowledge" of how to communicate is substantially challenged. The process of acquiring cross-cultural communicative skills is extremely complex, requiring not only competency in language but also competency in the social-cultural ways of a people. (23)

Colleges and universities also have to take advantage of having diversity. International students typically represent the very best their countries have to offer. "They tend to have solid to superior

academic credentials, which subsequently enhance the academic excellence of the colleges and universities they attend" (Chuck 131).

Their presence tends to enrich the diversity of the campus. They expose different cultural and ethnic experiences as well as promoting global awareness.

From an economic perspective, Chuck establishes: "international student in state-supported institutions typically pay some form of full-fare international tuition, thereby making a greater contribution, on a per student basis, to the cost of running a school"(131). International students are also willing to accept on-campus jobs as research or teaching assistants to partially pay school expenses.

From a business perspective, international students trained in U.S. business schools will have a better understanding of U.S. business practices, which could influence and facilitate business transactions in the global market.

It is very important to take in consideration the indications mentioned above, for a better comprehension of the importance of having foreign students in colleges and universities in the United States.

It is not surprising that many educational institutions in the United States are adopting, as part of their mission, the goal of increasing foreign student applications and admissions.

It is almost impossible to create a plan that can be applicable to all universities and colleges. Each institution has its own principles, goals and objectives and based on them, the plan has to be adapted.

The plan suggested in this culminating project addresses the main and most meaningful needs an international student confronts. All of its points are based on the research completed for this project and on personal experience as a foreign student.

An important issue for the student's successful development in classes is to have a proficiency in English. Support in English language and study skills is one of the most important services universities can offer to their international students. This service must also be considered by the institution as an important part of a responsible recruitment strategy, and the staff involved must be acknowledged as a valuable component of such a strategy.

Another important element of any successful program that must be emphasized is that all the information provided to students and their families has to be the most truthful possible. This will ensure the accomplishment of effective communications with exchange programs. It will maintain good relationships and reputation.

Issue with Chapter IV

The plan proposed in Chapter IV is very precise, and covers the main aspects for a effective foreign exchange programs guide. There is one important aspect that I didn't think of that came to light when I was sharing some experiences with another international student.

The plan does not address the issue of health care coverage. The university or college should provide options to international students to cover this important area. When the students arrive they should be required to have insurance either from their country or have the option provided by the university of selecting different alternatives of insurance, so the students can choose the best one for them. It should be requisite for the students to have an

insurance policy, so in case of accidents they won't have any kind of expenses problems. Such coverage also protects the school from liability or embarrassment.

I suggest this because there are many cases in which the students come to the United States without insurance and their schools do not offer any kind of insurance options, so they stay without it. Sometimes they have accidents and cannot afford the medical expenses getting in delinquent debt problems.

Feedback from an outside evaluator

This section is based on feedback from a person who works in "X university's" Registration Office for one year and a half. She is actually a foreigner and alumni at that university and today is in charge of the International Office.

The feedback provided was very useful and helped in the completion of the study and also was complementary to the Chapter IV plan, many of whose suggestions it exemplifies. Some points that were made are useful for any student on their way to a new college:

- To enter to the United States for the purposes of study or research you are required to hold a valid passport, an I-20 and a visa issued by the U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

- Check the expiration date of your passport.

- An I-20 is issued by your U.S. university once you have been accepted and have shown proof of English proficiency and financial support.

- Most students will enter the U.S. on a F-1 Visa. This visa is for students who have been accepted for full time study a U.S. university or junior/community college.

- When traveling to the United States they should ask about special student rates that may be available and remember to book well in advance of the departure date, especially as international students will probably be traveling in peak season. Student should be in contact with the institution's International Office to tell them the arrival date, airline, airport, flight number, time of arrival (if arriving by air) or, if arriving by car, bus or train, all the necessary information the International Office needs to welcome the students to the school.

