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UNIVERSALIZING GLOBAL LEARNING IN THE 21ST-CENTURY ACADEMY

# Developing an International Student Retention Strategy

## Theory to Practice

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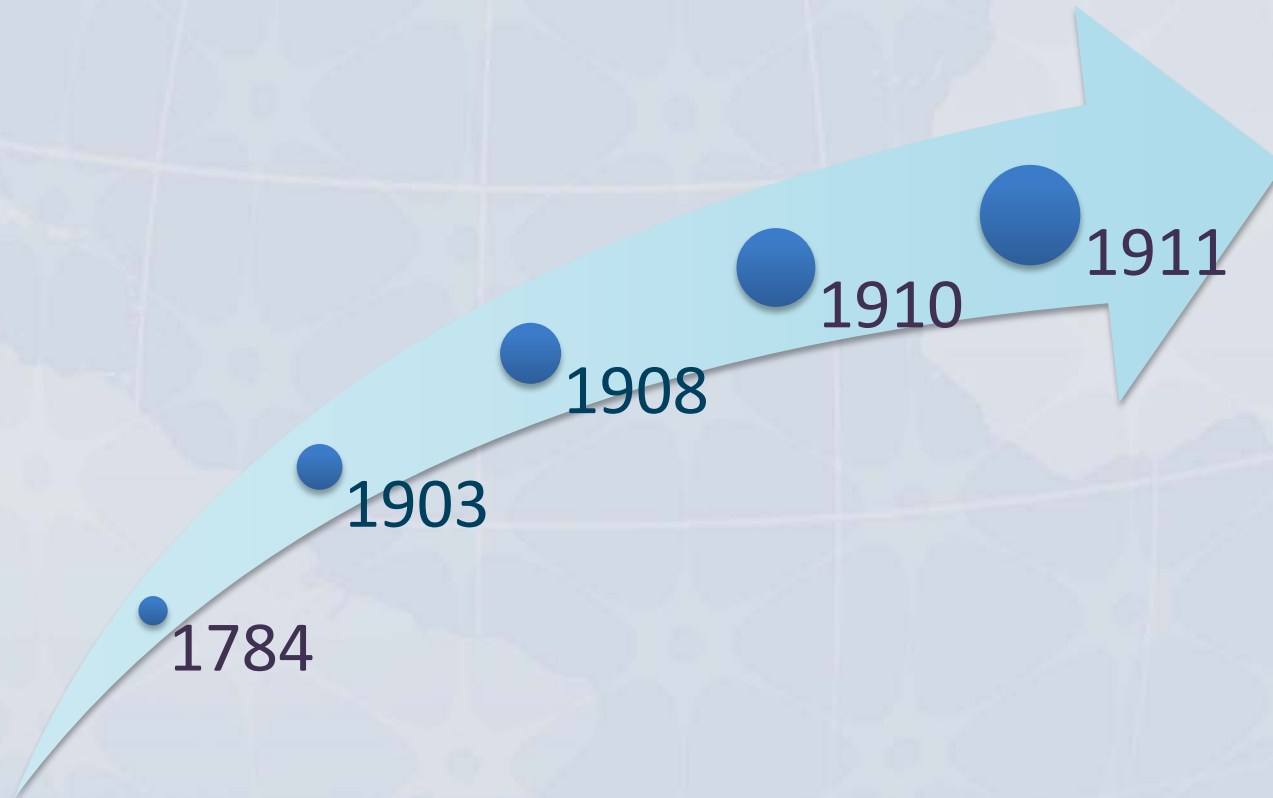
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# Overview

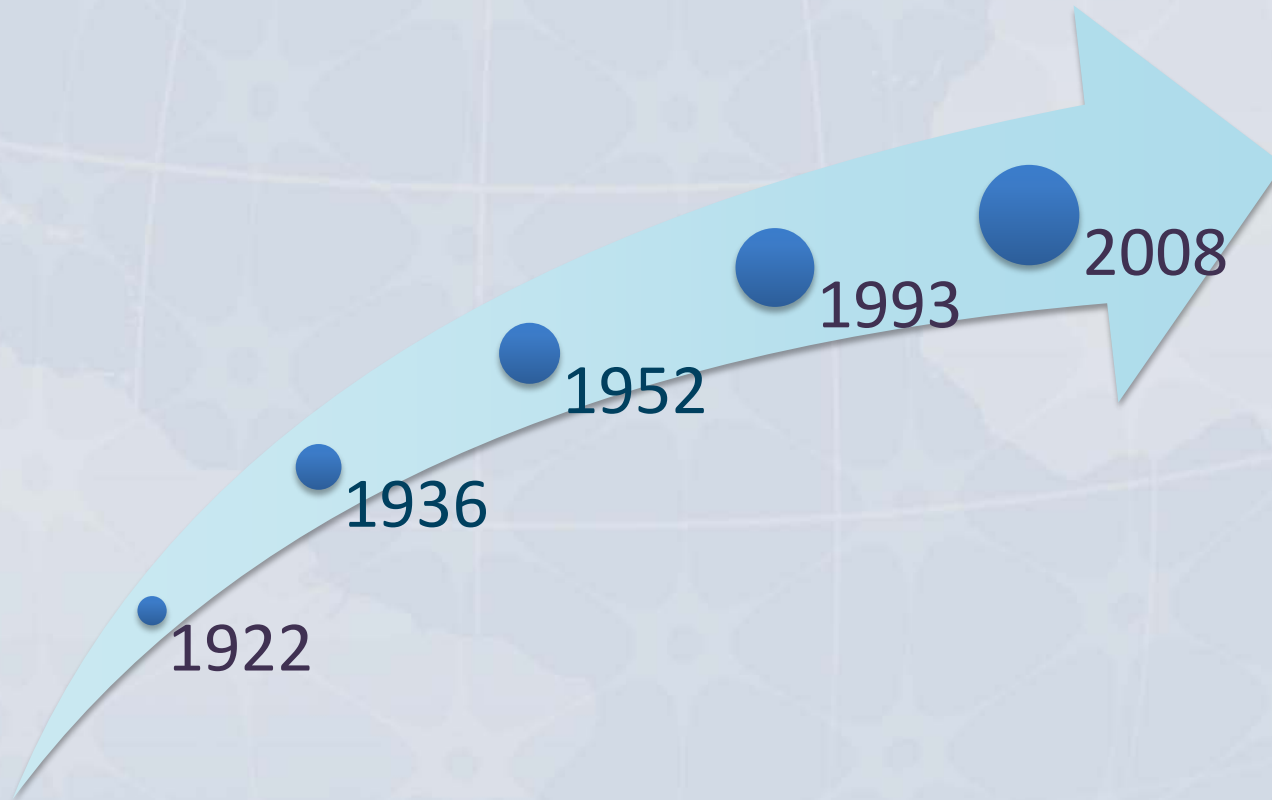
- **Student Retention Theories and Models**
- **Research on International Student Retention and Services**
- **Applying Theory to Practice: Intervention Programs at Two Institutions**
- **Tips for developing an international student retention strategy**
- **Discussion on Current Issues and Best Practices**

