INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

Into the academy: preparing and mentoring international doctoral students

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Abstract This qualitative case study was an examination of a team-based faculty/mentor-led International Doctoral Student Support Group (IDSSG) designed specifically around issues in preparing and mentoring international doctoral students for careers in academia. Twelve participants were selected to participate in a support/focus group that met twice a month for an academic year to attend workshops and discuss their lives as doctoral students. The data set was comprised of two pre- and post-surveys and two in-depth pre- and post-interviews. Findings in the themes of international doctoral students' graduate school experiences and the impact of the faculty-led support group are presented and discussed.

Keywords International student · Doctoral student · Mentoring · Case study · Focus group

Matriculation into a doctoral program of study can be a difficult transition for many people. Students transitioning into graduate school have been shown to experience increased feelings of insecurity, decreased self-esteem, and high levels of stress and anxiety (Grant-Vallone and Ensher 2000). Another gauge of the graduate school experience is persistence, or its negative counterpart, attrition. Although attrition rates vary by institution and

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discipline, records indicate that attrition from doctoral programs has ranged consistently between 40 and 50% over the past 20 years (Schinke and da Costa 2001).

While the doctoral experience can be stressful and even bewildering for any student, it can be particularly so for international students (Watkins 1998). International students are unique because they speak languages and come from educational systems that are different from those of the United States (U.S.). Most international students have different learning styles and cultural backgrounds compared to their U.S. peers. These international students need to deal with many layers of cultural novelty when pursuing their study in a foreign country. Cultural novelty is a term that reflects the degree to which norms of the host culture differ from those of the international student's home culture (Mendenhall and Wiley 1994). Some of the biggest challenges for foreign-born students include difficulty with the English language, separation from family, social and cultural adjustment, and academic role conflict (Ryan et al. 1998; Zhai 2002).

The benefits of recruiting and retaining high caliber international students to United States postsecondary institutions are numerous. International students with positive experiences in the U.S. may be effective ambassadors who convey favorable attitudes toward the U.S. when they return to their countries (Ebersole 1999). Another potential benefit of having international students is the long-term connections between the institution and alumni who can facilitate research collaborations and other relationships with overseas organizations (Trice 2001). In addition, international students who stay in the U.S. to work in faculty positions bring much needed international perspectives to the academic culture which may foster the ability of domestic graduates to operate more successfully in an increasingly global community (Association of American Universities 1998; Trice 2001). However, with increasing numbers of international students seeking postgraduate employment in academia, there appears to be little published research addressing academic support mechanisms for international doctoral students in general, nor for international doctoral students aspiring to employment as university faculty in particular.

One approach shown to increase graduate student success is the use of mentoring. Although there is no consensus regarding the definition of mentoring, a mentor may be seen as more than a supervisor, instructor, or coach. Rose (2005, p. 53) states "the two most important things mentors can do for graduate students are to communicate clearly and effectively, and to provide honest feedback." A mentor actively engages their mentee in an educative personal and professional sense thus promoting the mentee's development (Sundli 2007). The mentor/mentee relationship may be even more vital for international graduate students because they are dealing with a high level of cultural adjustment and language barriers, along with attempting to understand the culture of academia. Several authors have proposed that academic mentoring includes at least three elements: (a) emotional and psychological support, (b) role modeling, and (c) career guidance (Davidson and Foster-Johnson 2001; Kartje 1996). In general, research suggests that mentoring has been beneficial particularly for doctoral students of color seeking careers in academia (Hill et al. 1999; Lamb 1999).

Given the many benefits of having a strong international presence within the United States academic environment, there is a significant need for innovative programs and increased research related to improving the graduate school experience of international students. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the impact of a team-based faculty/mentor-led International Doctoral Student Support Group (IDSSG) designed specifically around issues of preparing international doctoral students for careers in academia. In this article, we first provide an in-depth examination of international students lives in academia and, second, a mentoring model for possible adoption by other

higher education institutions as a standard component of international doctoral students orientation and ongoing support. Specifically, the objectives of the case study were as follows:

- To explore international doctoral students' perspectives of their overall graduate school experience.
- To examine international doctoral students' perceptions of support with preparedness for an academic career before and after participating in the support group.

Methodology

Qualitative case study

Case study research has a long history in the field of research, and in educational research, case study is seeing a revival (Gomm et al. 2000). We conceived of the study's overall design as a holistic case study (Creswell 1998; Merriam 1998; Yin 2003) that consisted of in-depth interviews (Seidman 1998) and repeated focus/support groups (Krueger and Casey 2000; Morgan 1993, 2002).

