

## International Student Transition to the United States

Audrey Brown

Faculty: Charles Burdsal

*Department of Psychology, Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*

International student populations are found on almost all college campuses in the United States, with the majority of these students having come to the United States specifically for the purpose of attending universities at either the graduate or undergraduate level. Many of these students are sponsored by the universities that they attend; this not only means that the university provides assistance in sponsoring a visa for the United States, but that it also serves as the main information source about the new home these students are intending to move to and settle.

The research below addresses the problems of international student transition by trying to understand the students' quality of life from a basic daily-needs level, as well as from social-identity and personal-identity levels. It specifically addresses the difficulties and advantages that international students face when they come to the United States for school, either at the undergraduate or the graduate level.

The participation of the research, which was done via survey, was the entire graduate and undergraduate international student population of the university (2,157 students), of which 332 responded (15.4% response rate).

The results of the survey show that they (the international students) were not adequately prepared for basic life in the United States. Many of them felt that they lacked basic resources and they lacked the information necessary to find them. Many international students found the American students to be stand offish, and to be "fake" as well as not friendly in the way that many of them are accustomed to in their home countries. Some of the significant findings are the correlations between being asked to people's homes and the easiness of making friends in the US ( $r=.392, p<.01$ ) as well as a negative correlation between overall perceived friendliness of Americans and easiness of making friends ( $r=-.354, p<.01$ ).

The greatest impact on overall happiness was a significant correlation between having reliable transportation and food availability ( $r=.790, p<.01$ ), with social life ( $r=.564, p<.01$ ) and with being able to fulfill religious needs ( $r=.443, p<.01$ ).

There are many potential ways to help International students overcome these hurdles when coming to the United States, the best ways that have been indicated by this study are increasing resources to aid in transition by better outlining life in the US. For example: availability of transportation, food and the easiness of creating social connections.