# **STUDENT RETENTION THEORIES AND MODELS**

# Historical Developments (Bevis & Lucas, 2007)



# Historical Developments (Bevis & Lucas, 2007)



# Development of Retention Theories

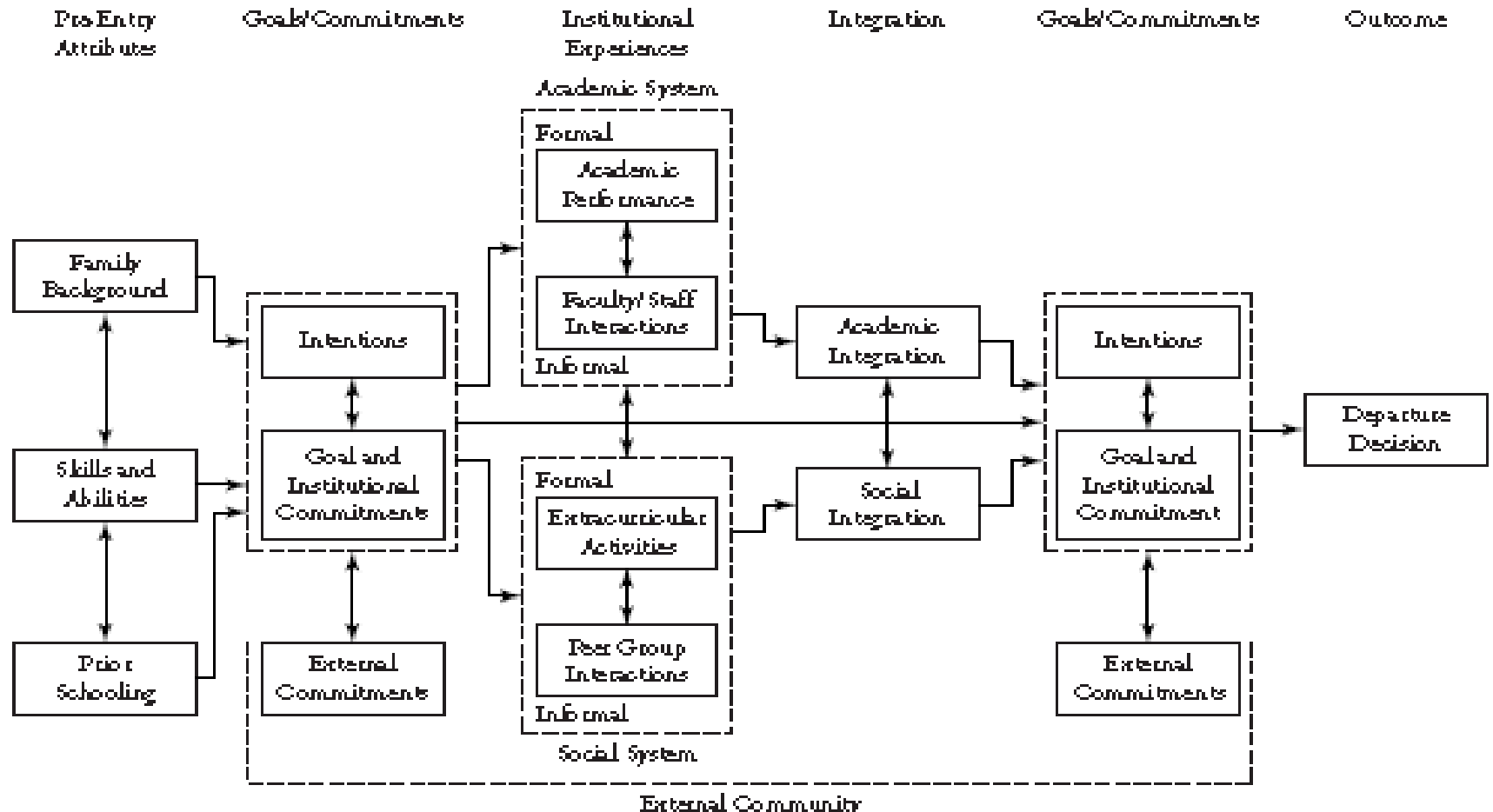
- Shift from descriptive to proactive
- Focus on domestic majority
- Drawn from other fields