According to Merriam (1998), case study is appropriate when one wants to understand the experiences in-depth in a rich, descriptive fashion. Lahman and D'Amato (2006) state that a case study makes its case through the details that convince the reader and makes clear the complexity of the case. If one wants the reader to understand how life is for the participants, case study offers a compelling story. In addition, Morgan (1993, 2002) has advocated for focus groups that have a more natural context or feel to them.

Qualitative case study research involves a detailed study of a unit that is naturally bound by the people, place, or experience and may also be bounded by time (Stake 1995, 2005). This case study was an examination of one group bound by people, place, and the time of one academic year. This case may also be described as an instrumental case (Stake 1995), since the case, international doctoral students' experiences, was formed to illustrate the topic of interest.

By combining case study and focus groups in a student support group, the mentors/researchers tried to give back to the students through mentoring and support while simultaneously seeking to understand the students' experiences in graduate school more clearly. Elsewhere international students (Lim 2007) and support group participants (Lather and Smithies 1997) have been engaged in this manner in order to understand their experiences in a meaningful and respectful fashion.

Participants

The two mentors were one Professor in Educational Technology and one Professor in Research Methods, with both of them having extensive experience working with adults from international cultures. A purposive sample (Merriam 1998) of 12 doctoral students (see Table 1) was selected to join the IDSSG using the following criteria in order of importance:

1. The students expressed an intention to work in higher education as their career goal.
2. Students represented the various international groups on campus.

Table 1 Participants' demographics

ID	Gender	Nationality	Discipline
1.	Male	Canada	Special Education
2.	Male	China	Educational Technology
3.	Male	Taiwan	Educational Technology
4.	Male	Taiwan	Educational Technology
5.	Female	China	Educational Technology
6.	Female	Europe	Human Rehabilitation
7.	Female	Japan	School Psychology
8.	Female	Taiwan	Educational Technology
9.	Female	Taiwan	Special Education
10.	Female	Thailand	Educational Studies
11.	Female	The Netherlands	Human Rehabilitation
12.	Female	Turkey	Biological Education

3. Students were early in their programs (i.e., prior to taking comprehensive exams).
4. Students from different colleges and disciplines were represented.
5. Both male and female students were represented.

The final group composition consisted of four males and eight females. One student from each of the following countries: Canada, China, Japan, Europe (the student is referred in this case term as a way of masking her identity), The Netherlands, Thailand, Turkey, and five students from Taiwan were represented. Taiwanese students are by far the largest population of international students on the campus. Students represented the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the College of Natural and Health Sciences. Their programs were in the following disciplines: five in Educational Technology, two in Human Rehabilitation, two in Special Education, and one each in Biological Education, Educational Studies, and School Psychology.

Setting of the study

The setting for this study was the University of Northern Colorado with an enrollment of approximately 13,500 students (11,000 undergraduate and 2,500 graduate students) from 49 states and 51 nations. This multipurpose institution has a wide range of graduate and undergraduate programs and is located in Greeley, Colorado, a community of 85,000 people. The university was classified by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as of Doctoral/Research University—Intensive. "These institutions typically offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs, and they are committed to graduate education through the doctorate. During the period studied, they awarded at least ten doctoral degrees per year across three or more disciplines, or at least 20 doctoral degrees per year overall" (EDUCASE 2006).

The university offers doctoral degrees in the following programs: Applied Statistics and Research Methods, Biological Education, Chemistry Education, Counseling Psychology, Counselor Education and Supervision, Educational Leadership, Educational Mathematics, Educational Psychology, Educational Studies, Educational Technology, Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership, Human Rehabilitation, Music, Nursing Education, School

Psychology, Special Education, and Sport and Exercise Science (University of Northern Colorado 2007).

The Center for International Education (CIE) at this university provided assistance to international students in many areas, such as English as a Second Language, Friend Families, International Quality Time, and International Week. International students who participated in these programs are supported in navigating the layers of cultural novelty. However, the programs and activities offered by the CIE strongly emphasize cultural and social aspects. In contrast, the IDSSG addressed issues on academic professional development and supported participants' career goals within higher education. Ultimately, the mission of the IDSSG was to inform and improve ways that future international faculty will be prepared for the teaching, research, and service responsibilities of working in academia.

