

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUCCESS

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This article, with a focus on North American postsecondary education, identifies international students as a strategic enrollment management institutional priority; presents themes in the international student retention, satisfaction, and success research literature; and describes related best practices. It also presents the findings from an in-depth Canadian study, which identifies factors that contribute to attrition of international students. Suggested areas are offered for future improvements to enhance institutional international student success.

"In practical terms, it became apparent that no assumptions can be made about the great variability of international learners and their needs. We need to become aware of the responsibilities and roles of all levels of the university in the learning and socializing processes of the learning environments in which international students seek to participate and experience a sense of belonging. Indeed students need to be seen in the context of the social and academic conditions and relationships that bound them." (Beck, 2009, pp. 335–336)

International Students: A Strategic Enrollment Management Priority

Students from abroad are increasingly choosing to study at North American colleges and universities. Currently, 1.2 million international students study at North American postsecondary educational institutions, with 336,000 choosing Canada and 886,052

enrolling in the U.S. (Canadian Bureau of International Education, 2014; Institute of International Education, 2014). Further, enrollments are growing. Between 2012/13 and 2013/14, international student enrollments grew by 8.1% in the United States and by 10.5% in Canada. The United States is currently ranked first and Canada seventh for the number of international students enrolled. Top countries of origin include China, India, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) projects that the number of international students will more than double by 2020 (OECD, 2014).

This has led most institutions to adopt internationalization as an institutional priority. Knight (2003) identifies internationalization as a process "of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and services elements of an institution" (p. 2). Globalization has emerged as an important educational goal in American higher education (Lucido, 2015).

Dr. Paul Davidson, president of Universities Canada, suggests:

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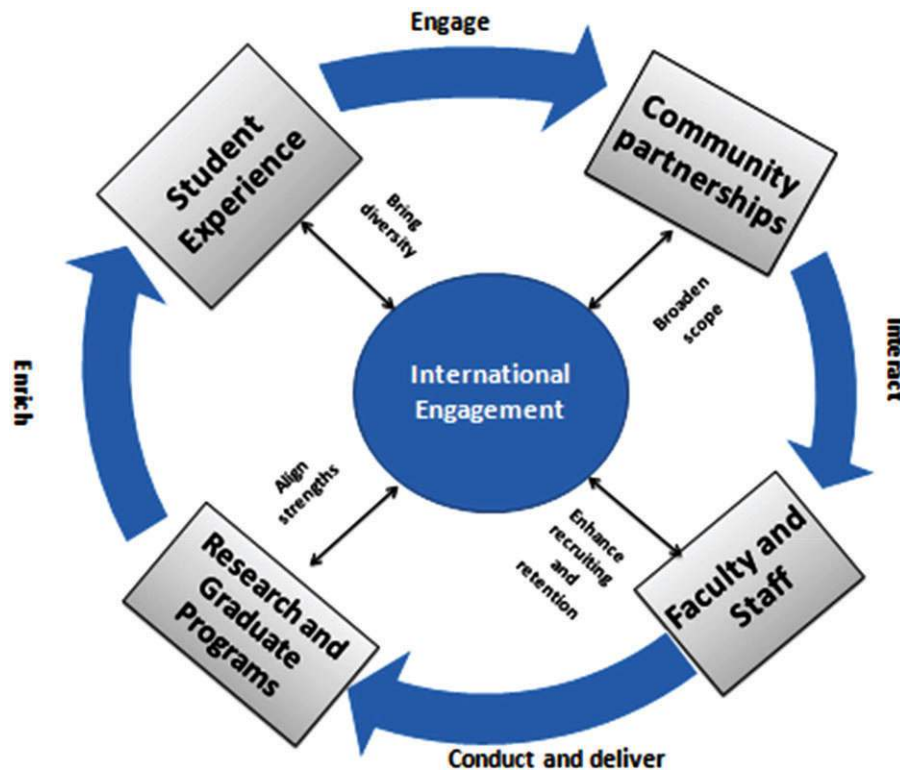
Globalization has become a pervasive force shaping higher education. Today almost all institutions in Canada and around the world engage to some degree in activities aimed at forging global connections and building global competencies among their students, faculty and administrative units. Developing such activities at many levels within universities is now a central part of institutional planning, structures and programming—a phenomenon known as the internationalization of higher education. (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 2014, p. 3)

The presence of international students at a post-secondary institution adds to the multiculturalism and diversity of the general student population and reinforces a global perspective and exchange of ideas. Mutually, international and domestic students develop global cultural skills necessary for success in an increasingly global environment and diverse workforce. In addition, the retention of international students represents a cost benefit for the institution

and the destination country as a whole. According to the Institute of International Education, in 2014 international students contributed more than \$27 billion to the U.S. economy. Roslyn Kunin and Associates, Inc. (2012) report that an additional \$8 billion is spent by international students who study in Canada. In this environment, the recruitment and retention of international students has become a priority for many institutions. Figure 1 shows how internationalization activities have become central to institutional planning.