# Student Retention Theories

- Durkheim's Theory of Suicide
  - Spady (1970)
  - Tinto (1975)
- Freud's Concept of *Cathexis*
  - Astin (1985)
- Van Gennep's Rites of Passage
  - Tinto (1988)

# Student Integration Model

**Tinto's Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure (Student Integration Model)**



(Tinto, 1988)

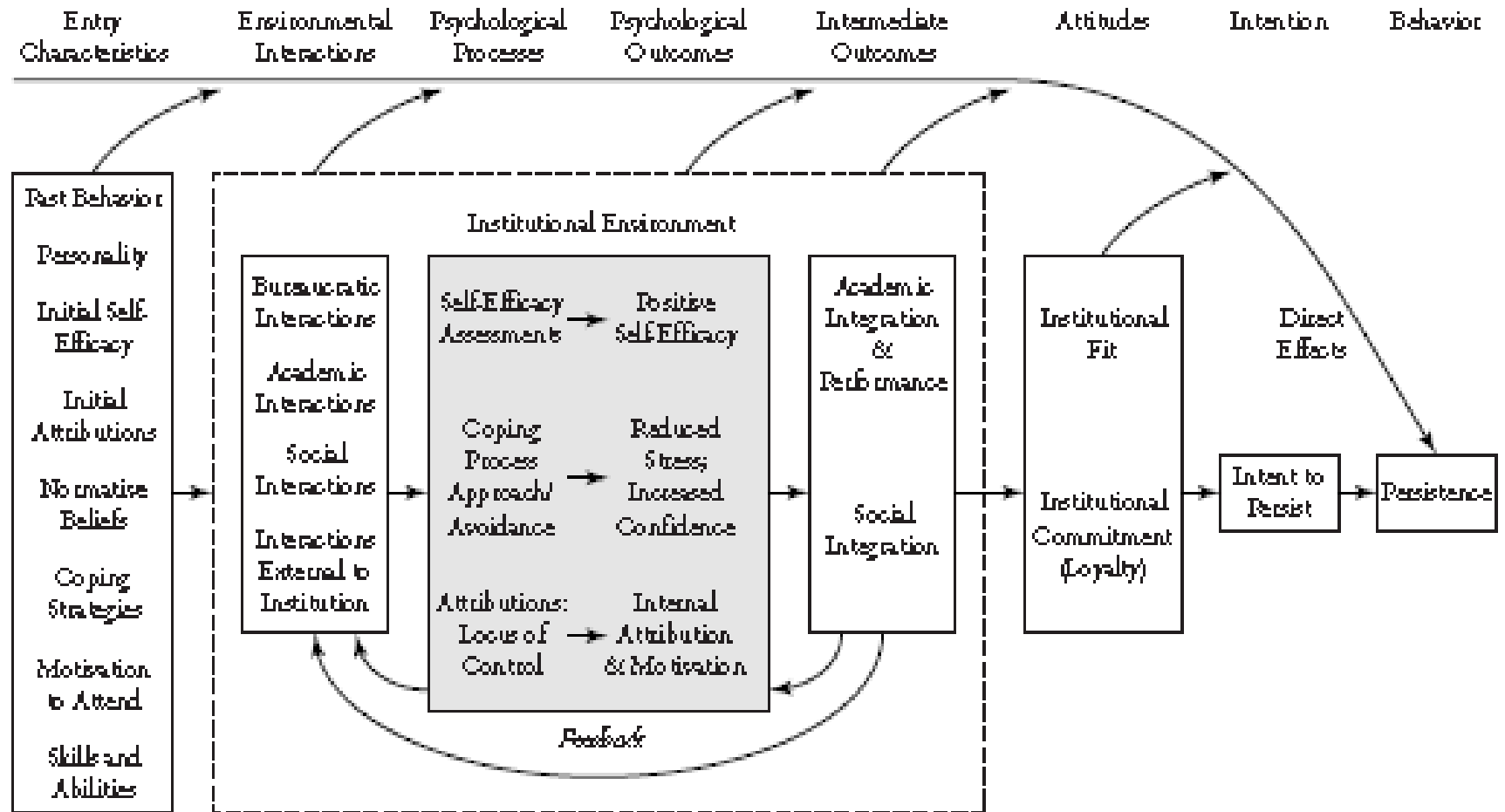


# Bean (2005)

- Proposes nine themes are found within retention literature. They are intentions, institutional fit and commitment, psychological processes and key attitudes, academics, social factors, bureaucratic factors, external environment, student background, and finances.

