

# International Student Advising Committee (2017-18) Committee Meeting

Date: November 23, 2017

Time: 5:00 PM -7:00 PM

Location: Telus 215 E

## Attendees Briefing:

- Josh (SU orientation staff) was the speaker
- Kumarie Achaibar-Morrison (Associate Director, International Student Services) and Gavin Palmer (International Student Engagement Program Coordinator) represented ISS staff
- Prabhav Sharma (Programs Assistant, UAI)
- 11 students from different cultural backgrounds attended the meeting
- 6 countries were presented by student committee members

## Minutes

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Purpose of ISAC
  - Create a space where International students provides an input in programs and services for international students.
  - It is a platform to present concern/feedback on campus resources, supports and systems. We are here to listen, answer questions, and address concerns.
3. Discussion Items
  - 3.1 New student orientation changes/recommendations,
    - Background about speaker:
      - Working with new student orientation with SU
    - Speaker debriefed about all student orientation
    - Purpose of the meeting was to look for a new date for all student orientation or stick to the previous schedules
      - Looking for two possible dates (Friday, August 31 or Monday, September 4)

- A survey was handed to students to complete during the meeting

### 3.2 Personal experience and Transition Student Orientation, Kumarie and Gavin

- Asked for feedbacks/ suggestions and concerns regarding transition/ orientation in general.

### 3.3 Discussion Panel,

- Survey questions (SU):
  - All students of the committee took part in the online survey.
  - **Questions included:**
    - What are the pros/cons of keeping orientation on Monday from the perspective of a New Student ?
    - What are the pros/cons of keeping orientation on the Friday before the Labor day long weekend? Think from the perspective of a New Student ?
    - If you were to advise us on which day New student orientation would be in 2018, which day would you pick ? Friday, Sept 1 or Monday Sept 4? Why ?
  - **Discussions about the survey:**
    - Are we taking a note on residence move in dates and then looking for an early orientation date as this can cause trouble to students who arrive before the move in dates, if the orientation happens move in date? (Yes, SU already had a look on that)
    - Are we thinking to break orientation into two days, as the single day seems too long? (This question I has been seen before them and they are still curious and discussing, but nothing is finalized as of now)
    - Did you have a comparison with other universities regarding their orientation scheduling and execution? (Yes, SU had a look on orientation formats of other universities)
    - What's the importance of this survey and will it be effective the following fall term? (This process provides a framework for the future orientation programs, it's not just focusing on the following fall 2018 orientation)
- Questions regarding their personal experience during orientation:

- **Questions included:**
  - What more do you need and what are some of the things that are still missing ?
  - What else would you like to have happened during your orientation?
  - How many students came with parents? What were their questions and concerns? (Please note that the complete panel is of international students)
  - What type of concerns your parents had while you came here , even though they did not come along?

#### 4. Questions and comments from ISAC:

##### 4.1 For SU orientation:

- Most members showcase their keen interest in having the orientation on Friday, September 1.
  - as a majority of students arrive on campus/Edmonton few days before the classes
  - Students avoid coming on Monday as it's a holiday
  - Mostly all International student usually come early (like 1-2 weeks before the class begins to buy furniture, get insurance, cell phones etc)
  - Few International come earlier with parents as well, so a week before is usually ideal.
  - Many students usually travel during that long weekend, so having an orientation on Friday will be ideal as they can go for a trip to Calgary or Banff over the weekend
  - Having the orientation on Friday, gives 3 more days to explore the campus
  - Issues with u pass can happen as its September the 1 (Students should be encouraged to get u pass before the orientation through emails)

##### 4.2 From personal experience and transition/ orientation in general:

- We should have learn about the culture about our faculty during orientation
- International students major concerns revolves around accommodation, cell phones, banking, address proof and food places.
- Emails sent by university before the orientation can be more broad

- Having info mart and Ikea trip earlier can help more international students
- Informarts needs clarity and better education with companies itself

#### 4.3 Other comments and suggestions:

- During SU orientation, the groups gets very large and its really hard to devote time to every student. (speaker mentioned the average group size was 15, but it depends on faculty and they will still have a look into it)
- Campus check in for international students happens at Telus Centre and students should be made aware about it, it's a great resource for international students for their prior questions and concerns.
- There should be some extra online materials about orientation and programs available on website.
- Since UAI provides a different set of services mostly applicable for international students, SU should offer some services for domestic students
- More effective plan to get more international student during all student orientation

#### 4.4 Student member briefing about other committee meetings

- Highlights about SLAC, COSA and RAC
  - For COSA, How important is the placement and internship for international students, how beneficial it is?, discussed about renovation in van villet ?(i.e gender friendly washrooms)
  - For RAC, How can the recreation services serve better?, mentioned all resources offered by them.
  - For SLAC, discussed about open source test book (U of A getting a grant from Government), changing the outlook for the website (minimize the search) ?, the amount of use of textbooks (throughout the years) and mentioned software's provided by the libraries.

#### 5. Briefing about the next meeting by Gavin

Next Meeting on January 18, 2018 from 5-7 PM, Telus 215 E

Send agenda items to [issint4@ualberta.ca](mailto:issint4@ualberta.ca)