

Navigating American Classroom

Introduction:

International students face unique challenges in American classrooms. They are generally unaware of the unique expectations and resources in American universities. Unlike their American classmates, they need to additionally undergo culture transitions and overcome language barriers. These problems are likely to be aggravated by the current global pandemic and political backdrop. Therefore, international students need guidance on how to navigate an American classroom more than ever before. Tom Tan is organizing a panel to address this need. Let's welcome Tom TAN with his speech, "Navigating American Classroom". "Navigating American Classroom", Tom TAN.

Speech:

In this project, I am going to organize a panel of four faculty members of international backgrounds during international student orientation. Its purpose is to acknowledge students' concerns and questions and share from our own first-hand experience to help the incoming international students succeed in their classrooms.

The most valuable resource of this project is the diverse background of the panelists. The professors, two males and two females, are from four different countries, China, India, Korea, and Thailand, all of which have different cultures from the U.S. The professors also represent different disciplines, ranging from accounting to finance to operations management. In addition, the professors are at different stages of their academic careers. The younger ones, who have just finished their studies at an American institution, can use their fresher memory to relate to the international students. The older ones have more experience of teaching international students, so that they can give direct suggestions. In brief, the professors will be like a mentor to help international students become aware of their options and potentials.

The deliverable of the project is a 45-minute panel that happens during the international student orientation, next week on Zoom. I will be the moderator and a panelist, joined by three other panelists. Here is the game plan. We will start with a self-introduction of our academic backgrounds and an ice-breaker question, "what is an unexpected WFH delight or WFH mishap". Then each panelist takes turns and spends 1-2 minutes each answering the following three questions:

1. Who was very helpful in your transition to an American academic environment? And how?
2. What lessons did you learn along your academic journey in America?
3. What advice do you have for the incoming international students, things you know now that you wish you knew earlier.

Finally, we open the floor for questions. Because it is a Zoom platform, we will remember to keep the students engaged by having some form of interaction every 15 minutes.

To conclude, the purpose of this panel is to help international students navigate and succeed in an American classroom. The panelists all benefited from the generosity of our mentors along our academic journey. It is time for us to pass this down to the incoming international students.