

Synthesis

I talked to loan. He is a first-year student from our faculty who just arrived at Sofia from a town called Veliko Tarnovo.

I was surprised to hear that he has never been to Sofia before and he was curious to know more about the city, in terms of important locations etc. He also mentioned that nobody else from his hometown will be a first-year student at our university, which makes him feel lonely at times.

I wonder if this means that first-year students like loan would feel the same way as he does.

How might we help students overcome the stress of being alone in a city they have never visited before and reduce the time in which they will get familiar with everything related to their everyday life here in the capital?

30 Brainstormed ideas for improvement of freshmen's lives

1. Guiding seminar, aimed at providing freshmen with the locations of the main areas in our faculty (Library, food court, administration rooms, etc.)
2. Team building games
3. Design thinking seminar
4. Mentoring program, the purpose of which is to support first year students, through insights and help from seniors, with their endeavors with teachers, courses and general issues that occur throughout their first year
5. Student-to-student introduction of what's to come and what they should expect from courses, teachers, exams etc., so that this initial "fear" of the unknown and new is mitigated
6. Easier access to the faculty via a bike stand
7. Wi-fi improvement in the faculty building, as it is a necessity for both students and teachers
8. Greater amount of study areas around the faculty, which will be useful for collaboration projects and studying in groups

9. Charging stations

10. Newsletter

11. Quarterly meetings of teachers with students, to provide feedback on courses inter alia, the way they're being taught, satisfaction among students etc., which will help improve the learning flow in the faculty through adaptation and perpetual amelioration of the processes

12. Sports area

13. Escape room, which we believe will strengthen social connections in the faculty through the teamwork required to complete such an activity

14. Gaming/relax room

15. Introduction to leisure time activities around Sofia – Cafes, clubs, parks etc.

16. Treasury room, which we believe would be very useful for the financially adept, as we are a business and economics faculty, so people could track the markets, follow important news and maybe even setup an investment club, so that all analysis techniques etc. could be applied in a real life scenario.

17. Happy hour for students' coffees and other refreshments, parts of our everyday lives in University.

18. Supply free books/learning materials to freshmen

19. Lost and found stations around the University's faculties

20. Outdoor events, like outdoor courses, movies etc.

21. Special welcoming for international students

22. Incentivize carpooling, due to vast amounts of students coming via cars

23. Book club

24. Soft skills training seminars, as time management is one of the most dreaded nemeses for freshmen in the beginning

25. Invite successful guest speakers for one-time presentations, motivational speeches and real-life story sharing

26. Club for young entrepreneurs for the whole university, headquartered at the faculty of business and economics for the provision of ideas and insights to students who wish to start their own businesses

27. More available free computers in the campus.

28. More courses oriented at fortifying the acquired academical knowledge through practical experience (workshops with well-established business companies)

29. Weekly organized run around the campus.

30. Organized trip to nearby landmarks.

The idea that we believe will most help first-time students in our university is a mixture of the propositions listed above. We suppose that a good start for our fellow freshmen colleagues will be an introduction to the teachers with which they will have the pleasure of working in their upcoming years in a more informal manner, via a mocktail party held at the faculties. In this event we would also like to shed light to the plethora of clubs on each campus, like “Business Club” in our faculty, which will host this event and the newly-reformed welcome week for freshmen, where we will implement our ideas to all the newcomers, due to the positive feedback we’ve received so far. We will also prompt all other clubs around the faculties to hold short presentations of their agendas. We also plan to share stories of our experiences in the university so far on this party, which we plan to be an initial inspiration for the students and a type of preparation of what’s to come and of course have little laugh.

The second part of our idea, sprouts from the fact that many of the freshmen have never set foot in Sofia and are not very acquaint with the city. We aim at introducing them to the major locations in our town, which they will need in the future as well as instructions on how to reach them. These locations will include canteens spread around Sofia, cafes, restaurants, cinemas, theaters and so on. We plan on facilitating this introduction through in a more amusing fashion via a treasure hunt in groups around the city. The group part of the exercise will also be an impetus for our colleagues to befriend each other from the start of their upcoming experience as students.

