

Strategies of Supporting Chinese Students in an International Joint Degree Program

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Abstract

The international joint degree program is one of the recent ways of international collaborations in Higher Education. Those programs involve intensive academic collaborations as well as institutional alliance. Such programs could provide a supportive environment for international students through international partnerships. The article provides a case study on sharing the practices of building an effective supporting system for international students in an international joint degree program. In specific, the authors shared academic, cultural, and individual growth support programs and services designed by Oklahoma State University to best facilitate academic and social integration of the Chinese students. Those programs are designed and implemented in a three-phase approach: Pre-engagement, Transition and Integration, and Connection at Oklahoma State University.

Keywords: International joint degree program; Chinese undergraduate students; academic and social integration; international partnership

The international joint degree program, the recent model of international exchange and internationalization strategies, has developed rapidly in the field of transnational higher education. European and United States institutions are taking the lead in this trend. They typically partner with Chinese institutions (IIE, 2011). In most cases, universities collaborate intensively on curriculum and award a combined, or two separate degrees to graduates of those programs. The rationale for building such programs may vary across regions and countries, but the primary rationale for American institutions is the sustainable international partnerships that could lead to curriculum innovation, financial gain, and an international reputation (Knight, 2011). Oklahoma State University (OSU) initiated their China programs aiming to enhance their international reputation while increasing the campus diversity. Although the enrollment in the dual or joint degree programs comprises only a small portion of the international student enrollment, such programs are gaining more attention in scholarly research. Recent studies have examined the structure, organization and quality assurance of such programs (Crosier et al, 2007; Goodman & Ruland, 2013); while others review the experience of international students enrolled in joint degree programs (Knight, 2011; Steber, 2013).

Chinese students are the main participants for the international joint degree programs in recent years (Knight, 2011). In the case of joint degree programs between Chinese institutions and American institutions, students first spend two or three years in China and then transfer to the American partner universities to complete the remainder of their degree program. As of

March 2016, there were a total of 2403 joint degree programs and institutes approved by Chinese Ministry of Education (Zhang, 2016). Upon the completion, they receive diplomas from both institutions. Many joint degree programs are cohort-based programs. The cohort size may vary. Some are as small as 15 to 20 students, while other could be 100 to 200 students as a cohort. Students start their first year as a joint degree cohort in China and then transfer to the U.S. The cohort-based program has many merits, such as providing tailored curriculum, more focused services and activities; while many scholars have doubts over their campus integration process, particularly their social integration process as a cohort. Their Chinese peer group dynamics could also directly affect their campus experience. Tinto (1975) found that students' campus integration has direct impact on their retention and persistence in college. The integration is defined by Tinto (1975) as a process by which an individual establishes membership in the college community. In Tinto's academic and social integration model, academic integration includes academic performance and intellectual development, whereas social integration refers to the interactions among peers and with faculty (Tinto, 1975, 1993).

Therefore, we are curious of the transition and adjustment process of Chinese students in the dual degree program. We wondered how the joint degree program student integrates academically and socially into the campus. What strategies are best to facilitate their campus experience and integration process? More specifically, we hoped to find effective approaches to address the challenges identified by Chinese students in their campus integration process. This can help institutions to design and implement programs and services to best support the international joint degree programs, as well as enhancing retention and satisfaction of Chinese students enrolled in those programs.

Purpose of the Study

This study focuses on Chinese undergraduate students and international joint degree program. The purpose of the study is to describe and analyze the approach that facilitates and promotes campus integration of Chinese undergraduate students. This preliminary study intends to identify the strategies that can support Chinese students and extends a growing body of research focused on understanding the current Chinese students' population in the U.S. higher education.

Literature Review

Academic and Social Integration of International Students

The review of the relevant literature identified three main issues related to the academic integration process of international students: communication barriers, classroom norms and learning preference, and faculty relationships (Church, 1982; Liberman, 1994; Wang, 2003). Many international students from non-English countries struggled with note-taking and class participation (Wang, 2003). Sometimes, international students try to apply their developed learning habits and previous classroom norms to the American classroom setting and often had a hard time adjusting to the new classroom norms (Sun & Chen, 1997). The limited research on relationship of faculty and international students found out that the close connection with faculty

and staff is important to international students' academic adjustment, but the language and cultural barriers limited such interaction (Trice, 2001).