Throughout modern history, postsecondary education has only occasionally been seen as a product to be traded. “Internationalization,” whereby international education is engaged in by both students and scholars, has been viewed as admirable but only supported in a rather passive manner. This appears to be changing, at least in regard to the recruitment of international students, as they increasingly become an intentional and integral component of many institutional strategic enrollment management plans.

Figure 1. Internationalization as an Integral Part of Strategic Priorities



Source: University of Windsor 2012

Fee, Radford, Dench, & Marshall (2011) suggest that this shift is being driven in Canada by a number of colluding factors: a downward trend in domestic student numbers, increased skilled immigration, less money from the public purse for operational costs, prodding from governments to be more entrepreneurial, and a monumental rise in global demand for higher education, particularly from countries with emerging economies. U.S. institutions of higher education have increasingly viewed international students as a source of tuition revenue (Stephens, 2013). Accordingly, international students are afforded places on campus as an essential resource to foster cross-cultural understanding based on their academic ability and their ability to contribute to financial stability and sustainability. Moreover, countries around the world are purchasing educational services in the trillions of dollars and the market opportunities and international scholarly obligations have attracted many colleges and universities into the market.

It is time to rethink internationalization while connecting emerging enrollment management structures and processes in the context of a globalized and intercultural student body. Educational leaders need to develop a clear and articulated vision for internationalization, a coherent and collaborative approach to planning and coordination of the many international activities across the institution, and an institutional research capacity that supports the use of up-to-date and relevant data and information. This should lead us toward a better understanding of the most effective overall international strategic enrollment management practices.

THE STUDENT VOICE

Satisfaction among international students studying in North American colleges and universities is high. Richard Garrett (2014), the North American director for i-Graduate, found that international student satisfaction and willingness to recommend the institution at both Canadian and American institutions was higher than the average reported by international students taking the most recent administration of the *International Student Barometer*, which targeted satisfaction toward students' academic experience, friendliness of school, attitude of professor, local atmosphere, and quality of learning. High scores on another survey were also reported at Canadian institutions, with 90%

of international students being either very satisfied or satisfied with their educational experience (Canadian Bureau of International Education, 2014).

Student satisfaction is one of the major goals of universities. A satisfied student population can translate into a competitive marketing advantage fostering positive word of mouth communication, student retention and loyalty. The creation and the delivery of excellent customer value is important in creating a sustainable advantage in the highly competitive international education market place (Kotler & Fox, 2002).

A 2004 study at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas (Tas, 2004), outlines that international students reported experiencing difficulties and challenges with social adaptation, college services, finances, cultural and social activities, student government and voice at the university, health care and wellness services, the orientation process, dorms, university value system, various university offices, dealing with authority and bureaucracy, receiving accurate information before arrival, being understood, and the geographical location of the university. Table 1 identifies nine reasons students gave for leaving the university.

Other studies identify an integration challenge. A Canadian Bureau of International Education (2014) survey reported that 56% of the respondents indicated that they have no Canadian friends, and that 36.6 percent said it is difficult to know Canadian students. Similarly, a recent U.S. study (Gareis, 2012) found that almost 40% of international students in the United States indicate that they have no close America friends and would like to have more meaningful interaction with Americans. Students highlighted internal as well as external factors for their lack of social bonds. Internal factors included shyness and lack of strong language proficiency. External factors included what is seen as a lack of interest in other cultures on the part of U.S. students.

In Australia, the issue of international student integration has been studied for many years. In Weiss's (1973) study, two-thirds of international students reported feeling loneliness and or isolation during their studies. In Gresham and Clayton's (2011) study, many students indicated that they have only superficial interactions with Australian students.

