Best practice in understanding and enhancing students’ motivations for integration

Bethan Payne, Higher Education Policy Advisor, NUS
Jo Holiday, International Student Adviser, Sheffield SU
Academic Integration
Key player = Institution
Supporting = Student Union

Social Integration
Key player = Student Union
Supporting = Institution

Is this always the case?

International Students
Home Students
Different challenges and different motivations
How integrated, if at all, do you feel with domestic students?

- 9.2% Not at all
- 9.8% Somewhat
- 34.7% Fully

How integrated, if at all, do you feel with international students?

- 22.6% Not at all
- 13.1% Somewhat
How important, if at all, do you think that integration with domestic students is?

- Not at all important: 2.1%
- Somewhat important: 4.1%
- Very important: 22.2%
- Don't know: 6.3%

How important, if at all, do you think that integration with international students is?

- Not at all important: 8.3%
- Somewhat important: 6.4%
- Very important: 26.4%
- Don't know: 7.2%
The top 5 motivators for going to university are:

- To gain qualifications
- Necessary for career
- Improve earning potential
- For the experience
- To improve chances of getting a job

But...are these motivators the same for both groups? There are many different sources that can provide institutions with this data at local level.
Employer demand:

You need the mindset that says, ‘The person I’m talking to isn’t like me and I need to understand what they are like and then work with them.’ It isn’t only about having the technical knowledge, it’s also necessary to understand the values, customs, cultures and behaviours that are significant to them. (National Grid)

I think cultural dexterity is important: an ability not to impose one’s own culture on another one, to be sensitive to other cultures and how to do business in different environments. There are certain ways of working with clients in the Middle East that you wouldn’t adopt in Japan. (PWC)

You probably can’t make someone have a global mindset or develop this learning agility on their own. You’ve really got to invest time in them to get them comfortable with it. (BNP Paribas)
• What factors demotivate domestic and international students from integrating/engaging in intercultural contact?

• Do student motivations for integration differ? By type of student? By level of degree? By type of institution? How can we reflect these differences appropriately?

• What incentives could universities/students' unions offer to motivate students to engage with integration/internationalisation activities and how could this be done more collaboratively?
Conclusion slide