Academic integration directly affects international students' persistence. However, social integration has a strong influence on their academic success as well. Although the benefits of social interaction with local natives is well documented (Schram & Lauver, 1988; Trice, 2004; Wang, 2003), research indicates that international students tend to form friendship with someone from the same culture and have difficulties forming long-lasting friendships with someone from the host culture (Church, 1982; Zhang, 2004). The challenges in limited social integration is due to cultural differences and language barriers (Jiang, 2010; Nicholson, 2001). With the increased popularity and availability of the international joint degree program, more attention needs to be given by researchers in understanding the academic and social integration experience of international students, particularly Chinese students' population.

Chinese Students' Campus Experience

Since the early 1980's, many American campuses have experienced the rapid growth in the enrollment of Chinese students; due in large part to the social economic changes in Chinese society (Huang, 1997; Qian, 2002). China's Open Door Economic Reform policy by the Chinese central government not only promoted international exchange of students and scholars sponsored by the government, but also provided financial feasibility for individual family to send their child abroad. In 2016, 31.5% of international students studying in the U.S. are from China (IIE, 2017).

Chinese students face similar challenges and difficulties experienced by international students in general, such as language barriers and academic adjustment (Wang, 2003). Moreover, the strong Chinese cultural background also shaped their adjustment to the new environment. As strong connections with the home culture affect the cross-cultural adaptation process (Kim, 2001), it is important to examine the influence of Chinese culture on Chinese students' academic and social integration process as well.

Many studies pointed out that Chinese students' language barriers and unfamiliarity with the American classroom norms are directly related to the low class participation among Chinese students in the American classroom (Sue & Kirk, 1973; Todd, 1997). However, Hodkinson and Poropat (2013)'s study focused on the "silent Chinese student" phenomenon from the cultural perspective. They distinguished the Western dialogic interactive learning model from the Chinese "competition-oriented and authority-centered" model (p. 432). The traditional Chinese teaching and learning emphasizes: "memorization, understanding, and reflection" (Hodkinson & Poropat, 2013, p. 433). Therefore, Hodkinson and Poropat concluded that Chinese students pose questions after they master sufficient knowledge rather than learning while participating through posing questions. This is also related to the notion of 'face culture' of Chinese society; and defined as "the need to be respected by others and not be embarrassed in social situations" (Hwang, Ang, & Francesco, 2002, p. 74). Face culture also shaped the attitude towards class participation of Chinese students. They may avoid posing questions in the classroom as they do not want to lose face in front of their peers.

Huang (1997) examined the academic experience of Chinese students and found out that Chinese students study very hard and often times have high academic achievements. Although they are interested in learning about American culture, they still prefer to form their own Chinese circle for the social interaction. Sue and Zane (1985) examined social and emotional adjustment processes of Chinese students and found that they were more reserved and anxious during their adjustment in comparison to other international student groups. Lewthwaite (1996) studied the adaptation process of Chinese graduate students in New Zealand. The study revealed that Chinese students are generally satisfied with their academic performance, but often had struggles with being afraid of losing their Chinese cultural identity in the new cultural and social environment. The influential Chinese culture supported Chinese students in their commitment to academic achievement, but also cause their fear of distancing themselves from the home culture while learning the new culture and social norms. Such feeling was identified as one of the sources of causing their anxiety (Sue & Kirk, 1973; Wang, 2003).

Chinese Students in the International Dual Degree Program

To better understand the challenges and supports in the academic and social integration of Chinese students, a case study was conducted in an urban setting public institution in the Midwest region (Wang, 2017). The study applied a case study method to understand Chinese undergraduate students' college integration processes in an international joint degree program. Participants in the study identified Chinese peers, Chinese faculty and staff, program coordinators, and the orientation programs as the major sources of support. In terms of the barriers in their academic and social integration process, it includes insufficient language proficiency in social settings, the lack of intercultural communication skills, and the housing arrangements (Wang, 2017). This study also highlighted the importance of international partnership, which could offer tailor-designed programs and services to support Chinese students and in return to strengthen the partnership.

The section of the literature review discussed the related research and provides an overview of the academic experiences of international students, and Chinese students in particular. Although some studies have focused on Chinese students and explored the academic and social integration process of Chinese undergraduate students, there is limited research focus on the strategies and approaches that institutions can adopt address the challenges faced by Chinese students;

Given the preceding context, the next part of this article provides a closer review of Oklahoma State University joint degree program and its effective strategies on how the institution can prepare to better address the integration of Chinese students in the joint degree program. Although there is limited data to evaluate fully the approaches presented in the next section, the study serves as the exploratory study to inform the future in-depth study.

