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Fall 2019, International Student Success: One Step at a Time

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UNH Global

International Student Success: One Step at a Time

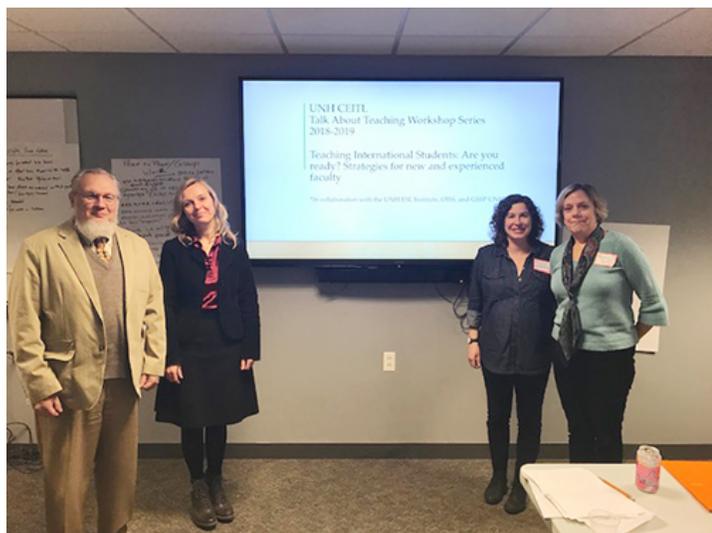
Wednesday, November 20, 2019

A common story for international students stems from confusion over cultural or idiomatic expressions used during lectures: "The professor said something in class, which made the students laugh, but I didn't understand what was funny, which made me embarrassed." Faculty of international students often note frustrations, such as "when an international student comes to me for help, they often tell me they now understand, when I can see they don't." Issues facing students and faculty are usually born out of both a culture and a language gap.



International students at a study session in the Global Education Center space

In March, the Global Education Center brought together colleagues from Paul College, COLA, CEPS, the ESL Institute, and the Global Student Success Program (GSSP, formerly known as Navitas) to share progress and plans made over the past year in the effort to support international student transition and integration. A needs review highlighted the academic adjustment challenges that many international students face, as were described during interviews with students, faculty, and staff. These challenges were centered around communication, managing time effectively, accessing support, integrating with domestic students, academic integrity, and family pressures.



Presenters for the CEITL 2018-2019 workshop series (l. to r.): John Lacourse, Professor of Electrical & Computer Engineering; Nina Kositsky, Teaching & Learning Specialist, Global Student Success Program; Rachel Lachance, Senior Lecturer in the ESL Institute; and Nancy Sell, Senior Lecturer in the ESL Institute

number of international students in their majors (Paul, COLA, CEPS).

During the action planning process, several initiatives were already being launched. In partnership with the Center for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching and Learning (<https://www.unh.edu/cetl>) (CEITL), the *Talk about Teaching* workshop series: *Teaching International Students: Are You Ready?* took place over three sessions that began back in September 2018. Faculty and staff participants from a variety of disciplines and units reported that the workshops gave them a chance to share experiences with colleagues and learn specific responses to situations in and out of the classroom, along with strategies to create a more inclusive classroom. And for staff, OISS offered a presentation on pronouncing Chinese names and effective communication with international students to UNH advisors during a monthly meeting of the Advisory Network.

On the student side, back in November multilingual writing tutors from the H.E.L.P. (<https://mypages.unh.edu/helpwriters/>) program made a panel presentation to the Connors Writing Center (<https://www.unh.edu/writing/cwc>) (CWC) staff on the experience of writing in a second

As part of the planning process, a working group made up of faculty and staff from across campus convened to identify priorities, action plans, and a timeline. Goals associated with the action plan included students making a successful transition into their colleges, continuing their English language development, having access to resources, acting with integrity, and creating a UNH academic environment that is inclusive to all students. Sub-groups met to hone in on specific topics, such as pre-transition preparation and admission/retention. Once a draft plan was created, the working group sought feedback from faculty stakeholders in the various colleges that enroll the largest

language, supporting their multilingual peers, and how H.E.L.P. and the CWC each play a role in supporting multilingual writers. The CWC staff said they found the session valuable and expressed interest in hearing from H.E.L.P.ers every year.

Finally, the first student Global Leadership Experience (GLE) took place on April 27-28, where 22 emerging international and domestic UNH student leaders took part in intercultural and leadership skill-building activities at the Essex Woods Retreat Center in Essex, MA. One of the domestic participants had this to say about the experience: “I learned to take an active role in making sure everyone is being treated equally and being heard...I also learned that to be a leader does not necessarily mean you are the one who speaks the most.” This fall the GLE completers are contributing to the increased engagement of international students and the overall internationalization of UNH by speaking on student panels at workshops for faculty and students and pursuing other leadership opportunities on campus. Plans for the next GLE training are now in the works.

These programs are being coordinated by Gigi Green (<mailto:gillissen.green@unh.edu>), Academic Transition & Integration Advisor in the Office of International Students & Scholars within the Global Education Center, who serves as a resource to faculty, staff, and international students.

News & Events (</global/news-and-events>)

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[Calendar of Events \(http://calendar.unh.edu\)](http://calendar.unh.edu)

[Events Around the Seacoast Area \(/global/events-around-seacoast-area\)](/global/events-around-seacoast-area)

[Buddies Without Borders \(/global/buddies-without-borders\)](/global/buddies-without-borders)

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