

Consider This Scenario

Abby (Yichen) Zhang is a student in your program. Two months into the semester, Abby emails you because she wants to talk about classes. When you meet, she spends the next 20 minutes telling you she expected the buses to run more frequently and doesn't think she has any friends.

What do you do?

What do you ask?



If you want a mental
break, take a break.
If you want to
engage with others,
chat about this.



DUKE
FUQUA
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Supporting International Student Academic Adjustment

Alistar Erickson-Ludwig
Program Director, Quantitative Management Programs

Session Goals

My Background & Professional Role

Subway Sandwich Story (Intro to the Issue)

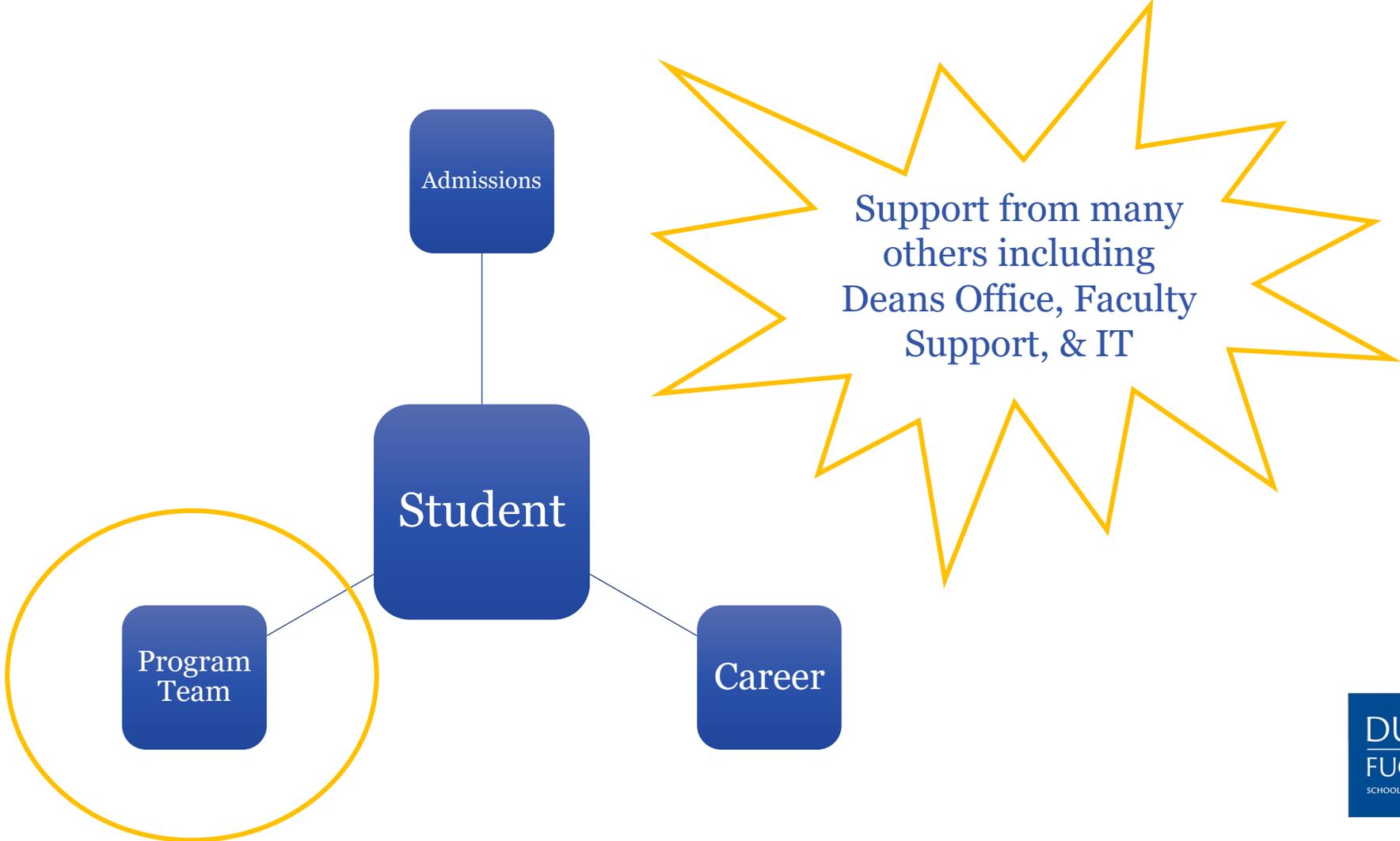
Deep Dive (Research)