Case Study of Oklahoma State University Joint Degree Program

Research Design

Case study method is selected for this study, to provide rich information and an in-depth understanding of effective approaches of supporting the college transition and integration process of Chinese students. By utilizing the case study method, the study can incorporate multiple sources for data collection. Those data sources include exit interviews and survey, program assessment self-study report and other documents related to the study. The findings of this qualitative study provide faculty and student affairs staff with a better understanding of strategies and approach of enhancing students' academic and social experience in an international joint degree program.

Research Context

Oklahoma State University (OSU) is a public land-grant institution located in the state of Oklahoma. The main campus is located in Stillwater, a college town with a population of around 50,000. Stillwater is about 60 miles from the Tulsa and Oklahoma City metropolitan areas. The full-time enrollment at OSU Stillwater campus is around 25,000 students. Stillwater is one of the five campuses of OSU, but it is the main campus. Oklahoma State University has a diverse student body. Students come not only from Oklahoma, but also from across the nation and more than 100 countries. As of fall 2017, OSU has more than 2,000 international students with over 470 from China.

About OSU-CAU Joint Degree Program

The CAU-OSU Joint Program, an undergraduate joint degree program between China Agricultural University (CAU) and Oklahoma State University (OSU) is a recent OSU China initiative. The OSU and CAU partnership was formed in 2011. The joint degree program, built upon the strength of two universities who are leading institution in agricultural fields in their respective countries, offers the first Agribusiness undergraduate degree in China. The program was approved for recruitment by Chinese Ministry of Education in 2013. The joint degree program was implemented at OSU through efforts and planning of several units on campus, including the OSU Provost office, School of International Studies and Outreach, Office of International Students and Scholars, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, and Department of Agricultural Economics. The development and success of the program was also dependent on the collaborative partnership with faculty and administration at CAU, including their office of International Exchange and Cooperation, The International College Beijing, and the Undergraduate Education Office.

The joint degree program is structured to allow qualified Chinese students to complete their two or three years at International College Beijing of CAU, and then transfer to the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources, Department of Agricultural Economics for the last one or two years. The curriculum was developed between the two institutions to reflect a four-year academic degree, with all the courses being taught in English.

Upon the successful completion of the program, students earn a Bachelor of Management Sciences degree and an undergraduate diploma in Agricultural/Forestry Economics and Management from CAU, and Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources degree with a major in Agribusiness from OSU. The recruitment target of this program was sixty students per year. The first cohort of 43 students began their first year at CAU in 2013 and 22 of them transferred to OSU in the fall of 2015 and successfully graduated from OSU and CAU in May 2017.

Program Strategy

The Department of Agricultural Economics sets the goal to help students accomplish the academic success, gain enriched cultural experiences, and pursue careers in relevant businesses that serve the growing needs of agriculture and related industries in China. In efforts to enrich CAU-OSU students' academic and cultural experience while enrolled in a joint degree program, a three-phase strategy is implemented: Pre-Engagement Phase, which is before students arrive at OSU and while studying at CAU; Transition and Integration Phase, which is upon students arriving at OSU and while studying at OSU; and the Connection Phase, which is upon approaching graduation and preparing for the next phase. For each phase, several action steps are implemented that are aligned with the goal of the program. The three-phase approach aims to enhance students' academic and social integration process. The next section will discuss each phase in details.

Phase I: Pre-engagement. The primary focus of Phase I is to build connections with students while they are at CAU and to ensure smooth logistical transition to OSU. The goal is to pre-engage students enrolled in the joint degree program and get them ready for the transfer to the American study and OSU campus culture. The Freshman Orientation course and weekly journal communication are the two approaches that are designed to meet the goal.

AG 1101 Freshman Orientation course is a required course for all Agricultural Economics majors. A revised version of this course is being taught in China by an OSU Agricultural Economics faculty member. The goal of delivering this course in China is to connect CAU students to OSU starting from their freshman year. Having this course taught by an OSU faculty member has helped students adopt the mindset of belonging to two academic institutions (CAU and OSU). It also allows the early connection between students and faculty members. Such early stage faculty interaction and connection is an important factor that could later enhance the social integration once they arrive in Stillwater campus.

Other than the orientation course offering, the department of Agricultural Economics continues to communicate with students through social media and weekly journals. Weekly journals (see Appendix A) are sent to the students during the fall and spring semesters while they are studying at CAU. Journals are one-page articles that cover wide-ranging and varying topics about life at OSU and in the Stillwater community. These journals are a way of connecting students to the culture of OSU in a simple, informative, and relaxing format. In addition, the

department uses WeChat, a Chinese social media platform, for announcements and direct interaction with students.

