

Helping Chinese 2+2 Students Integrate

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MultiCultural
Business
Solutions

First Group Discussion

What is our goal?

- What does “better integrate the 2+2 program students” mean?
 - Ensure that students have an engaging, purposeful and relevant experience
- How do we measure success?
- What are the benefits for the University of Waterloo to run the 2+2 program?
- What are the benefits that Canadian students, staff and faculty members get for being part of this program?

Gap Analysis

Academic ability is not a major gap, as 2+2 students don't do worse than local students statistically in courses; their major challenges are in critical thinking and writing. There are three major gaps:

1. 2+2 students have trouble find co-op; some have to drop-out the co-op program
2. Capstone project: 2+2 students don't cross over with the local students until then; 2+2 students missed all the bonding the local students built over the first two years.
3. The Cohort arrangement creates a safety net that the 2+2 students stick together; we believe recreating home country environment erode the value of the program; those who succeed break away from the group.

Goal: 2+2 program should be an enhanced learning experience for both Canadian and 2+2 students; we should communicate the benefit to local students.

Gap Analysis - Solutions

Motivation:

- Expectation: family sent them here; hope to move onto advanced education; find a job; one incentive is the visa to stay in Canada after the graduation.
- Encourage local students to work with 2+2 students as a way to learn new skill; in the past, we asked every group takes on a 2+2 for the capstone project, local students have no problem with it.

Program management:

- Two opinions: (1) We shouldn't force local students take on 2+2 students; (2) We should assign teams b/c in industry you can't choose your team; it's a safe environment to learn how to work with people who are different from you.
- Current process: Students put their choice of the kind of project they want to do; we match them based on project choice; this way it's not about mixing up local and 2+2 for the sake of mixing them up, but it's based on their preference of the type of projects; it's just a lot of work.
- Design of curriculum: incorporate global perspective
- Social activities to bring everyone together
- Partnering, shadowing

Second Group Discussion

- Assign percentages to and discuss the following:
 - To what extent do Chinese students need to adapt in order to integrate into the 2+2 program?
 - To what extent do Canadian students, staff and faculty members need to adapt?



Gaps and Solutions

General support gaps:

- University does not accept them into residence; they have to find accommodation on their own; this in turn facilitates the group sticking together behaviour.
- Student Success Office sends five long email information package, which can be difficult for 2+2 students to understand and retain the information.
- Primary source of information comes from existing students, which may or may not be accurate.

Solutions:

- Offer options to help them integrate
- Pamphlet or a video of what to expect, faculty specific
- 6-week English class: we keep reminding them why they are here; help them to clarify their motivation.
- Understand all the touch points and attach the solutions to these touch points; where is most potential of impact to apply resources
- Milestone debriefing

Gap and Solution

Solutions (continued):

- Mentorship: EB student started their own mentors program; can extend to 2+2 students
- 2+2 ambassadors – successful students (2+2 and local) go to China to brief future applicants; offer co-op jobs for 2+2 at university - Judi
- Professors teaching in Nanjing can provide information about the 2+2 program; communicate with professors who will go teach in Nanjing: Jen
- Explore co-op opportunities in China
- Incorporate in application requirement:
 - 40 hours of volunteer work
 - One-page statement, what impact you want to create
- Student leadership certificate
- Collect information: e.g. from 2+2 students; surveys, focus groups

Gap and Solutions

Gap – instruction side:

- Professor: I want you to go away and integrate this concept into your work; students came back and did not do it. This happens to majority of 2+2 student.

Solutions:

- Supplemental instructions or a process TA for all students - Judi
- Critical thinking: course or resources devoted to build the skill; they may not be asked “what do you think” “Why you are saying what you are saying” before.
- Information and training for local students to understand the benefits of 2+2 program in the first year – Michael
- Information about China, India, Africa, Latin America – Dan

Third Group Discussion

- What can this group do, individually and collectively, to help the program be more successful?

Action	Owner	Timeline	Follow-up

Possible Action Steps

- Bring Chinese students a few weeks early for English courses
- Provide an orientation program before formal classes start
- Buddy system: pair up incoming Chinese students with more senior students
- Set up a formal mentoring program; provide credit for students who mentor Chinese students
- Create a “Chinese student point contact” person, who speaks Mandarin and understands well how the university operates

Possible Action Steps

- Organize monthly movie nights that bring together Chinese and Canadian students to watch a meaningful movie and discuss it together
- Organize a ping-pong, badminton or volley-ball tournament with mixed teams
- Organize team-building events at the beginning of the capstone project
- Provide training and support to faculty members
- Provide cross-cultural training to all students (in particular, do the card game with them)