





THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

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The importance of belonging: enhancing international students wellbeing and outcomes

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THE IMPORTANCE OF
BELONGING: ENHANCING
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS'
WELLBEING AND OUTCOMES











About us







Jason D. Patent, PhD BridgeLabs



Fran Baxter Value Learning





For today

- Setting the scene
- International students in Australia and USA
- What can YOU do?
- Q&A







Share about a time when you felt you belonged somewhere

What feelings did you have?







Share about a time when you felt you did not belong somewhere

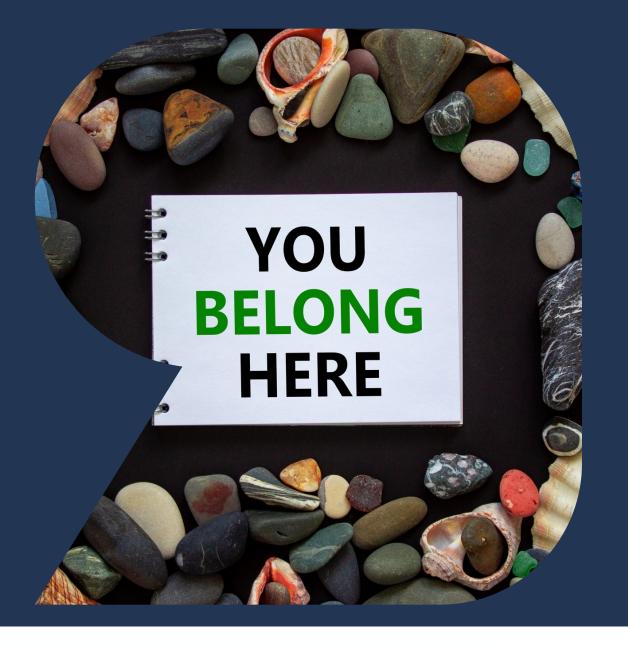
What feelings did you have?







SETTING THE SCENE







Social belonging is a fundamental human need.

This need is hardwired to our DNA.









BELONGING

- Essential for life satisfaction
- Happiness
- Positive self-esteem
- Long-lasting friendships
- Help-seeking behaviour







NOT BELONGING

- Absenteeism
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Difficulties with teachers and peers





MINORITIES

25-30%

Of their time spent worrying about how they fit in

AT WORK

40%

Of people feel isolated at work









International Students in Australia



 Universities Accord final report 50% of students feel they do not belong

Joseph Crawford, Kelly-Ann Allen, Taren Sanders, Roy Baumeister, Philip Parker, Cassandra Saunders & Dianne Tice (2024) Sense of belonging in higher education students: an Australian longitudinal study from 2013 to 2019, Studies in Higher Education, 49:3, 395-409, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2023.2238006

https://www.education.gov.au/download/17990/australian-universities-accord-final-report/pdf







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- RMIT- Belonging as a responsive strategy

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https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2789&context=jutlp





WHAT CAN YOU DO?







What can we do to help everyone feel like they belong on campus?



Develop your and your team's intercultural skills

- Self-awareness (biases and stereotypes)
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Suspend Judgement





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Map the diversity and inclusion in your institution

- What does diversity look like for you?
- Who is included? Who is not?





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Assess your systems and practices

- Physical environment
- Services
- Documentation
- Consider Impact vs intention





"A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP"







Language

Source: Lee, J.J. (2021). "Unique challenges and opportunities for supporting mental health and promoting the well-being of international graduate students." Council of Graduate Schools.







- Language
- Learning style differences

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- Learning style differences
- Social isolation







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- Shifts in identity (destabilizing)





"ALL POWER IS IGNORANT AT THE CORE."





Actions you can take individually / personally



- Recognize the challenges they're facing: their brains aren't at their best
- Be extra helpful and patient and kind
- Learn some words and phrases in a language spoken by some international students





Actions you can take at scale

Scaling impact:

- BUDGET: Pre-departure, onsite, and re-entry programming of all sorts.
- BUDGET: Ongoing staff and faculty training on unconscious bias, cultural dimensions, conflict styles, inclusive behaviors...
- Embed counseling and psychological services in multiple offices, including ISSS.
- Embed employability / career services in ISSS (concerns about Optional Practical Training and visa issues in the US)





Actions you can take at scale

Review the Forum on Education Abroad Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad, especially Standard 6: Student Learning and Development

(https://www.forumea.org/standards-of-good-practice.html)













What is ONE action you will take based on what you learned today?













Thank you!

Feel free to send in any questions to

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