# Model of College Student Retention

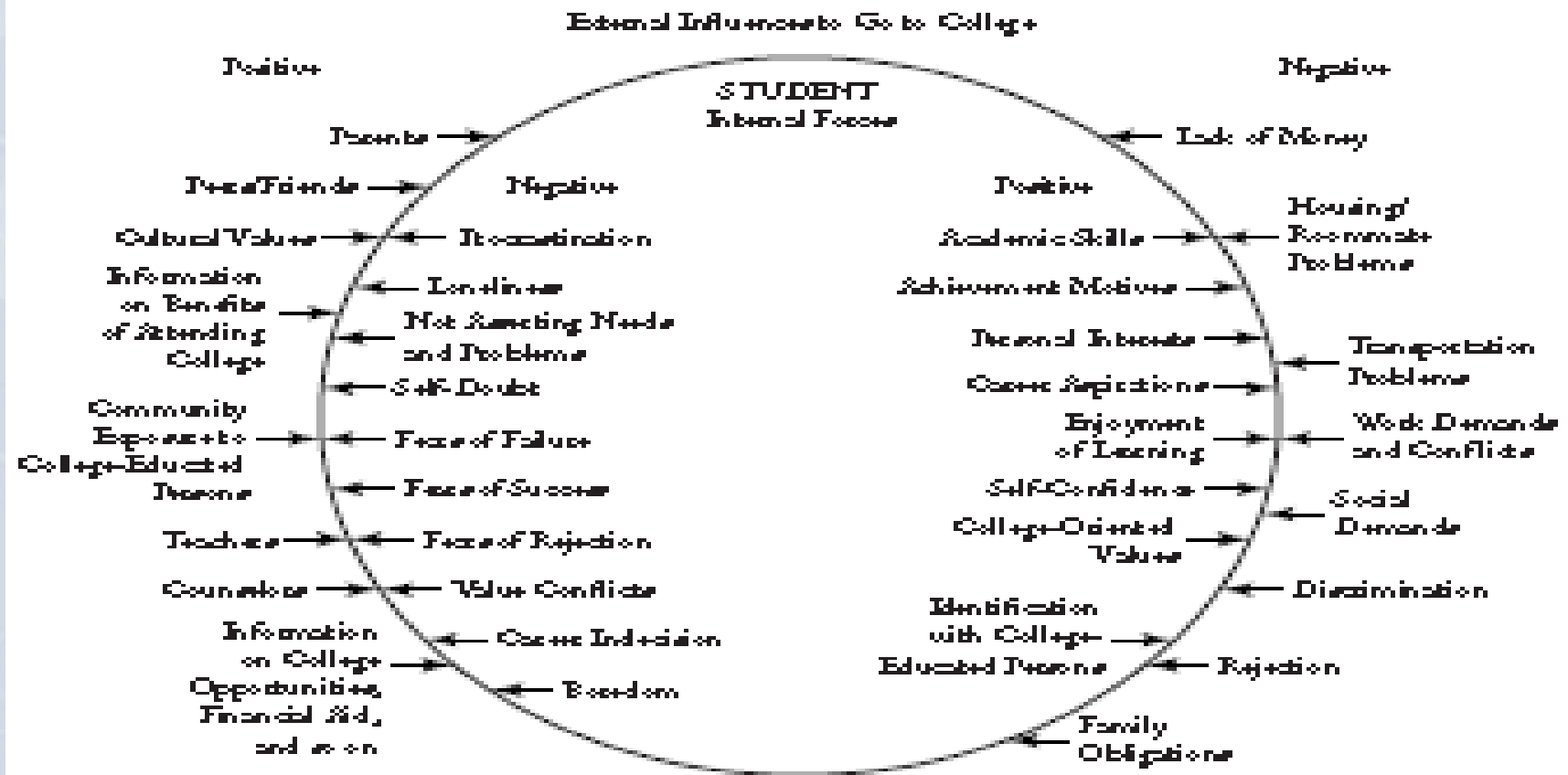
## Bean and Eaton's Psychological Model of College Student Retention



Bean & Eaton, (2000)

# Force Field Analysis of College Persistence

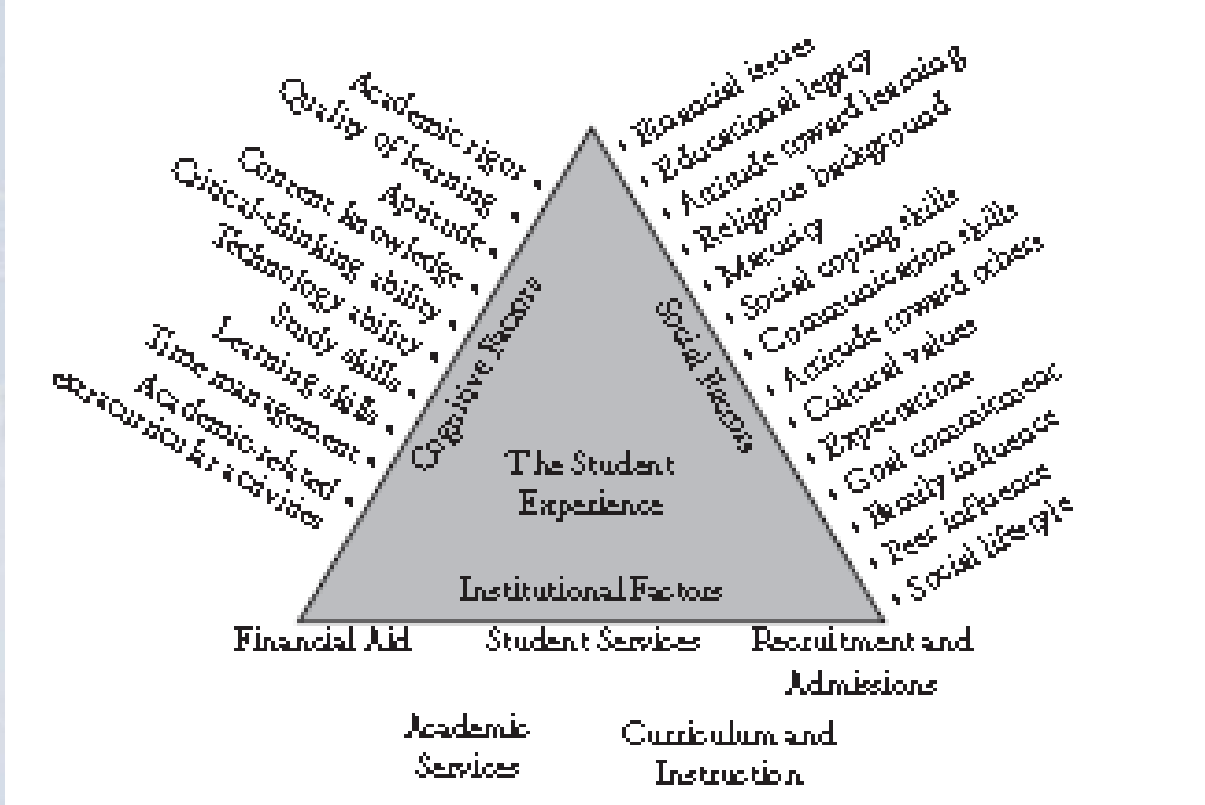
## Anderson's Force Field Analysis of College Persistence