Helping Students Succeed (Practical Ideas)



About Me

My Role



The Programs I Support at the B-School

In Person (MQM)

- Graduate level
- Full time students
- On campus all year
- Early 20s
- ~225 students
- 10 months in length
- STEM designated

Online (MSQM x3)

- Graduate level
- Working professionals
- On campus for orientation + optional events
- Mid-30s
- ~175 students
- 12-18 months in length

MQM Class

	MQM: BA
Number of Students	230
Average Age	23
Male (%)	41%
Females (%)	59%
Average GMAT	704
Domestic: US Citizens/ Permanent Residents	52
International: China (+HK,Taiwan, Macau)	98
International: India	51
International: Rest of World	29

How I Help

- Academic Support
- Leadership Development
- Interpersonal/Team Dynamics
 - Individual Meetings
 - Team Meetings
- Social Events
- Time Management
- Personal Identity
- Stress
- Adjustment
- Accommodations
- **Calendly.com/alistar** or email **aae14@duke.edu**





Pause

This session has an aim to highlight academic adjustment but we are really talking about whole-person adjustment because if one piece falls, the academic piece may as well.



Deep Dive: Personal Research

Qualitative Studies

- Chinese and Indian students
- Did not attend college in the US
- Survey + one-on-one interviews

Purpose: explore the cultural factors present in the acculturation process among Chinese and Indian graduate students at a business school.

Expectations and Goals

- >Study Abroad Experience
- >Value of Education in the U.S.
- >Career
- >Skill Development and Preparation
- >Personal Development

Expectations

I heard from many of my friends and colleagues that doing a university program away from family just changes your personality, it makes you more mature it changes your whole perspective, about how you explore life.

I'm not that satisfied with the bachelor education in China...the professors don't seem to care much about the teaching, don't seem to care much about the quality of the lectures, and the student don't seem to care much about their class participation.

... when you graduate from college in India...you will not necessarily get the best jobs out there because there's just so many people and those so many people are competing for like really limited job and I felt like my qualifications definitely didn't match up to a level that I could actually demand a premium for it.

Expectations

[In China] I was basically, like, totally focused on studying. I stay, either in my dorm or in the library. And I never got a chance to go to club or like bar with friends...Many of my friends and many of students who have like, finished graduate in the U.S. and told me you are definitely going to experience a totally different life. And I was very looking forward to that.

I come from Bombay...we don't have like big gardens, we don't have like a forest, we can't like you know go out and have picnics ...or like doing like a beach day or like driving around and doing a road trip on the weekend...I knew [my school] would have a lot of like extracurricular activities or like fun things you could participate in outside of school, so I just wanted to like be able to do those things, apart from work...I just feel like that's part of like the College experience.

Challenges with Transition

- >Communication
- >Interpersonal Relationships
- >Pace
- >Daily Life

Challenges with Transition

At first, I feel lots of pressure because my oral English is not that good. I feel it hard to participate in the class discussion. I was shy.

Two of my American teammates they are, it was quite unique personalities. So yeah, it wasn't seeing a lot of person like them in China. So, I have to get used to their work style and you know, team style together.

The pace here at [school] was very intense.... so every basically every three weeks, you have midterm, and then you have final term. So, these just make the pace very fast.

Wherever I try to have fun, I have seen it in my grades.

Successful Adjustment

- > Adjusting to Educational Differences
- > Speaking Confidence
- > Support from Peers and Professors
- > Growth Mindset

Outcomes

I think the social events really helped...I didn't really feel that difficult at the end of the day, because I mean there were so many people doing it with you, so it was alright.

It has only been eight months. I do see a change in my personality...I come from a business family. I'd have like dad's employees, helping me out with filling forms and everything and doing the little smaller stuff but here I've had to do everything on my own like checking my bank accounts to like seeing the laundry, filing and my apartment's maintenance ...



