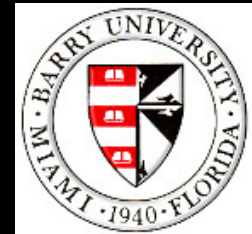




International Guests: Considerations for Collegiate Event Planners

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Why are international visitors important?

- International Programs Enhance Campus Life and Diversity
- Offer Visibility on Global Scale
- Provide Student Recruitment Opportunities
- Financial Rewards
 - – *International visitors stay longer, spend more*

Our Role

Hospitality – Make guests feel comfortable and welcome

Profile of Barry University

- Private, co-educational Catholic International University
- Enrollment: 9,000
- Location: South Florida (Miami-Fort Lauderdale)
- Diverse student population - #1 in Diversity in Southeast (*U.S. News & World Report*)
- Over 60 academic programs for undergraduate, graduate, and adult students

South Florida: Community Profile

- Miami/Fort Lauderdale
 - International, Cosmopolitan, Multicultural Flair
- Languages:
 - English, Spanish, Creole, Hebrew, French
- Arts and Culture, Dining, and Nightlife:
 - Cater to diverse, international tastes

Cultural Differences

■ Americans

- Tend to approach work and business relationships in a more casual, informal manner

■ Other Cultures

- More Formality, concerns for customs, rituals, and protocol

Cross-cultural Communication

Our national/cultural values affects norms regarding:

- Personal space and Eye Contact
- Gift-giving
- Dining
- Forms of address
- How we conduct business

Preparing for International Visitors

- Purpose of visit
 - What is the nature or purpose of the event?
 - What is the position or rank of the visitors?
 - Do any guests have special needs?
 - Where are they coming from?
 - Is the timing of event in conflict with national or religious observances?

Initial Welcome

- Use names and titles properly
- Learn proper pronunciation and name sequence
- Offer basic greeting or salutation in native language

Language

- DO:

- Use Proper Pronunciation
- Hire Professional Interpreters or Translators
- Recruit Multi-lingual Staff
- Use non-verbal cues
- Offer printed material in native language when possible
- Demonstrate effort and willingness to communicate

Language

- DON'T:

- Assume anyone can translate, especially written documents
- Make lengthy speeches in language you are not proficient in
- Use English colloquialisms, slang, or jargon
- Speak too fast or too slow
- Assume that a foreign accent means they cannot communicate in English
- Assume they cannot speak English or appear frustrated

Scenario 1

- Your university is hosting a youth leadership conference during the summer. They are a group of about 300, mainly from Asia and Africa. As you are helping them get settled in, you overhear a staff member casually ask one of the guests where he is from. When he states he is from Kenya, your staff member comments, “Wow, your English is really good! Where did you learn to speak it?” The guest, looking slightly amused and slightly annoyed, replies “Oh, I learned it on the plane on the way over,” and walks away. Your staff member looks confused.

Food and Drink

- Research Dining Customs
- Offer Vegetarian Options
- Ask about Dietary Restrictions
- Skip Cocktail Hour – Serve Wine with Dinner

Scenario 2

- Your president has asked you to assist with the planning of a gala dinner for your 100th anniversary. The guest list includes government officials, religious leaders, and university administrators from several international universities. The dinner menu features New York strip, garlic mashed potatoes, and fresh seasonal vegetables. One of the guests, who is from India, requests a vegetarian platter. The server returns with extra helpings of the mashed potatoes and vegetables. The guest looks unhappy, but quietly proceeds with his meal.

Gift-Giving

- Research gift-giving customs
- Be cautious about offering gifts with university logos
- Consider guest's native country when selecting gift items

Scenario 3

- Your institution is presenting an honorary degree to a researcher from a university in Argentina. You are making arrangements to have a gift basket delivered to his hotel room. When you ask a faculty member, who is also from Argentina, what might be a good wine selection for the gift basket, she says she doesn't think wine is a good idea. Explain why wine might not be a good choice for this guest.

Entertainment

■ Special Events

- Offer entertainment with local flair
- Explain choice of entertainment; share history
- Stick to Traditional
- Entertainment Should be Appropriate for Occasion

Entertainment

For overnight guests

- Internet access (!)
- Local options
- Lounge/Common Areas
- Campus Amenities

Protocol

- Refers to system of rules about international courtesy and manners
- Revolves around precedence (recognition of rank)
- Plays important role in international diplomacy

Meeting Management

- Research concepts of timing and punctuality
- Provide agendas, handouts, and technical documents in native language
- Avoid breakfast meetings and “working lunches”

Scenario 4

- One of your international conference groups will be using your gymnasium for a basketball tournament. They will need the gym “for a few hours at night.” You reserve it from 5-9:00 p.m. The following morning, the Athletic Director tells you that the teams did not show up until a quarter to 6:00. His staff had to stay an hour and a half later than scheduled, and describes the group as “disorganized.” When you speak to the conference coordinator about this, he seems surprised. He explains that the kids were out on the town, having a good time. Since it was the first visit to the United States for most of these young men and women, he did not want to cut the evening short and spoil their good time just to start right on the hour. He doesn’t understand why your staff members are so rigid and inflexible.

Guest Information and Campus Services

- Consider meal options during visits from international visitors
- Have calling cards available in campus bookstore
- Distribute campus and local maps
- Email, Internet Access, Faxing, Printing, Copy Services

Impressions from International Guests

- Slow down - relax
- Where is the public transportation?
- Where is everybody?
- Working lunch?
- When can we sit down and enjoy a good meal?

Last But Not Least...

- Offer tools for currency and measurement conversion
- Avoid discussions about political, religious, or other taboo subjects
- Keep up to date on current events
- Have a reference book in your library

Resources

- Country Information
 - CIA World Handbook
 - www.executiveplanet.com
- Holidays and Religious Observances
 - [www.earthcalendar.net\(holidays\)](http://www.earthcalendar.net(holidays))
- Online Currency Converter: <http://www.xe.net/ucc/>
- Books
 - Harris, April L. *Etiquette and Protocol: A Guide for Campus Events*. Washington, D.C.: CASE Books, 1999.
 - Axtell, Roger E. *Do's and Taboos of Hosting International Visitors*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1990.

*"Mankind is divisible into 2 great
classes: hosts and guests."*

-- Sir Max Beerbohm