(Anderson, 1985)

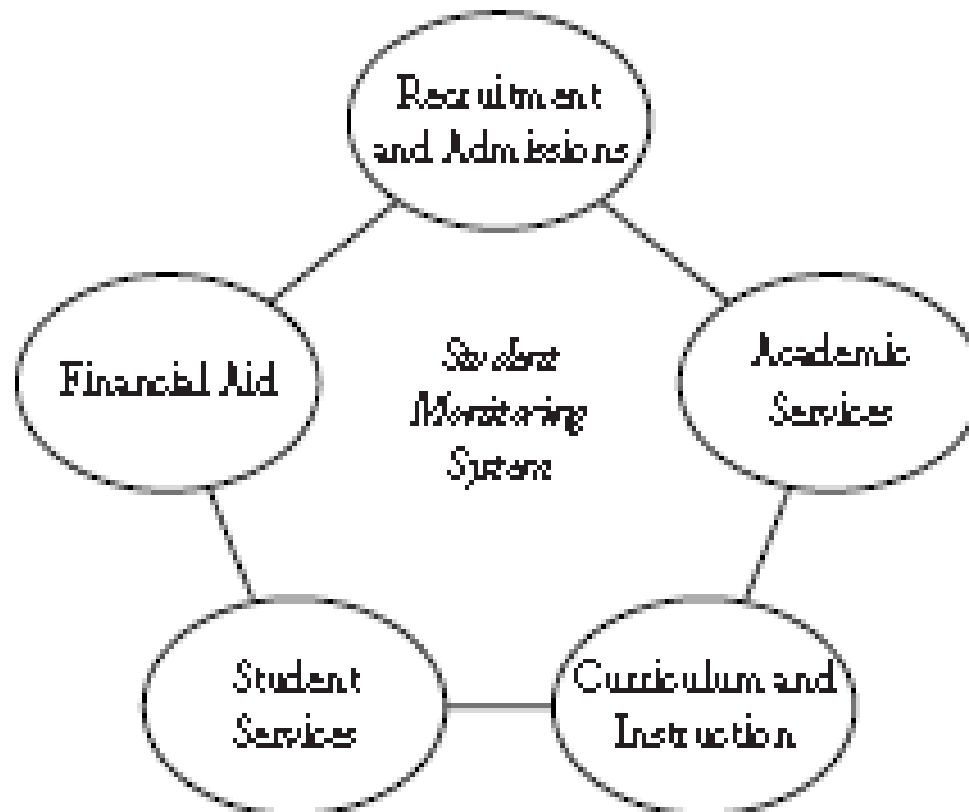
# Swail's (2003) Geometric Model of Student Persistence and Achievement

Forces Acting on the Geometric Model of Student Persistence and Achievement



# Swail's (1995) Student Retention Framework

## Five Components of the Student Retention Framework



# Swail's (2004) Student Monitoring System

- Must be comprehensive and incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection.
- Must be longitudinal , because the process of student dropout is longitudinal
- Must be recursive , in order to uncover trends, which will allow the identification of successes and remaining challenges

# Seidman's (2005) Retention Formula

- Based on Tinto's model
- Provides formula for retention consisting of identification (of needs and at-risk potential) and intervention.
  - *Formula*: retention = early identification + (early + intensive + continuous) intervention

# International Student Retention Formula

- **Retention** = **Early identification of potential for failure** + **Identification of (universal + immigration-specific + culture-specific + individual) needs** + **(early, intensive and continuous) interventions**

Adapted from Seidman (2005)



# **RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RETENTION AND SERVICES**

# The Study

- Examines retention of international undergraduate students in the U. S. after completing the first academic year in two separate statewide public higher education systems in a Midwestern state.
- Relative contribution of pre-entry attributes (prior schooling and family background), institutional experience (academics, co-curricular involvement, and peer group interaction), and on-campus integration (academic and social).

(Kwai, 2010)

# The Research Question

What factors influence the persistence of international undergraduate students from year-one to year-two in public four-year universities?