Curtis (2004) reported that in the United Kingdom, a 2004 survey jointly conducted by the British Council

Table 1. Reasons International Students Gave for Leaving a University

Theme	Specifics
Making friends and interacting with domestic students	Language barriers; difficulty making domestic friends; felt discriminated against by domestic students; made friends mostly with other international students; more difficult in this environment to belong
Food on campus	More expensive, less diverse, not as tasty as off campus; lack of sensitivity to religious restrictions and traditions; mandatory meal card plan
International student office	Lack of assistance; feelings of discrimination
Academic assistance	Lack of dedicated and approachable advisors and administrative staff; can't find advisors because they're not around; international students need more assistance because they are making a greater adjustment than domestic students
Cultural and social activities	Inadequate network; isolated; lacking social support compared to home country
Housing	Too many restrictions; frequent and short notice relocations
Incorrect information prior to arrival	Lack of trust in recruitment and orientation process
Availability of courses and flexibility in scheduling within degree plans	Courses not available; little or no flexibility in scheduling process
Other reasons	Social and academic adaptation within a new environment; availability of resources and research opportunities

Source: Tas, 2004.

Universities UK, the UK Council for Overseas Student Affairs, and the Council for International Education found that two-thirds of international students have few or no British friends. The survey revealed that most international students befriend students from their home country or other international students. In fact, nearly 60% of international students said that their friends were other international students only, including students from their home country; 32% said they have a mix of U.K. and international friends; and 7% of international students said that the majority of their friends were British.

While most international students feel welcomed and at home on their college campuses, many have a low sense of belonging in the United States generally and face challenges in making the transition to American culture (Schweitzer, Morson, & Mather, 2011). These same students voice concern over the lack of support from the institution in making that transition.

THE FACULTY VOICE

The faculty perspective gives a different view of the issues and challenges international students face at a postsecondary institution. Carter and Xu (2007) describe nursing faculty perceptions of program

adequacy related to culture differences and identify language as a significant barrier to English as a Second Language (ESL) students' progression, testing, learning style, and communication. The challenges ESL students face may be related to patient safety, time demands required for the instruction of ESL students, and various psychosocial issues such as the ability to form relationships with peer groups, isolation, loneliness, and poor social supports. Furthermore, faculty expressed frustration that due to employment restrictions and the subsequent inability to earn an income as a student, international students could not resource a tutor to assist them in academic difficulties. Three concerns identified include language and communication barriers, clinical probation due to communication difficulties as unnecessary humiliation, and competing for attention and time of faculty with other students.

Tompson and Tompson (1996) asked business school faculty at two universities in the southeastern United States to identify behaviors exhibited by international students they consider academically detrimental. Similarly, international students were asked to identify adjustment areas they perceived as most difficult. Each group identified very different factors. The results are summarized and compared in Table 2.

Table 2. Faculty Perceptions of International Students' Academically Detrimental Behaviors and International Students' Perceptions of Most Difficult Adjustment Areas

Faculty—Academically Detrimental Behaviors	Students—Perceptions of Most Difficult Adjustment Areas
1. Not participating in class	1. Social isolation
2. Not asking for clarification	2. Language skills
3. Sitting only with international students	3. Knowing norms, rules, and regulations
4. Studying only with international students	4. Overcoming stereotypes
5. Breach of ethical standards of scholarship	5. Transportation
	6. Clothing norms
	7. Weather differences
	8. Food differences
	9. Oral presentation assignments
	10. Personal finances

Source: Tompson and Tompson, 1996.

An In-Depth Look

Building on research findings that suggest international student success is at least partly a local matter, a mid-sized public Ontario-based university engaged in a yearlong study to identify the factors that contribute to attrition of international students to determine what might be done to improve the success and persistence of international students academically through support initiatives and by way of student recruitment (Smith & Demjanenko, 2011).

The research design included both a full-year cohort qualitative study using both undergraduate and graduate international students, and a two part interview process and survey of faculty and service providers. The collected data was coded and analyzed for themes and patterns of similarity and/or difference. Participants in the study were recruited from four sample populations: international students, international student groups, international student service providers, and faculty who instruct international students.

Emergent Themes

Emergent themes were consolidated by international students, faculty members and service providers, which

showed consistency across the groups for culture and racism and discrimination. The faculty and service providers groups also identified language. International students added frustration, disorientation and confusion along with facilities and services. Table 3 provides a breakdown by participant category.