Students in their sophomore year at CAU receive guidance and assistance with their transfer process to OSU. In addition to working with the office of Undergraduate Admissions and other offices at OSU on transfer related logistics, students also receive information and advisement on course selection and major/minor options. Logistical arrangement could be challenging for international students. Therefore, the department also serves as the liaison for on-campus housing assignment and airport pickup arrangements for students prior to their arrival to OSU.

Understanding the Chinese culture is an important component of establishing and maintaining a successful partnership. Chinese culture values personal relationships and appreciates personal connections. With respect to that, the department schedules periodic faculty and staff visits to CAU to build rapport and maintain academic relationships with faculty, staff, and students. Such frequent visits not only form personal relations with CAU faculty, but also foster positive student and faculty relationships early on.

Phase II: Transition and integration. The goal of Phase II is to ease the transition. The second phase takes place when students study at OSU. The approach addresses students' needs to help with their transition and support their campus integration. In this phase, several tactics are designed and implemented to help students adapt and do well in the new academic and social environment.

Transition approaches. When students arrive a week before the start of the academic semester, the department of Agricultural Economics plans a comprehensive itinerary (see Appendix B) that includes settlement within the community and orientation programs on university, college, and department levels. The itinerary is given to the students prior to their arrival so that they are aware of, and prepared for, what is ahead of them during Welcome Week. As international students starting life away from home, ensuring that their basic settlement-related needs are met is important; as it can positively affect their readiness to begin the academic semester. Therefore, the OSU program facilitates each student's airport pick up, housing check in, personal shopping, bank account issuance, cell phone purchase, and other activities.

During the Welcome Week, the Department of Agricultural Economics plans and delivers a two-day departmental orientation session, covering different topics such as classroom courtesy, academic integrity, cross-cultural topics, university online resources, and more (see Appendix C). One of the highlights of the departmental orientation agenda is the student-faculty luncheon. This opportunity has helped Chinese students and faculty meet each other, ask questions, and get to know each other on an individual basis. We also include a question and answer session with domestic students in the departmental orientation agenda, with students grouped into small teams to allow conversations and queries on a peer-to-peer level. Afterwards, these domestic and Chinese student small teams go on a tour around the campus in an effort to create opportunities for engagement between domestic and Chinese students. Such activities and

arrangements cited above, including faculty, domestic students and Chinese students foster the connection and interaction among peers and with faculty.

Another action to enrich students' experiences on the academic level is the creation of a new course AGEC 3810 Domestic Agribusiness Tours. The intent behind this course is to expose students to U.S. agriculture through a series of visits and field trips. This course has become a vital element to complement classroom instruction. It includes tour destinations in the state of Oklahoma and other states. Having the course open for both domestic and international students has created one more opportunity for students from different backgrounds and cultures to interact with each other while traveling together. The department has also established a new section for a core course, AGEC 3101 Professional Career Development, with a syllabus modified for international students to address issues and concerns that international students may face. It also addresses careers that students may pursue.

Integration approaches. Faculty advisement is a unique advising structure, which is only available in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at OSU. Faculty members serve as academic advisors for all undergraduate students in the college. With such structure, and based on students' preference and advisors' capacity, CAU-OSU program students are assigned to faculty members for ongoing academic advice, from the time they start at OSU until they graduate. Such structure continues to enhance the interaction and connection between faculty and students outside of the regular classroom.

Moreover, on the individual level, the academic coordinator in the department also conducts one-on-one meetings with CAU-OSU students periodically. The intent is to encourage students to share their concerns; especially those related to homesickness and to help them find resources if needed. On the cultural level, a series of events to foster cultural understanding and appreciation between CAU-OSU students and domestic students are planned, such as sporting events, holidays, and cultural events. The department also works with Chinese students in the program and organizes the Chinese New Year Luncheon and Celebration. During the Luncheon, Chinese students present a variety of Chinese culture performance, such as Chinese Tea Culture. Program students also join the rest of Chinese students at OSU to celebrate various Chinese holidays and festivals. Several program students also serve as the leaders in the Chinese students' community. All these events and connections to the Chinese community on campus allow the program students to share and celebrate their cultural identity with domestic students and faculty. Such cultural celebrations supported by the academic department creates a sense of pride for students and promote cultural understandings among Chinese and domestic students.

