

Reflective Teaching

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International Student Engagement

Strategies for Creating Inclusive, Connected, and Purposeful Campus Environments



International Student Engagement: Strategies for Creating Inclusive, Connected, and Purposeful Campus Environments

Glass, Chris R.; Wongtrirat, Rachawan; and Buus, Stephanie
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Book Review

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In 1950, just over 25,000 foreign students were enrolled in institutions of higher education in the United States. At the time this review appears on the Internet, that number will be close to 1 million (1). While many schools' admissions offices have sought to increase their enrollment of international students as an important source of revenue, those who work at colleges and universities in the U.S. should understand that the integration of so many international students into campuses poses a special challenge. If faculty and administrators do not do it well through intentional policies and practices, institutions run the risk of failing the students who have chosen to come to their schools. This book seeks to identify the types of campus environments that lead to the greatest flourishing and growth for international students.

The authors draw from two primary types of data in order to discover best practices for integrating international students on campus. They combine analysis of the big data provided by the ongoing Global Perspective Inventory with stories from individual international students. As they put it, the authors' goal is to use both the "big stories" and the "small stories" to learn what factors contribute to flourishing for such students. The small stories are one of the real strengths of the book, as they are drawn from a variety of schools: small private liberal arts colleges, large state universities, and community colleges are all represented. Over the course of the book, the authors tackle a number of big issues that they see as central to international student flourishing. Individual chapters are devoted to: how diversity is recognized and addressed in the classroom; how international students are involved in campus student leadership; the roles that friends and peers, family, and social media in helping students; and what types of campus contexts create a sense of belonging.

Ultimately, the authors conclude that intentional campus-wide policies and practices that support integration of students into many different aspects of campus life are the most successful. They give a number of specific suggestions for best practices, which are well summarized in the last chapter of the book. One of their central arguments is that such measures should not be limited to particular offices (the advising office, the admissions office, and so forth), but that entire campus cultures need to be adjusted, and that this requires buy-in not only from administrative units, but from academic units as well. This book provides much to think about, and would be useful for people in a number of different positions within academia. It is a welcome contribution at a time when faculty and administrators are engaging with the question of what it means to have increasing numbers of international students in college, university, and seminary classrooms.

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