Developing Comprehensive Advising System for First Year International Students

When Peer Mentoring Is Combined with First Year Seminar

University College, Yonsei University, South Korea
Developing Comprehensive Advising System for First Year International Students
When Peer Mentoring Is Combined with First Year Seminar

Presenter
Han, Bonghwan
onepack@yonsei.ac.kr
Kim, Hyunsang
jimkim@yonsei.ac.kr

University College, Yonsei University, South Korea
http://www.yonsei.ac.kr/eng/
Yonsei University

- A four year private university located in the heart of Seoul, South Korea.
- Founded in 1885, it has been one of the leading institutions
- 36,000 students in 19 colleges, 89 departments, 1 graduate school, 17 professional graduate schools
Institutional Information
Institutional Information
1. Who Comes to Korea to Study and Why?
2. Arising Issues
3. How to Handle the Issues
4. Freshman Seminar for International Students
5. Peer Mentor Program for Internationals
6. Benefits of Combination
7. Difficulties
8. Evaluation
9. Slide Show
10. Things to Check When You Implement
I. Who Comes to Korea to Study and Why?

* All freshman students are to be in University College before advancing to their majors
* University college takes in about 3,800 first year students every year
I. Who Comes to Korea to Study and Why?

Why They Choose Korea?

- Global presences of Korean companies
- Korean Wave: Increasing popularity of Korean Cultural products
- South Korean Government’s efforts
- Advanced image of Korea
I. Who Comes to Korea to Study and Why?

Mainly from neighboring countries

Students from Southeast and Northeast Asian countries are increasing.
I. Who Comes to Korea to Study and Why?

International Students’ Characteristics

1. Poor Language Skills
2. Inadequate academic preparation
3. Difficulties to understand Korean culture
4. Heavy advising need (5.8 vs. 3.5)
5. Poor academic performance 2.5/4.3
II. Arising Issues

1. To Academic Advisors
   1) Lack of experience dealing with foreign students
   2) A greater advising load each international student requires

2. To Students
   1) Limited experience with foreign students
   2) Predetermined ideas on international students

3. To International Students
   1) Language barrier
   2) Poor understanding of Korean culture
   3) Limited academic background
   4) Difficulties in making Korean friends
   5) Strange Korean university culture
   6) Poor administrative supports
   7) Stereotyped ideas on foreigners
III. How to Handle the Issues

1. **Modifying Existing Course**
   Gateway to College: a freshman seminar offered in University college since 2007

- Freshman Seminar: Gateway to College
- Customized contents for international students
- Gateway to College for International Students
III. How to Handle the Issues

2. Modifying Existing Program
   Global Tutoring: a tutoring program provided to international students since 2004 by Center for Teaching and Learning
III. How to Handle the Issues

3. Combination of Two Independent Components

- Gateway to College for International Students
  - Weekly meeting with advisor
  - In-class administrative & academic supports

+ Universit y College Peer Mentor Program
  - Weekly meeting with mentor
  - Immediate assistance provided by mentor
  - Mentor supervision by Gateway to College teaching members

= Comprehens ive Academic Advising for International Students
IV. Freshman Seminar for International Students

Gateway to College for International students
1) Freshman Seminar customized to international students
2) 1 credit course graded pass/no pass
3) Taught by a team of academic advisors
4) Covered Topics
   – Academic resources
   – Korean cultural activities
   – Talk with international student seniors
   – Talk with international graduates
   – Planning college life in Korea
   – Major exploration opportunities
   – Study tips for internationals
University College Peer Mentor Program for Internationals

1) Why Peer Mentor?
   - International Students’ Needs that cannot be met by advisors
   - Students want the nitty-gritty of campus life
   - Students think fellow students know more about college life

2) How It Works
   - 1:1 matching with a senior Korean student
   - Meet a mentor at least once a week (individual or in group)
   - Mentors are required to upload mentor activity report every week, reviewed by one of the Gateway to College teaching members
University College Peer Mentor Program for Internationals

3) Who Can Be a Mentor?
- completed at least 2 semesters
- committed to serving internationals
- Be able to attend 3 mandatory meetings (mentor orientation, mid semester check-up, mentor/mentee night)
- No minimum GPA requirement

4) What Mentors Get
- 1 social service credit
- Monetary support for cultural activities with mentees
- Mentoring guideline book
- Pride as a Korean and Yonsei’s representative
- Opportunities to learn how Koreans are seen by foreigners
University College Peer Mentor Program for Internationals

5) How to Match
   – Gender
   – Fields of academic interests
   – Language abilities
   – Other facts shown in mentor application form and freshman profile
VI. Benefits of Combination

1. **To Academic Advisor**
   1) Decreased advising needs from international students
   2) Better understanding of each international student

2. **To International Students**
   1) Language training opportunities
   2) Expedited cultural understanding
   3) Extending campus network through mentor
   4) Academic supports
   5) Sense of belonging

3. **To Mentors**
   1) See how Koreans are seen by others
   2) Motivated and challenged
   3) Pride as mentor and Yonsei’s students
   4) Feel better about themselves
   5) Train cultural sensitivity
VII. Difficulties

1. Deciding priorities: two parties are involved
2. Maintaining effective communication
3. Selecting the right mentor and matching with the right mentee
4. Proper supervision on mentors
5. Bringing two independent teaching methods together
### 1. International Students' Evaluation on Gateway to College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Score (5 point scale)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The seminar provided the help I need to make a successful transition</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The topics covered in the seminar were appropriate</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The time allocated to each topic was adequate, and it was covered well</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this seminar to other foreign students</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The seminar helped me understand Korean university culture and provided the information I need.”
2. International Students' Evaluation on International Student Peer Mentor Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Score (5 point scale)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with my mentor</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor provided information I need for my study and college life</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will recommend my mentor to other foreign students</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“My mentor is a lifesaver. He introduced me to other students that I would never be able to meet. He also helped me with assignments. I owed him a lot.”
### 3. Mentors Evaluation on International Student Peer Mentor Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Score (5 point scale)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the program</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program was operated properly according to its goals</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program helped me understand international students on campus</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this seminar to other foreign students</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I was able to see how we are seen by foreigners. It presented me a new perspective on my culture. It was a rewarding and interesting experience.”
IX. Slide Show
X. Things to Check When You Implement

1. Can You expect synergy by combining a course with mentor program?

2. Can you guarantee effective communication between two parties?
Thank You

Q & A