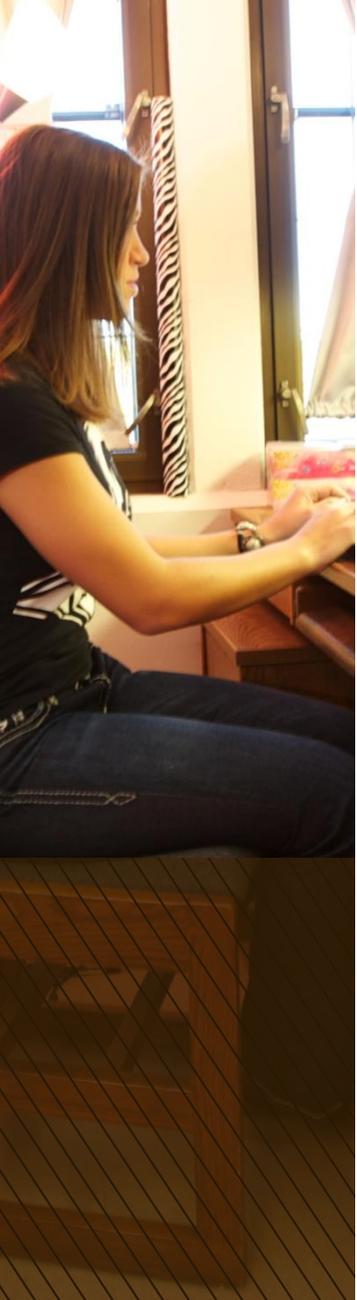


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**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT  
TRANSITION: A COMPREHENSIVE  
APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENT ORIENTATION**

**FYE Conference – San Diego, CA – February 2014**



# AGENDA

- **Purdue's Context**
- **Trends in Enrollment**
- **Reactions to Trends**
- **Costs and Resources**
- **Collaboration**
- **What We Didn't Do!**
- **(Exportable) Lessons Learned**

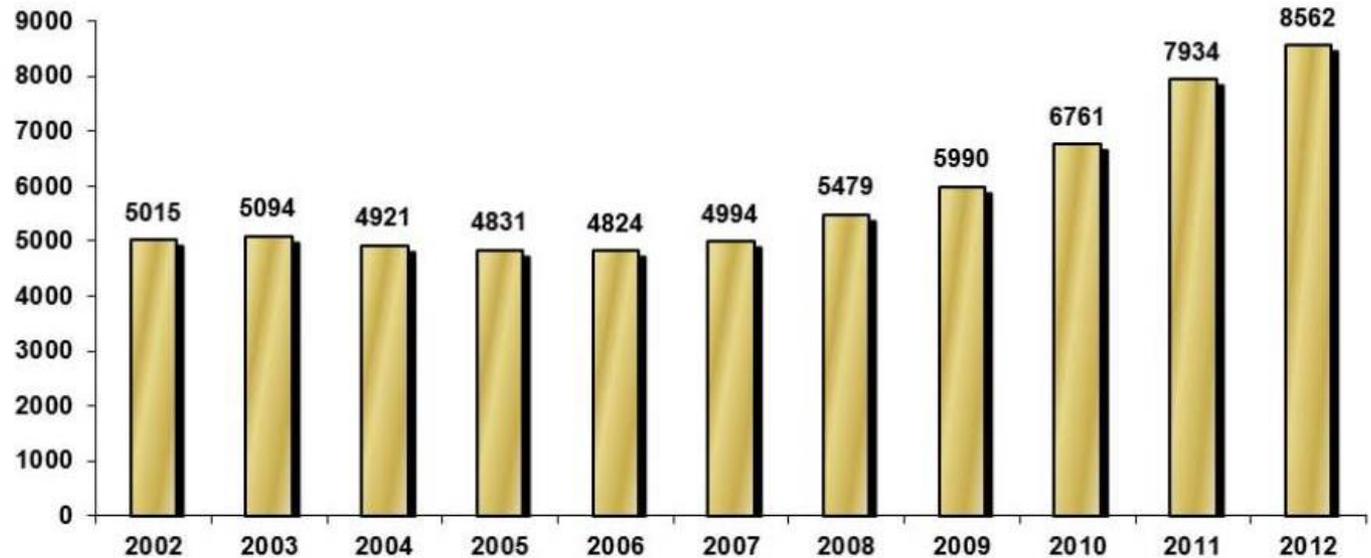


# PURDUE'S CONTEXT

- **Large, Public, Land Grant, Research-Intensive**
- **Midwest**
- **STEM-focused**
- **Big Ten Athletic Conference**
- **Decentralized college structure (11 colleges and programs)**
- **No ESL Program**
- **#2 for international student enrollment (among public universities)**
  
