

## **Appreciative Advising with International Students**

**Disarm:** An integral part of making a positive first impression with international students

- create a safe and welcoming environment by decorating offices with pictures taken from trips overseas or souvenirs from international students
- meet each student at the door and introduce yourself in order to make students feel welcome
- a handshake is favorable to greet students since the majority of international students know Western-style greetings. However, do not be upset if the student refuses a handshake for cultural reasons
- use the student's name often during the conversation to make sure you pronounce the name correctly; if the name is difficult to pronounce, ask the student to say it slowly

This stage helps us to demonstrate our interest in students from other countries and break the ice before initiating further discussion.

**Discover:** Advisors should draw out the students' hobbies, strengths, and passions by asking open-ended questions

- ask questions about your students' home countries
- share your own intercultural and international experiences
- Some sample Discover questions are
  - “Tell me about your journey to America,”
  - “What challenges did you overcome to study in the U.S.?”
  - “Tell me about a time you felt most proud to be from your home country.”

To avoid communication misunderstandings, advisors should confirm and summarize the statements that are made by the students and rephrase them if necessary.

**Dream:** The stage when advisors help students formulate a vision of what they might become and then assist them in developing their life and career goals

- help students define what they want to achieve in the United States by asking about their hopes and dreams for the future
- Some sample Dream questions are:
  - “What are your biggest hopes and dreams for your future?”
  - “Do you plan on moving back to your home country once you complete your education? Why or why not?”

Listen purposefully to students' answers to assess what students' dreams and goals are.

**Design:** After discussing students' interests and dreams, advisors should help them devise concrete, incremental, and achievable goals

- brainstorm with students about how they can best achieve their goals
- attach your professional knowledge to the students' ideas, as appropriate, in order to help define the necessary resources that can turn their dreams into reality
- make appropriate referrals to campus offices, including the counseling center and people in the local community. You may need to initiate on their behalf because some international students are not confident enough to search for help on their own

Advisors also need to encourage students to write down questions they have for the person to whom they are referred.

**Deliver:** Once international students design plans to achieve their goals, advisors should encourage them to follow through on these plans

- facilitate follow through by following up with advisees after the appointment to inquire about their progress and by expressing confidence that students can accomplish the plans that they created together

Advisors should reiterate to international students that they should return to the advising office if they run into problems.

**Don't Settle:** The last phase of Appreciative Advising is Don't Settle. In this stage, international student advisors proactively raise international students' internal bar of expectations

- Give positive feedback and encourage students to continue to use the momentum they have achieved to accomplish even more.
- Help students set new goals by asking, "What is one thing that you can do even better?"

As long as advisors think students are capable of higher expectations, this stage is woven throughout the advising process.

<https://dus.psu.edu/mentor/old/articles/090909ep.htm>