The Peer Mentor Program is another effective tool implemented to help CAU-OSU students adjust to life in their first year at OSU. The mentors are selected through an application process and they receive compensation for their services. The selected individuals go through an orientation session before starting their job. The mentorship is focused on three areas: academic, cultural, and individual. On the academic level, the peer mentors help students locate assistance from the different resources available on campus such as tutors, the student success center, library resources, and others. On the cultural level, peer mentors plan and/or attend campus life

activities with their mentees that offer cultural exposure. On the individual level, student mentors encourage mentees to share their concerns during their transition and answer their questions that are within their capabilities and limits. The peer mentors are required to plan a total of four hours of weekly encounters with the students, provide weekly reports to the academic program coordinator (see Appendix D), and attend weekly meetings with the academic program coordinator. The Peer Mentor Program has been a valuable tool to help CAU-OSU students with the adaptation process in a quick and effective manner. On the other hand, the relationship between the mentor and the mentees creates an opportunity for the mentors to develop leadership skills through practicing reliability, responsibility, and maturity in different situations.

Phase III: Connection. The focus of Phase III is to get students prepared for their future and stay in touch with OSU as alumni after they graduate. As a cultural characteristic and with our experience with CAU-OSU students, we realize that they plan their next endeavors ahead of time. Based on a survey that was conducted, most of the students expressed a desire to pursue graduate studies, and the remainder leaned towards starting a professional career. With that learned, the department delivers a Graduate School Information Session to give guidance to students on program applications, processes, and expectations, as well as to answer questions. Chinese students are provided with detailed information about the immigration regulations related to post-graduation employment. In this activity, the department collaborates with the Office of International Students and Scholars to provide special sessions on Optional Practical Training for F1 visa students and the SEVIS transfer process.

In this phase, various career-related educational activities are offered by the department and the respective offices on campus. Students are provided the opportunity to join departmental field trips to have direct conversations with employers and alumni in agricultural and related industries. The main goal of these activities is to expose students to career information and develop connections with potential employers and alumni, in addition to helping them remain connected with OSU after graduation.

Program Assessment

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the strategies to enhance Chinese students' integration process at OSU. With the first cohort of Chinese students graduating in May 2017, the study has only received preliminary information on students' satisfaction and feedback. Therefore, the assessment information discussed in this research is drawn from the program mid-term self-review conducted in 2015 and exit interview of graduating cohort conducted in spring 2017 semester.

Eighty percent of the first cohort of this program, graduating in May 2017, were admitted to graduate schools in prestigious universities in the United States, Japan, and Australia. Of the 22 students in the cohort that graduated from OSU, 95.5 % rated the overall experience as very good and 4.5% rated as somehow good (see Appendix E). In terms of their academic experience, 86.4% rated their academic experience as very good overall and only 13.6% rated as struggling sometimes. The exit interview also specifically evaluated the mentor program offered by the

department. Ninety and nine-tenths percent (90.9%) of the students considered peer mentor program as very useful and 9.1% considered it as somewhat useful. This information is very important for us as we consider the role the peer mentor program played in their integration process. Students were also asked about their perception of their cultural experience at OSU. Students were asked to rate their cultural experience at OSU. For 72.7% the cultural experience was rewarding, while 27.3% of respondents believe their cultural experience was limited.

The self-study assessment survey conducted by CAU side unveils that students found the program a good platform that offers a wide range of options for future career and academic development. Students found the curriculum design is effective for them to develop a comprehensive and solid knowledge in their major while allowing their choices for either options. Program students enjoyed personalized faculty advisory system and felt that they could visit their academic advisor to discuss their questions in learning and life, and discuss the opportunities for personal development.

In the fall of 2016, the second cohort of 32 students arrived in Stillwater and in the fall of 2017, the third cohort of 43 students transferred to OSU. Historically, the department of Agricultural Economics at OSU had few international students for its undergraduate program. The CAU-OSU joint program has increased diversity and internationalization of the undergraduate student population of the department.

With the partnership between OSU and CAU, the department of Agricultural Economics also offers study abroad programs to China for the first time after the joint degree program launched. The faculty-led study abroad program foster mutual cultural exposure and learning between Chinese and American students. The university level reciprocal exchange program and the departmental short-term faculty-lead study abroad program not only enhance the partnership between OSU and CAU, but also create peer relationships between Chinese and domestic students. American students have a better understanding and appreciation of the cultural differences after attending study abroad program and are more inclined to help Chinese students when they come to OSU.

