

Abstract

Engaging returnee students as partners in peer advising programs: the National University of Singapore experience

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The Student Exchange Program (SEP) at the National University of Singapore (NUS) sends more than 1300 NUS students to 180 partner universities in 27 countries for 6 months to one year. In addition, shorter-term programs send another 300 students. In return, NUS welcomes 1300 international exchange students. The International Relations Office is tasked with ensuring that these exchange programs are enjoyable and worthwhile experiences for all our students. The Peer Advising Program was initiated last year to tap on the experiences of NUS returnee students with these objectives:

- (1) Recognize and value returnees' unique experiences and encourage them to use skills learned while abroad
- (2) Allow returnees to share their knowledge and experiences with NUS students who are considering study abroad
- (3) Make valuable connections between NUS students and incoming students. Returnees are able to relate to those who come to NUS on exchange
- (4) Provide academic, social and psychological outlets for returning students.

Some initial reactions and lessons learnt about the impact of this program will be discussed.