Materials

Data sources consisted of two pre- and post-surveys and two in-depth pre- and post-interviews.

Pre-survey. To assist in organizing the meetings, we listed ten potential topics (such as job interviewing, developing and writing a vita, grant writing, etc.) and asked the participants to rank the top five topics they would like to hear a speaker present. We also asked the participants to write down any other topics that they were interested in learning more about.

Pre-interview. Students were asked to respond to a set of ten open-ended questions to reflect on their decisions to pursue doctoral degrees and their experiences as graduate students. Although all ten questions were asked during the pre-interview with participants, we only include the following four questions that best address our research objectives as indicated previously in this article. (1) What significant events or people shaped your decision to pursue your education? (2) How did your department orient you to your doctoral program? (3) What do you plan to do with your degree? and (4) Why did you join the International Doctoral Student Support Group?

Post-survey. We listed all the topics that were covered in the IDSSG and asked participants to rank the five topics that they thought are most beneficial for them.

Post-interview. Students were asked to respond to a set of 12 open-ended questions to reflect on their experiences of the past year. Similar to the pre-interview, all 12 questions were asked during the post-interview, but we only list the following four questions that best address our research objectives in this article. Questions such as: (1) What were your best and worst days in graduate school in the past year? (2) What advice would you have for people in academia who support graduate students during their schooling experience? (3) What did you gain from the group? and (4) What would you advise us to do with a group like this in the future? were asked.

Procedure

We advertised the IDSSG flyers on campus and asked the CIE to send the IDSSG information via their listserv in the spring semester of 2005. Then, the research team selected potential participants and prepared learning materials in the summer semester of 2005. All of the IDSSG meetings were 2 h long and held twice a month on Monday afternoons starting in August 2005 and ending in May 2006.

Table 2 Qualitative data analysis procedures

Procedure	Description
Transcribing	Recorded interviews were fully transcribed after the completion of interviews
Reading	Transcriptions, comments, and observation data were read thoroughly
Coding	Keywords were marked and notes were written during the process of reading. On the basis of the keywords and notes, meaning units were identified. Comparing and relating all the emerged meaning units, categories were developed. For example, "…making more time for students," "…have more office hours," and "…offering help and time for international students" had similar meaning units regarding time. Therefore, the category "Be more accessible" was developed based on each participant's meaning unit
Interpreting	According to the developed categories, interpretations and conclusions were made

The first monthly meeting allowed group members to share their current experiences and questions or concerns. The second monthly meeting had a formal topic presented by the research team and guest speakers. The topics and guest speakers were chosen from issues the international students rated on the pre-survey as needing more information. After each meeting, participants in the support group wrote a reflective journal entry and sent it to us by e-mail.

At the last meeting, participants presented their final portfolios. Portfolios were representations of the students' interpretations of their experiences with the support group. Examples of portfolio entries included their research projects, mock job search findings, and other scholarly products related to their experience with the support group. All participants were surveyed and interviewed at two different stages: prior to the support group and at the end of the academic year. All group meetings and interviews were audio-taped and then transcribed by the research team.

Data analysis

The surveys were analyzed using rank by five-point Likert scale with reverse coding (top choice = 5 points and fifth choice = 1 point). All 24 interviews were fully transcribed by two of the researchers and returned to the participants for a member check in order to enhance the study trustworthiness or validity and reliability (Merriam 1998). As suggested by Poland (2002), quotes from transcripts were lightly edited for distracting "ums" and "ahs" and points of clarity, yet an effort was made to retain a feel of the speaker's voice. Comments on the survey as well as the interview data were analyzed using thematic or categorical analysis (Merriam 1998). The qualitative data analysis procedures are summarized in Table 2.

Results

In the following section, we will depict the findings based on the participants' responses to pre-interview and post-interview questions. Findings in the overall areas of students' graduate school experiences and what they found helpful regarding the IDSSG are presented.

Coming to America: "I come here to pursue my dream."

During the pre-interview, we found that there were many different reasons why participants travelled all the way from their countries to the United States for their advanced education. Synthesizing all the participants' responses, two themes were developed related to personal goals, and people who shaped students decision to pursue their advanced education.