(Kwai, 2010)

## Other Questions addressed by this study:

- Categories such as pre-entry attributes, institutional experience, and on-campus interaction influences persistence of international students
- Proficiency in English
- Country of citizenship
- Source of financial sponsorship

(Kwai, 2010)

- Gender
- GPA
- Number of credit hours attempted
- Living on-campus
- Working on-campus
- Number of appointments with International Student Office

(Kwai, 2010)

# Public System 1

The first public system is comprised of 32 colleges and universities, including 25 two-year colleges and seven four-year universities. The system serves about 240,000 students per year in credit-based courses, and an additional 130,000 students in non-credit courses, and graduates about 33,500 students each year. An estimated 64 percent of all undergraduates in this state are educated in this public statewide system

(Kwai, 2010)

## New International Undergraduate Students at Public Four-Year Universities

Public System 1 University	Total New International Student Fall 2006	Non Degree Seeking or Exchange	Degree Seeking	
			Freshmen	Transfer
Institution A	119	24	26	69
Institution B	123	51	28	44
Institution C	249	97	59	93
Institution D	116	8	15	93
Institution E	92	0	77	15
Institution F	69	12	31	26
Institution G	106	68	29	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>349</b>

(Kwai, 2010)

# Public System 2

Public System 2 has five campuses located throughout the state. Two are considered to be four-year undergraduate campuses, one is a master's university, one is a master's university with applied doctoral programs, and one is a research university with very high research, based on the Carnegie Classification

(Kwai, 2010)



## New International Undergraduate Students at Public Four-Year Universities

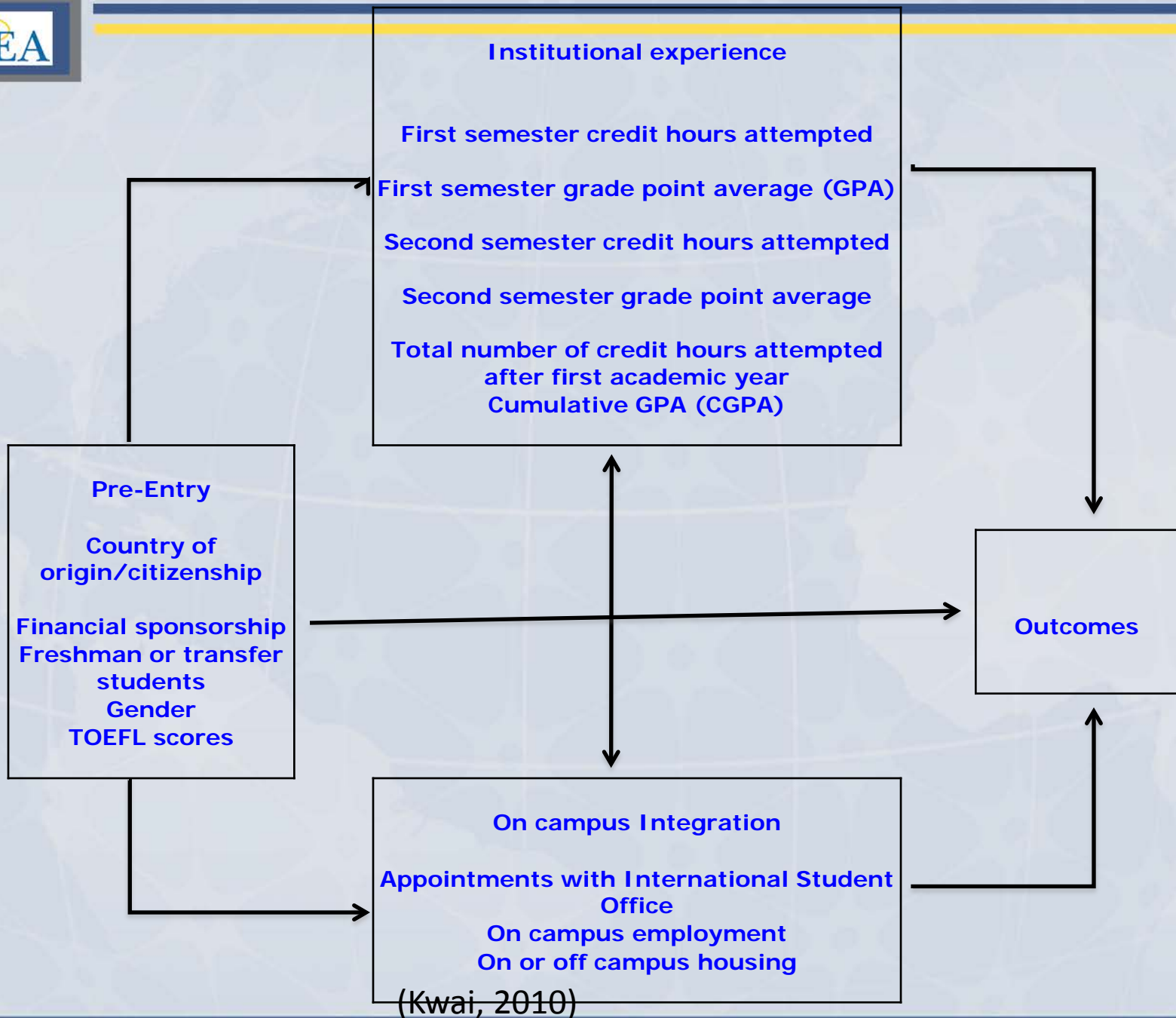
Public System 2 University	Total New International Student Fall 2006	Degree Seeking	
		Freshmen	Transfer
Campus A	24	9	15
Campus B	32	25	7
Campus C	21	7	14
Campus D	130	68	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>98</b>

(Kwai, 2010)

# Research Design

The purpose of this study was to develop a retention model for degree-seeking undergraduate international students in statewide higher education systems. The model uses a combination of Tinto's (1975) and Astin's (1970) models, and revisions made by Tierney (1992) and Pascarella and Terenzini (1980).

(Kwai, 2010)



(Kwai, 2010)

# Data Treatment

- Public System 1 Model One (PS1 M1) was constructed from Institutions F and G. These two institutions had complete data on all 14 variables. Missing data such as TOEFL scores was replaced by the average score of students' data from individual campuses.
- Public System 1 Model Two (PS1 M2) consisted of data from Institution C, where the IR office was unable to provide the data on number of appointments with International Student Office due to the loss of data in the personnel changes and a new operating system.