Language

Both faculty members and service providers reported on the difficulties international students experience in daily language and communication. A language problem often signals a mal-ability to function in English and/or comprehension issues, which may result in poor communication not only with professors but also with domestic students. Underdeveloped English ability affects the entire education experience for international students.

Culture

All three groups identified culture as something international students experience. Faculty members reported that some international students are “lonely, tired, and haven’t made friends” and said that international students need to adjust from a strict and disciplined environment to a university environment which expects students to be autonomous and responsible for their actions. Service providers said the need to be “guarded,” “on,” or “engaged and sensitive to a great many factors including language, customs and comprehensive around international students”. International students said that it is generally difficult to make friends with Canadian or domestic students and that some international students “don’t have Canadian students as close friends.”

Table 3. Summary of the Emergent Themes by Participant

International Students	Faculty	Service Providers
• Culture	• Language	• Language
• Frustration, disorientation, and confusion	• Culture	• Culture
• Facilities and services	• Racism and discrimination	• Racism and discrimination
• Racism and discrimination		

Source: Smith and Demjanenko, 2011.

Racism and Discrimination

All three groups identified racism and discrimination concerns. Faculty members reported that they had observed “classmates of international students frequently are rude to international students in group work” and that “students experience discrimination when renting accommodation, when looking for prayer spots and when forming heterogeneous groups”. Service providers responded that incidents of racism and discrimination were isolated incidents and occurred “mainly based on assumptions made about members of a certain race and attaching stereotypes to the membership.” Some international students reported experiencing racism and discrimination on campus and that it “just made it difficult ... just made the day completely bad for me.”

Frustration, Disorientation, and Confusion

International students described having some frustration, disorientation, and confusion. Students who attended orientation reported that the program was “very helpful” in getting oriented to the new environment while those who missed orientation reported feeling “lost,” “disoriented,” “confused,” and in general uninformed about the tacit knowledge within higher education.

Facilities and Services

International students reported that a number of facilities were very helpful (e.g., international student center, library, recreation facilities). Others were not what they anticipated. Some of this was due to cultural issues around food and faith needs.

The results of the study point toward the idea that in order for students to be retained there must be a fit between student, institution and sociocultural environment (Conrad & Morris, 2010; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987). In this instance, the job of the institution to meet varying needs of a large number of individual international students multiplies the effort put forth by the institution and its representatives. As Conrad and Morris (2010) point out, “the devil really is in the details of each student’s experience” (p. 13).

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUCCESS FACTORS

Broadly speaking, numerous cognitive and noncognitive variables have been identified as impacting

the academic success and retention of international students.

Academically, the international student population experiences, among other things, language difficulties (Barron, Gourlay, & Gannon-Leary, 2010; Carter & Xu, 2007; Fitzgerald, 1998; Hansen, 1993; Tas, 2004; Zhang & Zhou, 2010), culture-related learning differences (Carter & Xu, 2007; Rice et al., 2009; Tas, 2004; Thompson & Thompson, 1996), academic support issues (Fitzgerald, 1998; Sandeen, 2004; Tas, 2004), and adjustment to a new educational system (Andrade, 2009; Boyer & Sedlacek, 1988).

Equally important are nonacademic challenges international students face while enrolled in postsecondary institutions. These challenges include cultural differences (Carter & Xu, 2007; Fitzgerald, 1998; Hansen, 1993; Tas, 2004; Zhang & Zhou, 2010), isolation (Carter & Xu, 2007; Hansen, 1993; Van Nelson, Nelson, & Malone, 2004), relating to and identifying with campus community (Carter & Xu, 2007; Hansen, 1993), social issues (Fitzgerald, 1998; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987; Tas, 2004; Van Nelson et al., 2004; Zhang & Zhou, 2010) and finances (Beane, 1985; Fitzgerald, 1998; Tas, 2004; Van Nelson et al., 2004).

Figure 2 shows how academic and nonacademic challenges dynamically impact international student success.

Some of the major international student success factors are summarized below.

Proficiency in English

English competency prior to admission is a critical part of international student success (Beane, 1985; Carter & Xu, 2007; Van Nelson et al., 2004). However, the ability to predict academic success using the Test of English as a Foreign Language has been and is being disputed (Beane, 1985; Thompson & Thompson, 1996; Van Nelson et al., 2004; Wait & Gressel, 2009). Researchers argue that language proficiency is difficult to measure because communication depends on grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discoursed competence, and the verbal and nonverbal dimensions of a language (Van Nelson et al., 2004).