Personal goals. Some participants decided to pursue advanced education because they wanted to achieve their personal goals. As over depicted as Hollywood has made this image, the participants invoked the image of coming to America and attaining education as a way to obtain higher goals, experiences, and success. A student from The Netherlands said, "…I think it's myself mostly. I just like to study. I haven't been really out into the real world." A Taiwanese student decided to pursue education because he did not want to be less competent. He said, "I think it's myself who shaped my decision to pursue my education…if I don't move on, I will be combed out by the society, especially when I am involved in the field of education." Pursuing education is a dream come true as expressed by another Taiwanese student who stated "Actually to get a Ph.D., to enter graduate school is my dream…so I come here to pursue my dream."

Inspired by advisors. In addition to personal goals, university advisors also played an important role in some participants' decision to pursue advanced education. A Turkish student said, "My advisor in [my] university…she always encouraged me to go overseas, to come to the U.S. and to get my Ph.D." On the basis of the response of a Taiwanese student in special education, there is a need in her country for her to pursue her degree. She said, "The Professor at [my] college…he told me that there would be a need for professors in this field."

Orientation to campus: "Our department is really bad."

Orientation is an important part of acclimating international students to a new academic environment. Notably, when asked, eight of the students mentioned they received no departmental orientation. A Turkish student had a negative comment in terms of this issue. "No, our department is really bad." A Taiwanese student agreed, saying, "I guess not. I just asked the secretary and she gave me some information about my advisor." Only four students mentioned that they received departmental orientation. A Japanese student said, "There were about 15 new students…and the department had like a welcome party kind of thing."

Career goals: "I can do more by teaching people."

In terms of what the students planned to do with their degree, all of the participants were selected for the group because they had a goal to be a professor in higher education. However, this was articulated differently by all of the students with 11 referring to teaching and one to conducting research. For example, a Thai student shared, "I would go back to the lab school in my country…I will also teach pre-service teachers as a faculty." A Chinese student showed his preference for being a professor. He said, "I can go back to my country to be a professor in university." A student from Europe mentioned, "I feel I can do more by teaching people…I could stay in my country for awhile and then here [in the U.S.]

for awhile." In addition to teaching in higher education, being a researcher was another option. A student from The Netherlands said, "I would like to get a research position somewhere…."

Why students joined the IDSSG: "I want to learn more about…"

When asked why they joined the IDSSG, the participants' responses could be organized into five themes—getting advice about teaching, conducting research, preparing for a job, learning about culture, and gaining support and friendship.

Getting advice about teaching. All the participants desired to obtain a faculty position after they received their Ph.D. Thus, some participants mentioned they would like to learn how to teach at the university level. A Taiwanese student said, "I want to learn…how to teach in higher education." A Thai student responded, "I would like to learn how to be an effective teacher in the university…to adapt myself to be a faculty member."

Conducting research. Conducting research is one of the main roles of a doctoral student. Some participants wanted to learn skills regarding conducting research and publishing journal articles. A Chinese student said she wanted to "…get a lot of information, knowledge from this group about how to conduct research…." A Canadian student said, "I want to learn skills and tricks on how to get articles published."

Preparing for a job. One of the purposes of IDSSG was to prepare international doctoral students for a future career in higher education. Therefore, some participants mentioned they would like to learn how to find a job. A Taiwanese student intended to "…gain some skills regarding job searching and job interviews." Another Taiwanese student mentioned that he would like to gain strategies from the group about how to obtain a job in higher education.

Learning about culture. Some participants mentioned they would like to learn about other cultures from this group. A Japanese student stated, "I am interested in what's going on in another country…it's gonna be the opportunity to share some cultural differences." A student from The Netherlands said, "…I think it's important to have people around you who go do the same thing as I am going to, in a different culture." A Thai student mentioned, "…I think that I have to go out and meet other international students. We can talk, discuss, or learn something from each other."

Gaining support and friendship. Many participants mentioned they hoped to gain support and friendship from this group. A Taiwanese student stated, "I don't take any class this semester and I think this is the opportunity for me to have contact with people." A Turkish student indicated that she needed other people to give her advice on what she needed to do in graduate school at this moment. In addition, a European student stated, "I think I would like to build more relationships, maybe to have that forum to chat and discuss."

Challenges of graduate school: "It was successful"/"I did an awful job."