Deep Dive:
Additional Research

Enrollment Trends



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT DATA
FROM THE 2021 *OPEN DOORS*® REPORT

Year	Enrolled Int'l Students	OPT	Total Int'l Students	Total U.S. Enrollment*	% Int'l	Annual % Change
2020/21	710,210	203,885	914,095	19,744,000	4.6	-15.0
2019/20	851,957	223,539	1,075,496	19,720,000	5.5	-1.8
2018/19	872,214	223,085	1,095,299	19,828,000	5.5	0.05
2017/18	891,330	203,462	1,094,792	19,831,000	5.5	1.5

Institute of International Education. (2021). "International Student Enrollment Trends, 1948/49-2020/21." *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. Retrieved from <http://www.opendoorsdata.org>

Leading Places of Origin



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT DATA
FROM THE 2021 *OPEN DOORS*® REPORT

Academic Year:

2020/21

Search Leading Places of Origin:

Rank	Place of Origin	Number of Students	% of Total	% Change
1	China	317,299	34.7	-14.8
2	India	167,582	18.3	-13.2
3	South Korea	39,491	4.3	-20.7
4	Canada	25,143	2.8	-3.3
5	Saudi Arabia	21,933	2.4	-29.2
6	Vietnam	21,631	2.4	-9.0

More Facts

- Most study at the undergraduate level, followed closely by graduate level, then OPT and non-degree
- Field of Study Engineering (1st), Math and Computer Science (2nd), Business (3rd)

Literature

- Adjustment to a new academic environment depends on how students acculturate into the university environment (Swanbrow et al., 2017).
- Acculturation explores the relationship between culture and the individual and includes changes that result from group interactions (Berry, 1997).

Career Goals

- Cultural values propel excellence (Yu & Yang, 1994)
- Challenges with networking (Bozionelos, 2006; Huang, 2008; Nadermann & Eissenstat, 2018)

Knowledge of U.S. Academic Environment

- Knowledge as a protective factor (Yuan, 2011; Zhao et al., 2008)
- Unmet expectations cause discomfort (Bertram et al., 2014; Jiang et al., 2020)

Preparation, Intensity, and Competing Demands

- Cultural norms emphasize hard work (Zhou & Kim, 2006)
- Individual experiences outside academic environment compounded challenges (Yan & Berliner, 2011b)

English Communication

- Cultural and contextual challenges (Li & Jia, 2006)

Peers and Teammates

- Challenges outside of collectivist environment (Hofstede, 1986; Triandis, 1995)
- Strong alliance with peers (Cura & Isik, 2016; Chen & Yao, 2015)

Why This Matters

- International students enter a new and different environment compared to the one they are most familiar with.
- **Students who study in the U.S. may show symptoms of anxiety and depression which limit the students' ability to adapt and succeed in their new academic environment.**



Think Back to the Scenario

Abby (Yichen) Zhang is a student in your program. Two months into the semester, Abby emails you because she wants to talk about classes. When you meet, she spends the next 20 minutes telling you she expected the buses to run more frequently and doesn't think she has any friends.

What do you do?

What do you ask?



Helping Students
Succeed

Enhancements

Increase

- Pre-orientation programs
- Prepare students for study, life, and work in the U.S.

Strengthen

- Help faculty understand experience and needs of international students

Provide

- Opportunities to increase English communication

Orientation or Before

- Share important content over the summer
 - Building maps
 - Faculty intro videos or welcome letters
 - Staff Zoom Q&A or open office hours
- Offer early chances to meet with students and faculty
 - Host International student welcome event + invite faculty/staff
 - Do a scavenger hunt of the campus or academic building
 - Bar/restaurant meet up with table topics/conversation starters
- Start a mentorship program
- Reflection exercise to connect and process feelings
 - Egg time capsule
- Letter writing/reading

Think About... Orientation

- What does your orientation look like?
- When do you communicate with students?
- Do you utilize other staff teams/faculty/alumni?
- How long is the schedule?
- What do students remember the most from orientation?

- Thinking about Abby's situation or your own experiences working with international students- could you get ahead of these challenges early in orientation?

Moving On

Finish your thoughts.

It's time to move on!