- **40,000 Students**
  - **30,000 Undergrad**
  - **7,000 First-Year**
  - **8,702 international students**
    - **22.4% of student body**
    - **49% from China, 51% from other**
    - **979 First-year Beginners**
    - **4,981 Undergrad**



# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT TREND



## **A Combination of Incentives (to do something)**

- **International student yield continues to grow**
- **Foundations of Excellence® causes the University to be introspective**
- **Disparate campus units begin to get creative and bump into each other trying to serve these students**
- **International Tuition launched – source of funds**



# PROGRAMMATIC REACTIONS

- **UR Global**
- **MiX**
- **Virtual STAR**
- **Boiler Gold Rush international**
- **Global Partners Program**
- **GS 490**
- **Additional staffing**



### **The Need**

- **Help international students to transition & integrate to community living**
- **Assist international students in understanding Purdue & US culture**
- **Help international students build friendships**

### **The Idea**

- **Came about during annual Big 10 meeting**
- **Themes to assist w/ transition and acclimation to campus & community living.**

### **The Pilot**

- **First 6 weeks of programming**
- **Year 1 = 50 participants, Year 2 = 300 participants**

### **Themes**

- **Public safety, US sports & traditions, holidays and food, getting to know campus, leadership opportunities & community living / sharing a room**
- **Based around a shared meal – dinner**
- **Evolved into a “mentor” program year 3**

### **Next Steps...**





# VIRTUAL STAR

*STAR - Summer Transition, Advising and Registration is Purdue's program for new undergraduate students to receive academic advice and create their initial course schedule.*

## The Need

- prepare international students to be effectively advised
- facilitate the connection to advising community
- support students during registration

## The Idea

- consistent online pre-advising education
- virtual advising appointments
- virtual registration lab

## The Pilot

- Blackboard-based pre-advising course with customized content
- Encouragement/training to use existing web-conferencing platform
- Student lab assistants available (online) during registration



## **BGR INTERNATIONAL**

## **BGR*i***

***Boiler Gold Rush is Purdue's new student orientation program that takes place the week before classes begin each year. BGR is designed to enhance academic success and address first year transition topics. A hallmark of BGR is small group size and peer mentor contact, which enable our new students to become better acquainted with Purdue and meet hundreds of new students before classes begin.***

**The Need – Address cultural competence and fulfill immediate needs (unique to international students)!**

**The Idea – a supplemental program to the existing welcome week**

**The Pilot – Up to 700 international students arrive 3-4 days ahead of domestic peers, live/eat together, student leaders, meet immediate needs and prepare for the domestic culture**

## Program Goals:

- Provide information and assistance with personal needs
- Provide cultural context of using Purdue resources
- Help students successfully transition to Purdue University
- Help students understand relationships
- Explain the cultural context of learning at Purdue
- Develop a sense of belonging

## Learning Outcomes:

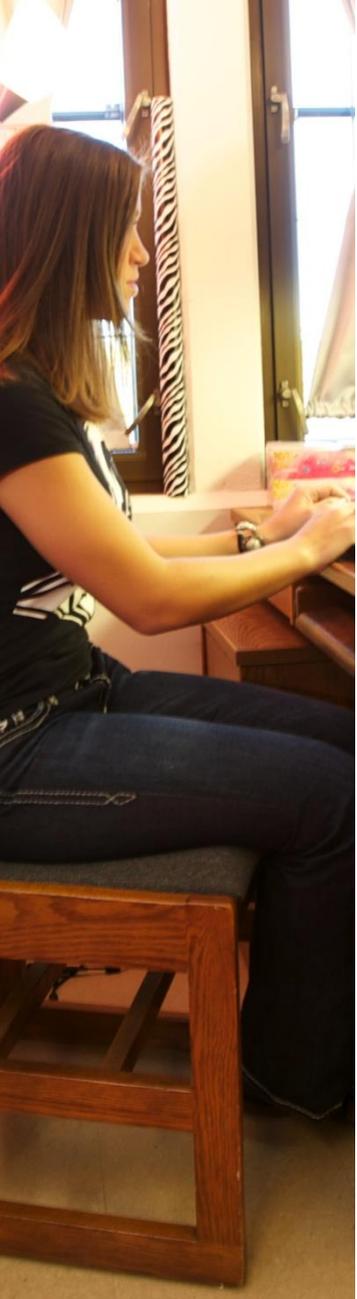
- How to successfully transition to Purdue and the community
- The differences in the American classroom vs their own
- How to effectively connect with domestic peers
- The Purdue University culture
- What is going to happen during Boiler Gold Rush and purpose
- Their role as a student on Purdue's campus