During the post-interview, the participants shared similar responses when asked about the best and worst days in graduate school. According to the participants, the best days included passing comprehensive exams, passing proposal defenses, and finishing an academic task. A European student stated that the best day for her was the day when she passed the comprehensive exam. She said, "I think best day would have been just at the

orals [oral comprehensive exam] last week. It was successful…." A Taiwanese student shared, "My best day was when I passed my proposal defense." Some participants felt happy when they finished a task. A Taiwanese student said, "…I am happy after my conference presentations are done." Some other experiences that made participants' best days in graduate school were getting a scholarship, being involved in an internship, making new friends, and going to a conference.

As for the worst days, the participants pointed out work, frustration from class, language barriers, and departmental politics. A European student complained about her work in the department. She said, "…they [masters students] really resented me for not being a full professor or that they weren't getting their money's worth." A Taiwanese student shared, "Their [instructors'] feedback made me feel that I did an awful job on the assignments." A Turkish student mentioned, "…I got a B in that class," which felt like failure to her. Two students also felt frustrated because of the language barrier. A Taiwanese student said, "…language barrier… I should overcome that." A Chinese student added, "…some students [classmates] gave me some feedback, but most of the feedback was not on my subject or on my presentation. They were criticizing about my oral English, my accent…" A student who did not want to be identified shared about a programmatic and advisor conflict. She said, "…university faculty has great deal of power over you. Once you are in the program and they want to terminate you, they can do so at their own whim." Some other things such as financial problems, change of dissertation research design, and conflict with major advisors also frustrated the participants.

Academic advisors: "Just care about your students."

Academic advisors play an important role for students, especially international students. The participants had some suggestions for academic advisors and the following two themes emerged.

Be more accessible. Some participants had the need for more time from advisors. A student from The Netherlands said, "Maybe make more time for students." A European student mentioned, "The advice for advisors is…be more accessible." As for a Canadian student, he also thought that advisors should be more accessible. He said, "I think offering help and time for international students is necessary because international students are a special group which needs special care."

Care about students. Some participants hoped that advisors could work with them on research. A Taiwanese student said, "Engage students in the research that they are conducting." A student from The Netherlands mentioned, "…being more interested in doing things with students, like publishing." A Chinese student also mentioned, "I think the faculty members should, if they have the time and interests, they should group students together and do some research." International students also need care and patience from advisors. A Japanese student said, "Listen to the students. Just listen and make sure what the students really want to say." A Chinese student also expressed the need for more care. He said, "I think just care about the student…know your students, know their progress, and know what is going on with his/her studies."

What was gained from IDSSG membership: "A good community."

When asked what they have gained from IDSSG, the participants' responses could be organized into three themes – culture, friendship, and skills. A student from the

Netherlands said, "I think it was fun to hear other international students say kind of the same thing that was going on in my mind, things about the American culture." A Taiwanese student also mentioned, "It was also interesting to know how people from other cultures think." Many participants also enjoyed the friendship and camaraderie in IDSSG. A Canadian student said, "I gained friendship[s] I didn't have before, you [interviewer] and everyone else." A Japanese student said, "I think I had a good community, get to know the people, just even say hi or something like that I feel very connected." A European student remarked, "…the reason I joined IDSSG was friends, make friends." A Thai student mentioned that friendship was something she gained from this group. Furthermore, the participants also stated that they also learned skills in this group such as writing grants, dealing with pressure, doing research, preparing portfolio, writing vita, and preparing for job interviews.

Advice for future groups: "More socialization."

In terms of advice toward the implementation of IDSSG in the future, the participants' responses regarded participants and participation.

Participants. Many participants suggested that we could include more doctoral students to expand diversity in the future, but some participants expressed opposite views. A Chinese student said, "…attract more students, not only the international students." A Taiwanese student said, "I think you can include all the doctoral students, not only international doctoral students. It will expand the diversity." On the other hand, participants also had concerns about having an over-sized IDSSG. A Japanese student said, "…the content itself gonna be helpful to all graduate students…but the more people in the group, the less connected the people would be." A Canadian student mentioned, "I think the size of this group was perfect for us to get to know each other on an individual basis…a larger number might defeat the purpose."

Participation. Over the course of the year, there were a few students absent at each session. Some participants suggested that something should be done to increase the participation. A Taiwanese student mentioned, "Maybe it's better to figure out a way to have everybody show up at each meeting next time when you are going to have the same group." A Taiwanese student suggested, "You can consider offering IDSSG as a course that meets one hour or so each week…becomes a requirement for students and they will put more time and thoughts into the sessions that are offered." A European said, "…have more interaction, more socialization…because a lot can be learned from just talking."