Discussions and Implications

The unique structure of the international joint degree program allows the institutions to provide more focused services and programs to support international students. The supporting structure also allows the institution to continue serving future students well. The approaches, such as the frequent visits of the OSU faculty and staff and the special tailored orientation programs held by the Department of Agricultural Economics, are effective ways to engage international students. The efforts of the two institutions on the logistical level are crucial to ensure a smooth transition of students from CAU to OSU. The social integration is fostered as early as their first arrival week in Stillwater. The special arrangements of peer interaction programs and mentor programs creates a welcoming environment for Chinese students to be socially engaged. The faculty advisement structure provides efficient and focused academic

support for Chinese students. It also builds another layer of faculty interaction outside of the classroom, which could promote students' social integration.

This study described and presented the three-phase approaches aiming to ease students' transition and engage students academically and socially. The strong connections built among peer students and with faculty fostered a sense of security and belonging. This feeling of connection is particularly important to Chinese students as Chinese culture places emphasis on a sense of community.

As stated in the research design section, this study utilizes the case study approach to understand the approaches of supporting a group of Chinese undergraduate students enrolled in a joint degree program. The study is limited by the choice of the objective, the boundaries associated with the setting. There are other issues associated with the international joint degree program, such as student learning outcomes or internationalized curriculum; however, they fall outside of the scope of this study. The campus location and setting provide a significant contextual factor for the college experience and campus culture. Thus, the findings of this study should be interpreted carefully within such a context. It may not apply beyond the research setting of the study, but they can be a reference for similar or further studies.

The existing limited exit interview and survey data reflects students' perspective on their academic and cultural experience, yet no available data to evaluate the effectiveness of each approach. The existing exit interview among all graduating students, which include both domestic and Chinese students, did not have specific questions regarding their interactions or the benefits of having such international joint degree program in the department.

Although the current study provided a detailed description of the supporting program focusing on enhancing Chinese students academic, social and personal growth, further research is needed to explore the impact of the joint degree program on domestic students and the campus internationalization process. This study extends a growing body of research focused on establishing international partnership and delivering joint degree programs. However, further research is needed to develop a deeper understanding and the knowledge of the growing Chinese student population on American college campuses. Researchers need to continue to explore and advance our understanding of best strategies to support this group of student population as well as strategies to develop effective international partnership and international programs.

This case study has significant implications for American institutions. While not every American institution has international joint degree programs in place, many institutions have a high enrollment of Chinese undergraduate students. The approach discussed in the case study identifies Chinese students' needs and addresses their concerns through three phases. This case study provides insights and suggestions for university administrators and faculty and student affairs professionals in creating a supportive and welcoming campus environment for Chinese undergraduate students.

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Appendix A

Weekly Journal 'A Week at OSU'

University Dining Services held a series of activities for healthy dining, "Choose Orange", this week. Information tables were set up to provide resources and information on the campus wide "Choose Orange" healthy options food labeling program. Nearly every dining location has healthy food choices labeled by an orange sign on the menu. Baked potatoes, pan-seared salmon, and vegetables are popular options.



Valentine's Day was on Tuesday and Oklahoma State University held the "Orange Crush: Share your OSU love story" contest this week. Many people shared their stories about how they met each other while at OSU, fell in love, got engaged, and made many lasting memories. Some campus dining spots, such as Red Earth Kitchen in the Student Union, made Valentine's Day meals: Pan-Seared Salmon, Chipotle Mash, Asparagus, & Chocolate-Dipped Cheesecake with Chocolate Strawberries. Valentine's Day is not only for couples. Whether you are a couple, best friends, or family, you can celebrate Valentine's Day with loved ones.

Appendix B
Welcome Week Itinerary
CAU-OSU Students Welcome Week Itinerary

Date: Sunday, August 7
Event: China Program Orientation and Processing Immigration Documents
Time: 9:00am
Location: Student Union, Room 416
Arranged by: The Office of International Students and Scholars
Attendance: Mandatory

Date: Monday, August 8
Event: TB Test, Issue Student ID, Open Bank Account, and Purchase Cell Phone
Time: 9:00am
Location: Meet in the Student Union, Room 250
Arranged by: The Office of International Students and Scholars
Attendance: Mandatory

Date: Tuesday, August 9
Event: Departmental Orientation Session (Part 1)
Time: 8:20am – 3:00pm
Location: Ag Hall, Room 201
Arranged by: The Department of Agricultural Economics
Attendance: Mandatory