# GLOBAL PARTNERS PROGRAM

- **Faculty and staff overseas trip to a country of origin for Purdue's international students (dormant for a couple of years)**
  - **Expose faculty and staff to international student culture**
  - **Bring cultural knowledge and experience to their work**
  - **Enhance connections with institutional partners**
- **Program modified and re-launched in 2012**
  - **Travelers include academic advisors from colleges that host large numbers of international students, orientation professionals, etc.**
  - **Offers ½ day, on-site pre-departure program for incoming new undergraduates from the visited country**



# GS 490: WRITING AND SPEAKING FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

**Core component of orientation is cultural competence. Students need to be effective contextual and cultural communicators.**

## **GS 490: Reading, Writing and Speaking for International Students**

- **ESL students in their 1<sup>st</sup> semester**
- **3 credit hours, 16 weeks**
- **Self/peer evaluation**
- **Presentations with critique**
- **Writing/reading prompts based Purdue traditions/culture and pop culture**

### **Evidence:**

- **Positive correlation between being in this course and academic success indicators**
- **Students report being more confident (taking risk in conversations, engaging in group discussion, presenting)**



# PLACE (PURDUE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE EXCHANGE)

- **Expansion of GS 490: Reading, Writing, and Speaking for the International Student**
  - **Possibly split into 2 courses (Reading/Writing and Speaking/Listening)**
- **Place students in courses based upon TOEFL sub-scores**
- **Restrict first semester enrollment in English and Communication courses based on TOEFL sub-scores**
- **Expansion of assistance in Writing Lab and Communication Lab**
- **Creation of online tool to practice English over the summer**
- **Creation of an English proficiency test to complement the TOEFL**
- **Centralize all these efforts under single point of leadership**



# OTHER REACTIONS / ENHANCEMENTS

- **\*4 International Academic Advisors**
- **\*English Composition (international version) instructors**
- **\*Mandarin-speaking therapist in Counseling & Psychological Services**
- **International specialists**
  - **\*1 x staff added to Center for Instructional Excellence**
  - **\*1 x Student Activities Office**
  - **\*1 x Center for Career Opportunities**
  - **Orientation Programs**
    - **International Specialist**
    - **Graduate Assistant**
- **\*3.5 FTE (equivalent) added to IP Clerical and AP Staff**
- **Communications (Department of) Practice Lab**
- **\*Funding for Office of Diversity and Inclusion**

*\* funding source is international student tuition*

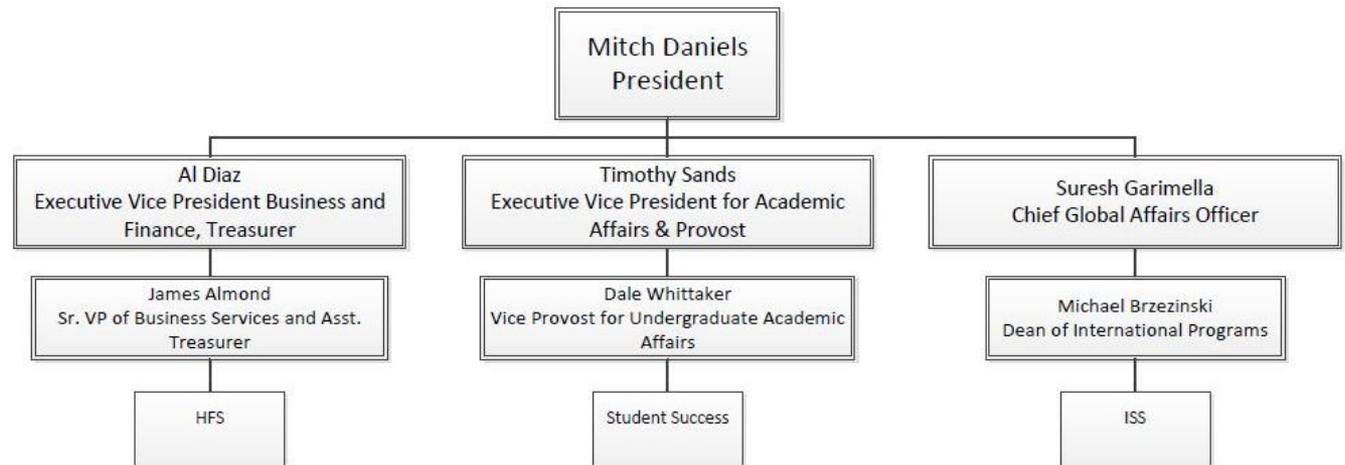
A close-up photograph of a young man with short dark hair and glasses, smiling broadly. He is wearing a light-colored shirt and a patterned tie. The background is blurred.