IDSSG experience

Along with understanding the students' experiences, we sought to find out what had helped the student the most from the IDSSG. At the start of the year, the students filled out a pre-survey where they ranked topics they would be interested in hearing speakers present. The data indicated that the five top ranked topics were: (1) Research and Academia, (2) Grant Writing, (3) Teaching at the University Level, (4) Developing and Writing a Curriculum Vita, and (5) Conference Presentations. Students also indicated in the survey that they wanted to gain the following skills and knowledge from the group: learning about others' cultures, preparing for a job, developing an academic portfolio, getting support, and making friends. We developed the seminars around these topics and the following sessions

Table 3 Survey results—top five ranked workshop topics

Rank	Pre-survey	Post-survey
1.	Research and academia	Developing and writing a curriculum vita
2.	Grant writing	Job search and interview
3.	Teaching at the university level	Grant writing
4.	Developing and writing a curriculum vita	Research and academia
5.	Conference presentations	Teaching at the university level

were held: orientation and introduction; international food potluck; academic teaching; the threefold mission of a professor (teaching, research, service); sharing cultural artifacts; finding academic jobs and interviewing; new semester potluck; grant writing; developing and writing a curriculum vita; coping with stress; new faculty panel; and sharing academic portfolios.

The post-survey indicated that the students had found these sessions in the following order the most helpful: (1) Developing and Writing a Curriculum Vita; (2) Job Search and Interview; (3) Grant Writing; (4) Research and Academia; and (5) Teaching at the University Level. Furthermore, according to students' comments on the survey, although they stated all the workshop topics were beneficial, they also valued meeting each other, forming friendships, getting to know the mentors/researchers well, and spending time in the mentors' homes for social occasions. Both pre-survey and post-survey results of the top five ranked workshop topics are shown in Table 3.

Conclusion

The findings of the study offer guidelines and suggestions to other universities that are interested in offering a mentoring group that is similar to IDSSG. With increasing numbers of international students seeking postgraduate employment in academia, there appears to be a continued need to address academic support mechanisms for international doctoral students in general, and specifically for international doctoral students aspiring to employment as university faculty in particular.

While there are many possible implications of this study, we will emphasize the importance of caring advisors, friendship, similarities among graduate students, and the need to remember international students' uniqueness. Many of the negative experiences that occurred in the students' lives could have been minimized or avoided all together, if, as one student said, faculty would "just care about your students". Clark et al. (2000) found that the career function of direct training and instruction and the psychological function of acceptance, support, and encouragement were ranked highly in the mentor relationship. Caring may be interpreted as being available, working with the students, and showing extra patience. Sadly, this is a component one would hope that advisors or mentors would bring to all interactions with graduate students.

One of the most intriguing implications that we discovered was that while the mentoring group functioned around academic issues, many of the students joined the group for social reasons and cited the social connection they formed as well as social events, such as the international food potluck, as the most meaningful elements of the IDSSG. This is a powerful reminder that international graduate students need time to relax and create meaningful relationships with their peers. According to Cunningham and Barbee (2000),

emotional support not only makes people feel better, it can also make them physically and emotionally healthier. Ironically, it is these very "social" connections that may be sustained to enhance their future academic network. Therefore, it is important that programs and the people who mentor international doctoral students consider ways to foster their connections with the campus community and each other.

The next two findings are inextricably related. First, the issues the international doctoral students identified, in general, are experienced to some degree by all graduate students. The participants underlined this implication when they point out that the group could be called just graduate students. However, one student reminded us that although all graduate students have these similar experiences, international students do bring distinctiveness to these issues that cannot be ignored. By being a newcomer to a strange country and experiencing cultural differences, all of the negative experiences may cause a more serious sense of dislocation and isolation than might happen to a native graduate student. Therefore, we recommend viewing international students as graduate students who may have distinctive needs that mentors should be equipped to help them negotiate.

Three follow-up research designs are being planned to extend our understandings formed from this group. First, a follow-up, in-depth interview with participants will be conducted to determine where they are at in their doctoral program and what impact the IDSSG had, if any. Second, a 3-year follow-up interview is being planned. Finally, a support group program will be proposed to our university as part of the ongoing international doctoral student support system. If this program is put in place, we would like to follow a cohort of students throughout their entire doctoral studies. We believe that knowing more about international doctoral students' perceptions regarding what merits success in graduate school could provide opportunities for institutions to broaden their cross-cultural perspectives and views on education.

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