- Student should have information about airline baggage allowance. They need to know that they will be allowed to check in two standard shaped bags (suitcases, travel-bags, rucksacks, etc.) which do not exceed 64 inches, and one small bag that can be carried onto the plane that should not exceed 45 inches. Some airlines are stricter on weight allowances than others although the average is 70 lbs. per checked item. Excess baggage costs range between $75 and $100 per piece and are subject to the restrictions above. So if they are bringing a lot of baggage they have to make sure to have some notes in English (if they have any problem) and coins in U.S. currency.
- Sometimes students do not know what to take when coming to the U.S.
  - About clothing, in general campus wear is informal. In some parts of the U.S. winters bring severely cold weather that requires heavy coats and boots which are best purchased after they arrive. Clothing is readily available in a wide price range in the U.S.
  - If the student takes medication regularly, he/she should bring a sufficient supply, along with a

copy of the prescription. If they use glasses, it is a good idea to bring an extra pair and your prescription, if possible. They may feel more comfortable using non-prescriptive medicines they are familiar with for headaches, colds, upset stomachs, etc. Such medication, aspirins, ointments and remedies, are widely available in the U.S.

- As international students will probably find themselves invited to the home of an American family, it is a good idea to take several inexpensive but typical gifts from your country. Generally small, light gifts are most practical.

- To stay in touch with their home, they should be informed about making calls. A telephone number in the United States consists of a three-digit area code, a three-digit local area exchange and a four-digit number (e.g. 314 949-2000). Normally, only the last seven digits are used in a local call. Non-local calls within the area code from which you are dialing require you to dial "1", then the area code, then the seven digit number. The area code "800" indicates a toll-free number. The area code "900" is a toll number and fees will be charged.

The advertisers of telephone numbers with this code are required to inform the person of the cost in advance, although it is usually in incredible small type or announced very quickly.

International calls: anyone can place international calls from any telephone. To call direct, dial the international access code (011), the country code, the city code and the local number. In some areas the student will have to give the operator the number they wish to reach and the operator will place the call.

Collect calls: If the students do not have a lot of change, they may want to charge the call to the recipient. To do this, first dial "0" and then the area code and the number he/she need to call. An operator will cut in and ask to help them. They then state that they wish to place a collect call. The operator will ask the person's name and telephone number the student wishes to call. The recipient will only be charged if they accept the charges.

Emergency calls: 911 is the number anyone can call in an emergency. This number is connected to specially trained operators, who will then

relay your message appropriately. Any medical emergencies, fires or crimes are handled by 911. Some cities and towns in the U.S. do not operate a 911 service. In these cases, dial "0" and the operator will connect you to the appropriate number immediately.

- About mailing, domestic rates are 32 cents for letters and 20 cents for postcards. International rates are 50 cents for postcards, 50 cents for aerograms, 60 cents for airmail letters for the first 1/2 ounce. Buy stamps at the post office and avoid stamp machines where you will pay more than the value of the stamps. You may also purchase stamps in grocery stores. Inland mail takes between one and seven days to arrive; to Northern Europe, three to ten days; to Southern Europe, two to three weeks; to Australia and New Zealand, ten to fourteen days, to South America two to four weeks.

- Students must be informed about the time zones. The continental U.S. is divided into four time zones; Eastern, Central, Mountain and Pacific. When it is noon Eastern time, it is 11 am Central, 10 am Mountain and 9 am Pacific (VanParijs).

Finally, this International Students Advisor provided complete information about the immigration procedures. She suggested the following to any international student on their way to college. Upon entering the U.S., students will pass through immigration for an official review of the passport and visa documents. The following documents should be carried (not checked with your baggage): passport, visa, I-20 form, evidence of financial assistance.

I-94 (Arrival-Departure Record or Permit to Stay.

This form will be given to the student on the plane and he or she will be asked to complete it before they disembark. After reviewing the documents, the immigration officer will indicate on this form the length of time the student will be permitted to stay in the U.S. (indicated by the notation D/S, which stands for Duration of Status). This means that the student will be allowed to stay in the U.S. as long as he/she maintain the student's visa status. The officer will attach this form to the passport.

The student will be admitted to the U.S. for the specific period of time indicated on the I-20. If it takes the student longer to complete the studies than indicated on the I-20 they must apply for an extension

of their stay in a timely manner (they can talk to the International Students Advisor for more information). Every time the student leaves and re-enters the U.S., the I-94 will be replaced. The original I-20, however, is the permanent record that must be kept with the passport.

Maintaining the students' visa status.

