Academic Advising Guide for First-Year International Students
Office of International Education & Academic Advising Resource Center

Among the advisees assigned to you this year is at least one international student. International students, especially non-native English speakers, come from cultural and educational backgrounds that are different from those of most Richmond students, and that can mean they have different advising needs as well. Below are some general tips that we hope you will find useful in advising these students on adjustment, course selection, and meeting academic requirements.

- Correspond with your advisees before their arrival at UR. Be certain the student understands that you are available to offer personal assistance.

- Review the student’s proposed course schedule to ensure a balanced distribution. It is recommended that international students take 4 units in their first semester at UR, and no more than 5 units per semester in their first year. International students sometimes plan to focus only on major courses, even during first year. Be certain to explain general education and electives.

- Explain to students the unique characteristics of the liberal arts approach to education. Encourage them to explore a variety of courses and interests. Refer them to colleagues in other academic departments where appropriate.

- Encourage them to take courses in American history and culture and to visit important cultural and historical sites in Virginia and the U.S.

- Where possible, involve them in teaching or research projects that you or your colleagues are doing.

- Connect them with other faculty, staff, or students who are from their home country or region.

- Refer students who need English language assistance to ESL Writing Consultants at the Writing Center or the Director of ESL Services, Nuray Grove. Refer students who need assistance with test-taking, note-taking, time & stress management, and tutoring in specific subjects to the Academic Skills Center. Refer students who need assistance with interview skills, oral presentations, and public appearances to the Speech Center.

- Refer students to the Office of International Education, RC or WC Dean's Offices, CAPS, or the Chaplaincy for personal counseling and cultural adjustment issues.

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