Study Discipline

Discipline of study or major is closely linked to the academic success of international students (Beane, 1985;

Figure 2. Factors Influencing International Student Perseverance Beyond First Year



Source: Smith and Demjanenko 2011

Van Nelson et al., 2004). Beane (1985) found that retention of international students is more closely related to majors than English proficiency and that engineering students had a high retention percentage as a result of a combination between a high GPA and a sense of identification with students in that department as a result of being admitted into the program as first-year students, and students who entered postsecondary programs for which they have experience at the high school level.

Finances

Finances impact the ability of international students to do well in postsecondary education (Beane, 1985; Boyer & Sedlacek, 1988; Tas, 2004). Unreliable financial support by the country of origin due to political or economic instability as well as the inability to budget appropriately impact on the financial situation of international students (Beane, 1985). Similarly, Tas (2004) reported that less than 40% of international students responding to a survey identified finances as the main factor for leaving the university.

Cultural Adjustment

Cultural adjustment permeates and affects most aspects of student life: living arrangements, participating in

the community, socialization, communication, eating practices and food consumption, learning styles, and education system, to name a few (Andrade, 2006). It is probably the most difficult issue to define as well as the most persistent because it can affect all aspects of an international student's life.

Social Supports

Although difficult to measure and evaluate, the availability of social supports impacts the academic success and retention of international students (Simpson & Tan, 2009). Social support has been shown to reduce stress, promote positive health outcomes, and moderate the effects of stress on mental health symptoms (Rice et al., 2009).

Self-Confidence

"Self-confidence and availability of a strong support person consistently predicted GPA" (Boyer and Sedlacek, 1988, p. 220). Considering the numerous academic and social adjustment international students must make "feeling confident, determined, and independent, and having another individual to whom to turn in crisis were important determinants of adjustment to academic demands and attainment of academic success" (Boyer & Sedlacek, 1988, p. 220).

Community Service and Understanding of Racism

Boyer and Sedlacek (1988) found that "community service and understanding racism significantly added to the prediction of persistence" (p. 219).

Generally speaking, international students engage more often in effective educational practices than their American counterparts, especially in the first year (Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005). International students report greater academic challenge and higher levels of active and collaborative learning, interact more with faculty members, engage more in diversity-related activities, perceive the campus environment to be more supportive, and report greater gains in personal and social development, practical competence, and general education.

Despite the increased focus in recent years on variables linked to academic success and retention of international students, retention rates have not seen any real improvement (Andrade, 2009). What has come out of the literature is that programs targeting retention rates

must be suited and tailored to individual institutions. Increased retention of international students depends on the culture of the institution, which must influence the experiences of international students at the level of integration with domestic students with faculty and with the larger community.

BEST PRACTICES IN SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUCCESS

Colleges and universities provide a wide range of international student supports, including academic, financial, health and wellness, social and cultural, transition, immigration, accommodation, and employment support.

Academic Support

Academic issues are of considerable importance to the success of international students. Various differences in their learning impact the success of international students. Students from China, for instance, were found to have difficulty in learning how to cooperate and collaborate with other student and group members (Zhang & Zhou, 2010). They also indicated that there is more laboratory work in science and engineering classes and more essays in social science classes.

Some of the key academic supports need by international students include:

- *Academic advising.* Peer advising can also be effective with international students. International students benefit from early and frequent advising, better preparation for students in meeting expectations in the classroom and in workplace internships, placements and co-op terms, and help with communication skills.
- *Academic integrity.* International students often have a different understanding of academic integrity from those educated in North America. This can result in international students being overrepresented in academic conduct violations. Many universities have gone to considerable length to inform international students early in their academic career of our academic integrity standards.
- *Verbal and written communications.* Language barriers, especially oral communication in English, are critical for additional language students. Verbal communications support for additional language

teaching assistants will ensure support for both domestic and international students. Graduate students whose second language is English will also need support associated with the writing of their theses.

Financial Support

The issue of financial support for international students has always been a contentious one since the whole process is based on the premise that they have sufficient resources to support their choice to study abroad. However, international students often find financial matters particularly overwhelming. A 2009 survey conducted by the Canadian Bureau of International Education found that international students are pressured by financial considerations. One in five students call for lowering tuition fees for international students and one in ten suggest that institutions provide scholarships or bursaries for international students.

