Programme of the session International Student Journey

• Welcome words
• Case 1 University of Oulu
• Case 2 University of Helsinki
• Discussion 20 minutes
• Case 3 South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (Xamk)
• Case 4 Turku University Applied sciences
• Discussions in groups 20 minutes
• Closure 10
TALENT BOOST PACKAGES OF MEASURES

1. Attracting talent
2. Developing immigrant legislation and permit procedures
3. Strengthening the conditions for growth and retention
International Student experience - Journey

• Talent boost service promise
• Four ways to look at the situation Integration and Retention
  • Attraction and Arrival
  • Integration and employability
University of Oulu

Attraction and Arrival

Ulla Alanko & Hanna Saarela
Attraction and Recruitment Realities

- Massive number of applicants to international degree programmes
- Students apply to several universities in Finland and globally
- **How to ensure that the ideal applicants choose us over other options?**
- Ideal applicant = A talented student who is likely to start studies and complete them in target time, and ultimately decides to stay in Finland (Oulu region) pursuing a productive career
- Delays in arriving to Oulu in the autumn causes challenges to study progress and integration
Pilot 1 - Offer Holder Hub (OHH)

- Online platform for admitted students
- Invitation to join OHH sent in admission letters, optional participation
- Networking features and exclusive content
- Faculty and degree programme presence – both staff and current students
- Support and co-creation of crucial contact points and content for engaging the students (student-focused approach, pampering)

**Goals:** Engagement and choosing Oulu, early integration
Pilot 2 - Kickstart to Finnish Language and Life

- Getting started efficiently at the beginning of the first semester
- Finnish language studies are crucial for integration and employability, especially in Oulu statistics show
- **Goals**: Efficient start for studies and life in Oulu, fast progress in Finnish language studies and aligning with the Finnish learner's path, sense of belonging
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISORS

Larissa Vanamo / University of Helsinki
BACKGROUND

• Before: no service point or service address for international degree students
• International degree students’ service path project
  • Workshops in autumn 2022 for students and staff
    – Strong feedback: need for face to face service & live encounters
• Lack of work options for international students, especially part-time jobs that do not require Finnish knowledge
• Talent Boost funding

Pilot project: Hiring international UH degree students to work as part-time Student Advisors for fellow foreign degree students
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISORS (1/2)

- Offering part-time on campus work for foreign students, excellent English required
- Also required that student advisors have themselves moved to Helsinki from abroad and are UH students
- Talent Boost funding until end 2024
- One person-workyear:
  - One student to work full-time mid-May to July, four students part-time (25%) August-May 2024
- Internationalisation of staff
- 138 applicants
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISORS (2/2)

- Service specifically for international degree students
- Customer service at service desk & by email, own service address
- Welcome point for newly arrived students
- Guiding students to right service within and outside the University & advising on matters such as:
  - Registering with the authorities
  - Healthcare
  - Tuition fees & scholarships (incl. administration)
  - Housing
- Publishing instructions for students and staff
FUTURE?

- Pilot project -> service developed by the International Student Advisors themselves
- Continuation after 2024?
- Hopefully an inspiration for offering more student jobs & jobs where perfect Finnish is not required at UH
Please feel free to add the organization and contact person in case you are interested in future benchmarking regarding best practices.

https://edu.flinga.fi/s/E74PCJ2, access code E74PCJ2
Changing the narrative

Spring Forum 2023 | 3-5 May, Espoo | Valéria Pinto, MBA
Packaging

3 parts

Services

Opportunities
Part 1: packaging

- **Approach** – how do I see/want others to see the international community?

- **Words matter** – how do I present/talk about the international community?

- **Mimicking phenomenon** – people usually mimic other people’s behaviors
Part 2: Services *we offer them*

Among many...
Part 3: what can *they* offer us?
Englannin kielibuusti 50+ Kotkan kirjastossa

- English language boost
- residents aged 50+ living in the Kotka region
- 60-minute weekly meetings
- Teacher of English → Xamk international students who are fluent in English
Main idea

- Identify skills
- create opportunities
- introduce members of the international community to the local one
- Empower international students → boost morale

- Focus on the narrative → service providers (volunteering)
  → solution
Results (so far)

- Regular attendance (4-5 participants + 2-3 monitors)
- Real interactions (great curiosity from both sides!)
- Exchange of practical information between participants and monitors
- Participation in other projects
- Positive feedback from participants and monitors
- Interest in a 2\textsuperscript{nd} round, longer sessions
- Finns help with Finnish language
Today’s goal

How can we:

• scale the project up?
• *copy/paste* the concept to other projects?
• adapt the project to different contexts?
The path continues..

Spring Forum
4.5.2023

Anu Härkönen
Head of International Affairs
Turku University of Applied Sciences
International Student Journey – returning to the path

• Not a new concept but as relevant as ever

• POLKU project in Turku 2015-2018 [Project | POLKU (abo.fi)]

• National KILKAS project 2016-2018 [KILKAS - Competitiveness and growth in promoting the employment of foreign UAS students – Xamk]

• We returned to the path in 2022 when Turku UAS mapping exercise regarding services for international students (inspired by the University of Turku [https://www.utu.fi/en/study-at-utu/journey-of-an-international-student-at-the-university-of-turku])
Still going strong –
old services with a new twist

• Courses at Turku UAS: Finnish Culture Journey, Get Finternational, Introduction to Higher Education Studies
• Study in Turku activities: e.g. Friendship Programme and Study and Stay in Turku events (https://www.turku.fi/en/study-turku)
• Turku Business Region collaboration: Career Talks Turku (Events - Career in Southwest Finland)
Some recently developed services and ideas

• MOI Service at Turku UAS
• International House Turku (https://ihturku.fi/en/)
• Mentoring and networking guidance as outcomes of MESH and DigiMESH projects: https://mesh.turkuamk.fi/arkisto/index.html and MOOC | DigiMESH (turkuamk.fi)
• Under planning: study councellor specialising in international student affairs and coordinator for practical training places of international students, involvement of local and regional country-specific associations
My suggestion (and hope) for today’s session

• So many actors at HEIs, ministries, organizations and associations
• Let’s put our thinking caps on and brainstorm how we can avoid re-inventing the wheel year after year and where and when we could share the best practices
• Cf. Talent Boost UAS network, Incoming Exchange Student Coordinators’ network