Date: Wednesday, August 10
Event: Collect I-20
Time: 8:00am – 9:00am
Location: Student Union, Room 336
Arranged by: The Office of International Students & Scholars
Attendance: Mandatory

Date: Wednesday, August 10
Event: New International Undergraduate Student Orientation
Time: 9:00am – 3:00pm
Location: Student Union, Room 203 (SU Theater)
Arranged by: The Office of International Students & Scholars
Attendance: Mandatory

Date: Thursday, August 11
Event: Departmental Orientation Session (Part 2)
Time: 9:00am – 3:00pm
Location: Ag Hall, Room 201

Arranged by: The Department of Agricultural Economics
Attendance: Mandatory

Date: Friday, August 12
Event: CASNR New Student Welcome
Time: 12:30pm – 1:45pm
Location: Wes Watkins Center
Arranged by: CASNR (College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources)
Attendance: Mandatory

Date: Friday, August 12
Event: Convocation
Time: 2:00pm – 3:00pm
Location: Gallagher Iba Arena
Arranged by: The Office of New Student Orientation & Enrollment
Attendance: Mandatory

Date: Saturday, August 13
Event: Student Success Center Open House
Time: 12:00pm – 3:00pm
Location: Ag Hall, Room 103
Arranged by: The Student Success Center
Attendance: Optional

Appendix C Orientation Agenda

Agricultural Economics Department Orientation CAU-OSU Students Tuesday, August 9, 2016 Ag Hall, Room 201

- **8:20-8:30am** **Student Check-in, Ag Hall Room 201**

- **8:30-9:00am** **Continental Breakfast**

- **9:00-9:05am** **Welcome Students and Open the Session**
Arakssi Arshakian – Academic Program Coordinator

- **9:05-9:20am** **Overview of the Week’s Schedule and Agenda**
Arakssi Arshakian – Academic Program Coordinator

- **9:20-9:45am** **Health Center and Related Resources**
Jack Henneha – Assistant Director, University Health Services
Cali Martin – Benefits Representative, Human Resources
Topics: 1- Services and resources (including birth control related services and STDs)
2- How to check in
3- Immunization
4- Health Insurance and how to file a claim

- **9:45-10:15am** **CASNR Student Success Center**
Amy Gazaway – Student Success Coordinator
Topics: 1- Services the center provides
2- How to acquire those services
3- Additional university resources

- **10:15-10:30am** **Welcome Students**
Dr. Thomas Coon – Vice President, Dean, and Director of DASNR

- **10:30-10:45am** **Break and Refreshments**

- **10:45am** **Cross Cultural Topics**
- **10:45-11:10am** A) Four Dimensions of Culture
Arakssi Arshakian – Academic Program Coordinator
Topics: 1- Individualistic vs Collectivist
2- Masculinity vs Femininity
3- Power Distance
4- Uncertainty Avoidance
5- Questions and Answers

- **11:10-11:30am** B) Federal Holidays and other celebrations observed in the United States
Dr. Brian Adam – Professor

- **11:30-12:00pm** C) Gestures, Customs, and Cultural Differences between the U.S and
China presented in acting exercise

Topics:

- 1- Handshaking
- 2- Eye contact
- 3- Punctuality
- 4- Periods of silence in social situations
- 5- Informality of interaction
- 6- Queues/line
- 7- Personal space
- 8- The use of “Excuse me”, “Pardon me”, “Please”, and “Thank you” in the American conversation

- **12:00-1:15pm** **lunch Break (on your own)**

- **12:15pm** **Start heading back to Ag Hall, Computer Lab/Room 266**

- **1:30-3:00pm** **Online Resources**
Arakssi Arshakian – Academic Program Coordinator

Topics:

- 1- Banner for course enrollment
- 2- D2L (Desire to Learn)
- 3- O-Key Account Services
- 4- Library Resources
- 5- Academic Calendar

Agricultural Economics Department Orientation
CAU-OSU Students
Thursday, August 11, 2016
Ag Hall, Room 201

- **9:00-10:00am** **Classroom Courtesy**
Dr. John Michael Riley – Assistant Professor

Topics:

- 1- Class attendance and report of absence
- 2- Being on time
- 3- Leaving early while the class is still going
- 4- Syllabus (mark dates for exams, turn in assignments, etc. as professors may not remind students of those dates).
- 5- Asking questions during class
- 6- Taping a lecture
- 7- Cell phone in classrooms