To maintain the student status they must maintain full-time enrollment, have a valid passport and not violate their status in any other way (i.e. work illegally). Also they must carry out the program described on the I-20 after admission to the U.S. This means they must attend the university that issued their I-20 they used to obtain their visa and to enter the U.S. Also, if after attending a university the student decides to transfer to another, he/she must complete a transfer of their immigration documents.

All this information above was given by the International Student Advisor of X University, in an interview. She brought out some of the specific information that should be given to each international student, so they won't be afraid when coming to a new school. I discussed here the most important points she gave that were not included in Chapter IV. In their

specificity, they effectively complement the purposes of this project.

Limitations or weaknesses

The limitations or weaknesses experienced during the elaboration of this culminating project all stemmed from time. I was really tight on time. As an international student I had a time limit to present the project. I really did not have the enough time to make a deeper and more extended culminating project. The information that was readily available was sufficient to complete a satisfactory project. Finding it however, required much legwork, visits to several different libraries, looking for material under a variety of headings. I am really pleased and satisfied with the research accomplished and plan suggested. It is complete and I think covers the most relevant and important points that have to be considered supporting international students.

Another limitation was that there are not a wide variety of books written about recruitment of foreign exchange programs and retention. There are more magazine articles written about topics that are directly and indirectly related.

I suggest that as international students importance is increasingly recognized, more books should be written and focused on aspects as: international exchange programs, college recruitment, student retention, and quality service colleges should offer.

Areas that future work might extend

My own research about this topic left me thinking that a good topic for future research could be about helping developing countries to recover their U.S. educated professionals. I suggest this because it is seen that when foreign students come to U.S. to study they stay working and later they do not want to go back to their country to help in its development.

International students should be trained so they would go back to their respective countries to help in the development of their economies. If the student has strong ties with his/her native land, if the student has sufficient founds to complete his/her education or the student's major has an application at home, those are all good reasons for the student go back.

Developing countries expect their U.S. trained professionals to return to and contribute to economic development at home. "But the circle is broken and the full effects are not reached when students and scholars do not return to their home countries to apply their education and skills, both technological and personal" (Arasteh 258).

These countries spend a very large amount of money for international education programs for one reason: they provide an excellent medium of knowledge transfer to their countries. As a result of students not returning, developing countries have a shortage of skilled personnel (269).

Some recommendations can be directed to help developing countries to recover their students, so they can help in the developing of their countries.

- There is some discrepancy of the salary levels between developing countries and the United States. Once they graduate students expect to make good money and that is something they hardly ever get when they go back. Developing countries must find ways to address this compensation issue competitively.

- Students who study in the United States with their own funds stay more often than those whose study is made possible by fellowship sponsored by their governments. "This is logical, since those who study with the aid of their government fellowship usually have moral and legal obligations to return home after completion of their studies" (259).

- If the students have close contact with their country and have the opportunity to see changes in socioeconomic developments, as well as good employment opportunities, these will have a significant effect in on students return decision. (259)

- Developing countries should set up a Student Placement Office in their embassies to find employment opportunities for the students who have completed, or are about to complete, their studies in the United States. (259)

- Most universities in the developing countries are not well organized and inadequately prepared, discarding the ideal institution that would meet the expectations of some students educated in the United States.

- Developing countries should have a publication in which they keep the students aware of the important news and economic development in their countries. Updates and employment opportunities and trends in the labor market at home should be included.

- Developing countries' initial efforts should be centered on improving and expanding programs throughout their countries in order to gradually limit study abroad to a few specific graduate and post-graduate programs (260).

These recommendations mentioned above, among others, can be very useful for recovering students who have studied abroad.

Closer and more involved research on this issue can be the subject of a good project for investigation. This area of research was not included in this culminating project, because it is not directly related to the topic of this study.

Conclusion

This thesis's intention was to provide a guide to help those educational institutions that plan to

develop communication programs to support international students.

Institutions have to be open to any kind of change – in all circumstances they must have excellent organizational and cross-cultural communications skills, all necessary for a company that intends to be successful and in the forefront of the market. They must be able to handle whatever necessity foreign students require, in order to provide the most effective and efficient service to a population with special needs, who are a great source of revenue and cultural diversity on campus.

In any individual case, there is a serious and hard work to be done. Today, those who are not prepared to give a quality service of any kind will quickly find out that service is the key of the success in today's business world.

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