# **COSTS AND RESOURCES**

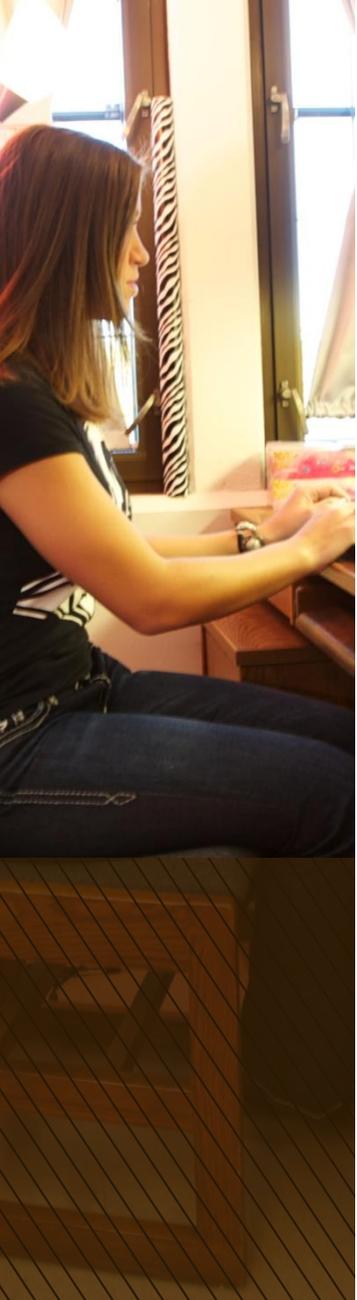
- **Costs**
  - **BGRi**
  - **VSTAR**
  - **GPP**
  - **Staffing**
- **Resources**
  - **Dean of International Programs / Provost Office**
  - **International student tuition (beginning in 2011)**
    - **\$1,000/year in 2011**
    - **\$2,000/year in 2012**
  - **Housing (Free rooms)**
  - **Internal assets**
  - **Student groups**

# COLLABORATION: THE NECESSITY AND THE CHALLENGE

- **Committee structure**
- **Joint leadership**



- **The questions of “who owns this?” and “who pays for this?” and “who makes the final call?”**
- **Things to negotiate: generational differences, skill set differences, departmental culture differences**



# WHAT PURDUE CHOSE NOT TO DO!

- **Transportation from airports**
- **Central Welcome Center**
- **No formal advising during overseas visit (GPP)**
- **Charge additional fee for BGRi or make it mandatory**



# **(EXPORTABLE) LESSONS LEARNED**

- **Establish Priorities – you cannot make all of the great ideas happen**
- **Be comprehensive, be collaborative – force yourself and your teams to avoid parochial thinking**
- **Be prepared to say “No, thank you” to campus constituents**
- **TOEFL scores do not necessarily predict academic success**
- **Arrival programs need to be sensitive to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**



## WHAT IS OUR EVIDENCE?

We are **NOT** necessarily looking to improve international student outcomes by traditional measure since...

- International students retention and graduation rates are already higher than their domestic peers and...
- They may be unchanged by all of this

So why are we doing this and what do we need to study?

- Connectedness
- Effectiveness (in this context)
- Post-college success **NOT** in their country
- English proficiency
- Increased intercultural competence
- Domestic students' intercultural competence

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