- 8- Assignments (both individual and group)
- 9- Short tests and quizzes
- 10- Addressing a professor
- 11- Making an appointment with a professor
- 12- Communicating with a professor through email and/or phone

- **10:00-10:15am** **Break and Refreshments**

 - **10:15-11:30am** **Academic Integrity**
Dr. Tracy Boyer – Associate Professor
Topics: 1- Definition of academic integrity in the U.S system
2- Examples of violation of academic integrity
3- Citations

 - **11:40am** **Head to the Wes Watkins Center**
 - **12:00-1:15pm** **Lunch with Faculty at the Wes Watkins Center, Room 209**
Dr. Clary – Associate Dean of CASNR to welcome students

 - **1:15pm** **Start heading back to Ag Hall, Room 201**

 - **1:30-1:45pm** **Aggie-X Club**
Jaclyn Shirley – Aggie-X President
Topics: 1- What is Aggie-X club
2- Activities run by the club
3- How can students be members of the Aggie-X Club

 - **1:45-2:15pm** **Overview of the Department of Agricultural Economics**
Dr. Mike Woods – Professor and Department Head

 - **2:15-2:30pm** **Q & A with Domestic Students and CAU-OSU Previous Cohort Students**
Students of Agricultural Economics

 - **2:30pm** **Tour Around the Campus**
Students of Agricultural Economics
- Ag Hall**
- 1- CASNR Student Success Center
 - 2- Ag Econ department head office
 - 3- Computer lab, Room 313
 - 4- Ag Econ Student Center
 - 5- Advisors' offices
 - 6- Lounge, Room 419

Other Places on Campus

- 1- Colvin Center
- 2- Health Center

3- IBA Hall

4- Library

5- Student Union including

- Dining facilities
- OSU Book Store
- Postal Services
- Bursar Office
- Student Union Theater
- Student Union Ballroom
- Writing Center, Room 440

Appendix D

Peer Mentor Weekly Report

Weekly Report

Peer Mentor Name:

Date:

1- Activity/Event Report

- What:
- When:
- Who (write down the names of CAU-OSU students who attended, along with any domestic/international students that joined the activity/event):
- Where:
- Duration:

2- Event/Activity Evaluation:

- What did students learn?
- Do you recommend this activity in the future?
- What areas would you improve/add in the activity that would be helpful to our students?
- Any additional notes, concerns, etc.?

3- Provide general developmental feedback on the mentees:

Appendix E
Spring 2017 CAU-OSU Students' Exit Interview Results

Table 1. Overall, how do you rate your experience as CAU-OSU Joint Degree Program Student?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	21	95.5%
Somewhat Good	1	4.5%
Not Good	0	0%

Table 2. How do you rate your Academic Experience?

	Frequency	Percentage
Good Overall	19	86.4%
Struggling Some	3	13.6%

Table 3. How do you rate your Cultural Experience at OSU?

	Frequency	Percentage
Rewarding	16	72.7%
Didn't get much out of it	6	27.3%

Table 4. How do you rate The Peer Mentor Program?

	Frequency	Percentage
Useful	20	90.9%
Somewhat Useful	2	9.1%
Not Useful	0	0%

Table 5. What is your next endeavor?

	Frequency	Percentage
Graduate School	19	86.4%
Seek Employment	3	13.6%

About the Authors

Arakssi Arshakian works at Oklahoma State University where she serves as Academic Program Coordinator in the Department of Agricultural Economics. Arakssi's academic, professional, and personal backgrounds provide strong support to the three-phase approach model adopted by the Department of Agricultural Economics. Arakssi is of Armenian descent, born and raised in Baghdad-Iraq. She received her Bachelor's degree in English from the University of Baghdad and a Master's degree in International Studies from Oklahoma State University. Professionally, Arakssi has eleven years of work experience in the international spectrum. For more information about the CAU-OSU Joint Degree Program, contact Arakssi Arshakian at arakssi@okstate.edu.

Dr. Vivian Wang serves as Manager of China Programs and Development at Oklahoma State University. Dr. Wang is responsible for the university's program development with China. She is the point of contact for multiple Chinese partner universities, facilitates understanding and collaborations between OSU departments and Chinese partners. Dr. Wang works closely with OSU current Chinese students and provides advisement for their success at OSU. Dr. Vivian Wang completed her bachelors of Arts degree in English Education at Shanghai Normal University and Masters of Science and Ph.D. in Educational leadership at Oklahoma State University. Contact: Vivian.wang@okstate.edu.

¹ Senior authorship is not assigned. Authors are listed in alphabetical order.