Student support services should help walk students through financial services—from financial aid and student bursaries to banking sources in the community—and other financial decisions including setting up a household, phone and web services, and so on. It is important that institutions have a competitive fee schedule, fair access to scholarships in recognition of academic achievement, and programs better able to respond to students who face unexpected financial pressures due to extreme circumstances.

Health and Wellness Support

International students are often some of the biggest users of campus health and wellness services. The challenge of becoming a student in a new country coupled with a change of diet and lack of knowledge about how to acquire health care services can result in feeling more illness or distress. Moreover, some international students arrive with untreated health concerns. This is often true for mental health issues and blood-borne illnesses, such as hepatitis B, which are viewed differently in North America than in many parts of the world. An additional factor is the number of international students who are accompanied by family members who require support during the student's period of study. Mirwaldt (2010) suggests that "for campus health services, the challenge is to communicate effectively, to provide culturally sensitive

care, and to learn from these students an expanded view of health, self, and family responsibilities” (p. 138).

Social and Cultural Support

Culture shock is common among international students. Zhang and Zhou (2010) found that international students from China found it difficult to make friends with other international students and domestic students. They concluded that:

The cultural differences set up barriers for their willingness and attempts to make friends with native English speaking friends, share residences with them and become fully involved in group work. Although language proficiency was mentioned by many participants as one factor that influenced their full engagement in the academic and social life on and off campus, it was often cultural differences that thwarted their efforts to be a part of the large community. For these participants who were able to manage the culture differences and enjoyed friendships with native English speakers, they felt significantly more satisfied with their experiences at the university and more confidence with their ability to finish their programmes. (pp. 131–132)

International students often seek a space where they can engage with students from their home country and access services. To meet this need, institutions offer international student resource centers that serve as the hub for the international student support network, which provides a central point for international student services, counseling and referrals, and cross-cultural activities.

International students often form fast and strong ties with international student organizations. These organizations help transport new students to and from the airport, help them during move-in and introduce students to campus and community resources. Such international clubs and organizations are often supported by the campus’s international student advisor.

Although systemic racism is not the defining characteristic of the international student experience, isolated incidents of racism leave deep emotional scars and sour the experiences for affected students (Smith & Demanjenko, 2011). Racism draws a distinction between experiences in which international students

thrive and experiences in which they go hand in hand and work to positively reinforce one another. Colleges and universities need to work proactively across the institution to enhance sense of community to reduce incidences of racism or cultural misunderstanding.

Transition Support

International students often do not bring family members with them, and thus many experience more severe adjustment issues than domestic students who can travel home more frequently. Transition, while a concern for all students, is especially relevant for international students who have travelled from another part of the world to be part of our academic communities. A recent study (Chen, 2011) suggests that approximately one-quarter of Mandarin-speaking students encounter adjustment issues. Transition programs and services need to be specifically designed for international students. These supplements should address any number of topics, including international student support services, academic expectations and cultural differences. This should be an integral part of the institution’s general orientation events, although it is also important to offer a stand-alone program focused on international students’ unique needs. Late orientation should also be provided for students who arrive late or start their programs midyear.

Immigration Support

International students inevitably must, at one time or another, apply for, and often renew, their immigration documents. Students often have questions regarding the processes, and may need assistance in dealing with more complex circumstances.

Immigration advising and support, most often provided by a central international student office, is important in ensuring students are able to successfully navigate government processes and ensuring they maintain the appropriate status during their studies.

Accommodation (Residence Life) Support

International students benefit from a variety of residential life opportunities on-campus, off-campus, and through homestay initiatives. Some campuses accommodate specific international communities with residence floor themes and married housing opportunities. Homestay is becoming more common.

Employment Support

One way students manage their finances is by finding employment both on- and off-campus. Students are not required to have a work permit to work on-campus, but one is generally required to work off-campus. Postgraduate work permits are also available. This is particularly the case in Canada where which many international graduates begin or continue their working career in Canada. According to the Institute for Competitiveness

and Prosperity (2010), Canada leads OECD countries in international graduate retention at 9.7%.

While the literature and supporting studies suggest that there are many factors influencing international student retention and success, the solutions offered appear to be both universally applicable and locally appropriate. Table 4 shows possible solutions to increasing international student persistence within the influential reach of postsecondary institutions.