(Kwai, 2010)

- Public System 2 Model 1 (PS2 M1) was extracted from the second set of data where the data was only available from twelve out of the fourteen variables. This is due to the limitation of data collection in the statewide public system 2's data collection structure. The variables that were not available were financial sponsor and number of appointments with International Student Office.
- Combined Public System Model 1 (CPS M1). Only 12 of the 14 variables were included in CPS M1. CPS M1 was created to test the validity of the analysis of the research questions.

(Kwai, 2010)

# Results

- **No Single factor or model to predict persistence**
- **Most variables were either unclear or inconsistent**
- **Only academic achievement was consistent**

(Kwai, 2010)

# Positive effect on influencing retention

- Spring semester GPA
- Credits hours attempted
- On-campus employment

(Kwai, 2010)

# **RESEARCH ON CAMPUS SERVICES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**



# Context of the Study



- Between the years of 1959 and 1974 only 21 (2.5%) articles published in the *Journal of College Student Personnel* were written about international students (Hood, Hull & Mines, 1979).
- Five years later, over 100 additional articles had been published in the same journal, but not one pertained to international students (Tryon, 1981).
- Pope, Mueller and Reynolds (2009) found international students to be mostly absent from the past fifty years of study affairs research.

(Di Maria, 2012)

# Statement of the Problem



- The provision of services for international students remains a critical issue for researchers and practitioners (Hammer, 1992; Ward, 2001; Arthur, 2004; Andrade, 2006).
- Few empirical studies exist pertaining to student affairs administrators and campus services for international students (Hood, Hull & Hines, 1979; Tryon, 1981; Pope, 1993; Pope, Mueller & Reynolds, 2009).

(Di Maria, 2012)

## Statement of the Problem (cont.)



- Serving international students challenges service providers in ways for which they may not be prepared (Tillman, 1990; Evans, 2009)
- Some staff members may harbor negative views toward serving international students, which can influence behavior (Alreshoud & Koeske, 1997; Gitlin, Buendia, Crosland & Doumbia, 2003; Black, 2011)
- Knowledge of factors affecting student affairs administrators' views of campus services for international students has implications for training and development.

(Di Maria, 2012)

# Research Questions



1. In what ways are campus services provided to international students by student affairs administrators?
2. In what ways should campus services be provided to international students by student affairs administrators?
3. What are factors affecting student affairs administrators' views of campus services for international students?

(Di Maria, 2012)

## In what ways are campus services provided to international students by student affairs administrators?



- 73.2% felt international students face additional challenges in accessing services
- 63.8% indicated that campus services for international students are mostly provided by the ISO
- 63.6% have not made adaptations to services to meet the unique needs of international students
- 50% did not feel adequately trained to provide campus services to international students
- 47.2% believed it is more difficult to provide services to international students than to domestic students

## In what ways should campus services be provided to international students by student affairs administrators?



- 97% view the responsibility to serve international students as a shared responsibility
- 97% agree that services should be adapted to meet the unique needs of international students
- 89.6% want more training
- 14.9% believe it is too much to ask staff to accommodate the unique needs of international students

(Di Maria, 2012)

# Qualitative Findings



- Communication Barriers
  - Culture (9/9)
  - Language (9/9)
- Preparation
  - Training of Staff (9/9)
  - Orientation of Students (8/9)
- Strategic Leadership
  - Administration
  - Collaboration
  - Intentionality

(Di Maria, 2012)

# Qualitative Findings



- We need to kind of stay ahead of what is coming through the door because these populations do present some greater challenge just from a counselor preparation point of view.
  - Manager of Career Services Office

(Di Maria, 2012)



# Qualitative Findings



- The more international students we have on campus, the more services we need and the more training other people really have to be aware of and able to attend.
  - Manager of Office of Judicial Affairs

(Di Maria, 2012)

# Qualitative Findings



- The biggest challenge is that we don't talk about it very much. And because we don't talk about it very much, we don't intentionally address that segment of our population.
  - Associate in Office of Student Organizations and Leadership

(Di Maria, 2012)

# Qualitative Findings



- It's like they come here and you turn them loose, but you don't give them a guide. You know, a disabled person has Student Accessibility Services, which can provide a companion at least for a little while, you know.
  - Manager of Student Union

(Di Maria, 2012)

## Qualitative Findings



- It seems like we continually move international students further and further away from student affairs. And the further it gets moved away from student affairs, the less likely we are to focus on that area.
  - Associate in Office of Student Organizations and Leadership

(Di Maria, 2012)

# Qualitative Findings



- There is more of a commitment to recruiting international students and the recognition of support services, I think, lags behind the desire to recruit.
  - Manager of Health Services Office

(Di Maria, 2012)

# The Current Situation

## Summary



- **ISO as primary provider of services**
  - Dependency (Hammer, 1992)
  - Integration (Ellingboe, 1998)
- **Lack of Assessment and Evaluation**
  - Ethnocentric characteristics (Jackson & Holvino, 1988)
  - Gather data and share results (Bolman & Deal, 2001)
  - Allow data to inform action (Senge, 1999)
- **Internationalization is happening at the periphery of student affairs**
  - Comprehensive internationalization (Hudzik, 2011)
  - Communicate vision (Kotter, 1996)

(Di Maria, 2012)