Strengthen Engagement in the Classroom

- Faculty introductions/bios
- Create teams with diverse groups of students including international + domestic
- Work in pairs before sharing with the class
- Accessible faculty
 - Walk around the classroom
 - Sit with students
 - Hold office hours in-person and virtually

Pre-program Opportunities

- Mock class
- How to access faculty directory
- YouTube channel
- LinkedIn
- Social Media



Bio

Dr. Jeremy Petranka is the Associate Dean for the MQM and MSQM programs and an Associate Professor of the Practice in the Fuqua School of Business. He

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ACADEMIC AREA: ECONOMICS

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Teaching / Research Interests

Managerial Economics, Competitive Analysis, Game Theory, Industrial Organization, IT Strategy

Mailing Information

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- Think asynchronous and synchronous
- How can students get a real feel for class? Teaching style, level of engagement, plus individual & group work allocation

All Year

- Opportunities for 1:1 meetings
- Mental health programming and check-ins
- Speed friending
- Public speaking practice with prompts
- Team building
- Events without a focus on alcohol
- Time management
- Cultural celebrations



The goal is to help students improve English communication, feel connected to peers, and be comfortable asking for help

Questions During 1:1 Meetings

- How do you pronounce your name?
- What city are you from?
 - Optional: where is that city on a map? What's it known for?
- Why did you decide to go to graduate school?
- What are your goals between now and when you graduate?
- Is there anything I can do to help?

How to Get Help



**STAFF: JEREMY,
ALISTAR, CALVIN**



**TEAMMATES AND
FRIENDS**



PROFESSORS



STUDENT HEALTH



**COUNSELING AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL
SERVICES**

Weekly Reporting for Mental Health

How would you rate your current core team dynamics?

- 10 - My team is extremely productive. Every member is contributing, we are able to resolve conflict, and we communicate extremely well.
- 9
- 8
- 7
- 6
- 5 - My team is functioning. We are completing our assignments, but we have some weaknesses around individual contributions, conflict resolution, or team communication.
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1
- 0 - My team is no longer functioning. Some members are not contributing, we cannot resolve conflict, or our team communication is ineffective.

How would you rate your overall well-being?

- 10 - I'm thriving. I feel happy, I have energy, and I am optimistic about the future.
- 9
- 8
- 7
- 6
- 5 - I'm surviving. Things are challenging, but I'm making it work.
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1
- 0 - I'm struggling. I do not feel happy, I do not have energy, and I am finding it difficult to navigate problems.

Are you facing any specific difficulties with your teammates? Note this will remain between us and will help the programming team understand the challenges you're facing. We might also reach out to you to see if we can help.

Fast Friend Prompts

What are your bucket list goals?

What one food could you eat for the rest of your life?

What is the story of your name?

What movie you could watch over and over again?

What's something you're proud of?

What are you grateful for in your personal life?

What's the most impactful book you've read?

What's a perfect day?

What would you invent?

What has been one of your proudest moments in life?

TRAVEL: WHERE IS THE FARTHEST YOU'VE TRAVELED FROM HOME?

SCHOOL: WHAT'S A PIECE OF ADVICE YOU HAVE FOR ANY CLASSMATE?

Describe chores you had growing up.

What would you say is your best quality?

BACKGROUND: WHAT DID YOU LIKE DOING FOR FUN WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE?

WORK: WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED?

Recite a line from one of your favorite movies.

What is one of your biggest pet peeves?

Team Support

- Scavenger hunt at orientation
- Optional team charter
 - When to meet, how to delegate work, what if someone doesn't contribute, etc.
- Team building off campus at a high ropes course
- Optional team meetings to help with conflict or to improve efficiency
- Personality/strength test(s)
- Team building exercises
 - It is January and your plane crashed in the desert/arctic. The pilot did not survive. You do not know your location. The nearest town is 25 miles away. You and the other surviving passengers were able to salvage 15 items.....



Additional Student Support

- Good Old Fashioned Fun
- Time Management
 - What's important? What's urgent?
- Cultural Celebrations
 - Food, music, dancing



Think About... Events

- What are the most impactful events to students?
- What do you enjoy planning and/or attending a faculty/staff member?

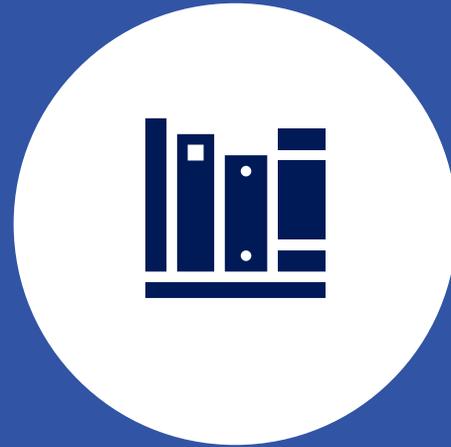


Thank you!

Please Reach Out

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Happy to adapt this presentation to share with your team.
Open to research collaborations or conference presentations.



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