Table 4. Strategies to Increase International Student Persistence

Topic	Strategy
Academic support	- Monitoring international students' progress through the academic program and years) (Andrade, 2009; Van Nelson et al., 2004) - Developing culturally appropriate approach to meet the unique needs of ESL students within the classroom (Andrade, 2009; Carter & Xu, 2007)
Admission policy	Establishing a minimum (English language proficiency and/or GPA) entry criteria (Beane, 1985; Carter & Xu, 2007)
Advising and counseling	- Providing individual counseling to meet needs of international students (Andrade, 2009; Boyer & Sedlacek, 1988) - Establishing a mentor program for one-on-one support (Boyer & Sedlacek, 1988; Carter & Xu, 2007) - Use an asset-based approach that comes from the field of positive psychology: connectedness, academic culture, resourcefulness, capability (Canadian Bureau of International Education, 2014)
Cultural awareness	- Increasing sensitivity toward cultural differences within departments (Beane, 1985; Sandeen, 2004) - Helping international students understand racism in the community (Boyer & Sedlacek, 1988) - Encourage domestic students to access the cultural knowledge and perspective of international students (Canadian Bureau of International Education, 2014)
Organizational	- Developing strategies of cooperation and coordination among offices accessed by international students (Beane, 1985; Goff & Snowden, 2015; Sandeen 2004) - Consider a more integrated approach to student engagement where international student offices and student life coordinators work collaboratively to create and facilitate more inclusive opportunities for international students and Canadian students, fostering greater multilevel exchange (Leary, 2012)
Orientation	- Orientation which introduce international students to the facilities and services available to them (Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987; Van Nelson et al., 2004) - Quality enhancement interventions and noncognitive elements of a student's experience such as daylong workshops (Carter & Xu, 2007) - Providing international students with prearrival information to decrease the first semester learning curve (Andrade, 2009) - Reconceive student orientation as an ongoing, nonlinear process for all students, and strategize around how to address barriers to participation for international students, especially at the beginning of the term (Canadian Bureau of International Education, 2014) - Develop a pass/fail acculturation class for new (undergraduate and graduate students separately) international students to make the transition by providing support and feedback over the course of a term (Leedock, 2011)
Social integration	- Helping international students with community involvement (Boyer and Sedlacek 1988), interaction with faculty members (Andrade, 2009) and domestic students (Andrade, 2009) - Encourage group work between international and domestic students (Canadian Bureau of International Education, 2014)
Study abroad	Establishing an exchange program (Carter & Xu, 2007)

While we know much about the strategies that increase international student persistence and success, there remains a gap between implementation of these strategies and student satisfaction and usage of the related services.

The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities collaborated with six Ontario universities to have i-Graduate administer the *International Student Barometer* (ISB) administered over a three-year period, beginning in fall 2010. The ISB tracks decision-making expectations, perceptions, and intentions of international students from application to graduation providing global, regional, and customized benchmarks.

Overall, the participating universities found the international student experience similar from campus to campus. However, when compared with the international index, reflecting all participating institutions, results showed some noticeable gaps. Looking across the areas of support, levels of satisfaction across the Ontario cohort were 5.2% lower than the ISB cohort, which suggests some possible areas of improvement (i-Graduate, 2011). When usage is factored into student satisfaction (Smith, Whiteside, Blanchard, & Martin, 2013), the areas where there appears to be the most potential for improvement include: health center services, student accounts/finance department services and campus eating places' services.

A LOOK AHEAD

Most institutions have developed strong student recruitment initiatives with the number of international students enrolled growing at many campuses. It is clear that colleges and universities should also work to enhance the success of international students.

Looking ahead, we need to ensure that these students are supported to reach their educational objectives while enrolled at our institutions. In particular, we need to find ways to create consistent interaction and socialization with domestic students. This will require us to pay more attention to the international student success factors.

Efforts of improvement to increase the retention rate should involve a paradigm shift in how postsecondary administration conceptualizes the efforts exerted in the work to retain each international student. Conceptually, administrators should focus their thinking away from the retention rate and toward retention risk factors

(Conrad & Morris, 2010). In other words, the institutional view would ideally shift toward early prevention and efforts to assist international student in real time as the challenge(s) to remain at the institution occur.

The outlook for increasing international student success through North America is very high.

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