# The Ideal Situation

## Summary

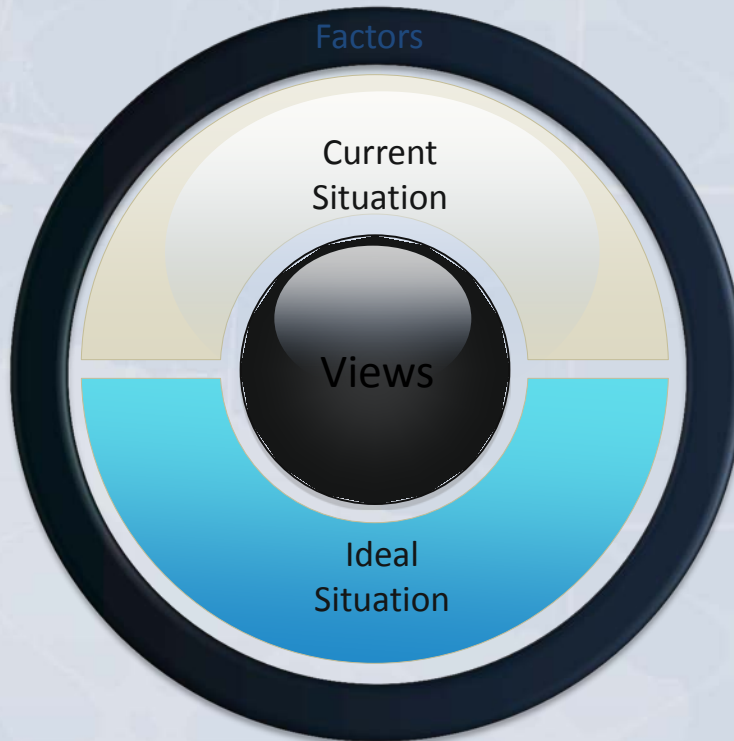


- **Services should be adapted to meet needs**
  - Targets of change (Jackson & Holvino, 1988)
- **Improve training**
  - Orientation of staff and students (Jackson & Holvino, 1988)
  - Ongoing training of staff (Jackson & Holvino, 1988)
  - Community outreach (Jackson & Holvino, 1988)
- **Increase involvement of stakeholders**
  - Distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006)
  - Authorship (Bolman & Dean, 2001)

(Di Maria, 2012)

# Factors Affecting Views

## Campus Services for International Students



(Di Maria, 2012)

### Factors

**International Enrollment**  
(Allport, 1979; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006)

**Strategic Alignment of International Activity**  
(Childress, 2009)

**Foreign Language Proficiency and International Travel**  
(Paige, 1993)

**Socialization (years and degrees of separation)**  
(Mills, 2009)



# **APPLYING THEORY TO PRACTICE: INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

# Strategic Planning for Internationalization



- Internationalization at most institutions occurs within an “adhocracy” (Rudzki, [1998](#), p. 47).
- “Such an approach will inevitably lead to increased problems within institutions as the consequences of unplanned growth of activities are realized” (p. 48).

Professional Domain	Interventions
<b>Career Services</b>	Provide resources on employment trends, resume format and interview customs outside of the USA.
<b>Counseling Services</b>	Explain the normality of counseling in the USA, what it is and is not.
<b>Disability Services</b>	Present to students about support services for which they may be eligible.
<b>Health Services</b>	Ensure policy meets requirements set by the U.S. Department of State and allows for flexible enrollment. Include add-ons for dental and vision care. Train staff on culturally-sensitive medical practices.
<b>Judicial Services</b>	Train judicial officers on how academic ethics differ across cultures.
<b>Legal Services</b>	Translate brochures covering basic legal information and services into the languages of English Language Learners.
<b>Residential Services</b>	Be sensitive to students' dietary needs by diversifying dining options and labeling ingredients. Provide family and single-sex housing.
<b>Student Organizations and Leadership</b>	Ensure that international students are represented in student government.
<b>Student Recreation Services</b>	Create single sex sections of fitness courses.
<b>Student Union</b>  (Di Maria, 2012)	Designate a meditation room where students of all religious and spiritual beliefs are welcome. Display flags of students' home countries in a culturally and politically appropriate manner.

# International Student and Scholar Integration Committee

- The International Student and Scholar Integration Committee will address concerns and issues that arise for international students and scholars at Kent State University.
- The committee will recommend to the director of international programs and services necessary actions and policies to improve the experiences of and services for international students and scholars at Kent State University.

# International Student Integration Committee

- 4 International student and scholar representatives:
  - One graduate international student
  - One undergraduate international student
  - One representative from Student Government
  - One visiting scholar
  
- 11 Student Services representatives:
  - One from Residence Services
  - One from University Health Services
  - One from the ESL Center
  - One from AAAC
  - One from Career Services
  - One from the Women's Center
  - One from Center for Student Involvement
  - Student Ombuds
  - One from Registrar's Office
  - One from Honors College
  - One from Bursar's Office
  
- 10 Faculty/Staff representatives:
  - One from each College
  - One from Read Center
  - Two representatives from the Office of Global Education, who will report back to the OGE Advisory Board

# Welcome Reception Hosted by University Libraries

- Students are welcomed by resource librarians and the dean
- Tour of the library
- Overview of library resources



# Who should adjust to whom?

- A focus on the student rather than the institution implies that international students are the cause of their own adjustment problems.
- At Kent State, we not only support international students to adjust to the institution, but we constantly question the readiness of an institution to function effectively in an increasingly globalized world.
- [ACIREMA](#)

# **TIPS FOR DEVELOPING AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RETENTION STRATEGY**



# **DISCUSSION ON CURRENT ISSUES AND BEST PRACTICES**

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