

Group 5. Meeting with experienced students

Difficult problems can have a simple solution; all you might need is an experienced person to help.

When I arrived in Norway, I was a little overwhelmed, as I am sure many of you were. I had:

No Contact
No Experience
No Guidance
No Clue

After the first few weeks had passed, I felt more settled, but I still had a lot of questions.

What I needed, like so many students, was information.

The idea our group focused on was building a framework for a program that would allow new students to meet with experienced students, both international and Norwegian. There are primarily guidelines and we hope they could serve as some sort of starting point. Our idea begins with generating a list of volunteer students who would be willing to meet and talk with a small group of new international students. The volunteer students would ideally be drawn from a pool of Norwegian and international students, in an effort to promote inclusion.

The meeting itself would be held after the first few weeks of the semester. We hope that this would give the new international students a little time to get settled.

The format of the meeting would be very flexible, and hopefully very informal and relaxed, ideally, there would be a mix of two to three of both experienced international and Norwegian students. In addition, there would be ten to twenty newly arrived international students in attendance. Our hope would be that this smaller, less formal setting would promote a more open discussion.

The topics covered in these meetings would be very open, and largely depend on the questions from the new international students.

The last step of this process would be a survey given to the international students at the end of the semester. The information gathered from this survey would be used to improve the following semester.

Not to be too negative, but our group also thought about some of the potential problems this sort of event might face.

- If there are few experienced students or few volunteers, it could be difficult to hold the meetings.
- Many international students leave before the new ones arrive, some of the counselling could then be done through e-mail etc.
- In our discussions we had a little difficulty deciding what information would be sent out to the incoming students. This would most likely be decided upon by the individual branch.
- When in the semester to hold the meeting is also relevant, this could be adjusted after the survey results are read.

In summary; every semester would begin by sending information to the incoming students to help them prepare.

Next, the meeting would occur with the new international students and the student volunteers.

At the end of the semester, a survey would be given to gather information. And finally, a list of student volunteers would be put together for the next semester.