Student Engagement Philosophy

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My Student Engagement Philosophy

Supporting students through a wholistic point of view is key to having an effective influence on their success. As an international high school teacher, many of my students want to attend higher education internationally, but they lack the confidence and encouragement to be competitive in their applications. Through providing letter of recommendation, guidance to find scholarships, or differentiated classwork to engage students with various learning styles, I have seen tremendous improvement in my student’s confidence in themselves, their ability to take risks and overcome challenges. Viewing each student through the Student Personnel Point of View (SPPV) allows me to connect to my students personally on an intellectual level while also revealing a glimpse of the student as a whole (Penn n.d). This allow me to suggest programs that are specific to their interests and goals while also being economically attainable.

As I earn a Master’s of Higher Education and continue my endeavors in international education, I hope to move from being an educator to being involved in logistical support of international students. Living abroad is an opportunity that fundamentally changes a person’s lens that they view the world through. Accepting this change is incredibly difficult, and it makes relating to your peers who have not experienced this new perspective confusing and isolating. As someone who has experienced this first hand, I hope to assist international students in logistical concerns such as visas, as well as being an understanding faculty member to support them in their attempts to integrate into the United States.

For international students, it is important that they have a student affairs professional who can guide them through legal logistics such as updating their visa and knowing their residency requirements. It also is important that they have a faculty member who can answer questions about how to pay utility bills, how to rent an apartment, how to get medical attention, and other daily issues that differ by country. Additionally, there should be a faculty member who can council and assist international students in navigating social conflicts that may arise due to cultural differences. If these key areas of support are in place, it would help students feel supported in their transition and feel more confident to engage socially in the college or seek academic help when they need it. Although college no longer acts in place of the parents based on the joint statement on the rights and freedoms of students, international students will need additional support in establishing a level of comfort in their new country of residence and in the institution (Penn, n.d).

The above logistical support would enhance Astin’s input-environment-outcome model of student development (Penn, n.d). The input of international students is not the same as traditional students, so it is important to provide support to these students to help integrate their input with the environment of the institution. This should enhance the international students’ ability to succeed in engaging their new environment with adequate student involvement while still pursuing their original goal of academic achievement.

Similarly, international student retention could increase with appropriate levels of integration according to Tinto’s theory. International students often struggle with English language skills and the logistical skills listed above, and these concerns may have a negative impact on the level of integration a student is willing to engage in. If student affairs faculty are in place to support them logistically and emotionally through their transition, the students who are struggling would have faculty specifically invested in their success who could spot issues regarding social isolation and academic persistence before they affected the student’s institutional success.

Ultimately, my student engagement philosophy aligns with Astin, Tinto, and the SPPV because I hope to focus on international student success, experience, integration, and retention.

References

 Penn State World Campus. (n.d.). Lesson 9: Student Affairs as a Means to Student Engagement. In HIED 545: *Foundations of Higher Education and Student Affairs: Spring 2020*. Retrieved from https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2043984/assignments/11272035?module\_item\_id=27822386