

The Orientation Program

by

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The International Christian University admitted nearly four hundred new students in 1963, either as freshmen, graduate, or "Junior Year Abroad" students. Many chose this university for different reasons. Few of them, perhaps, know the thrilling and unique history of this young university which has already established some meaningful traditions.

One of the most important responsibilities of the university is that of guiding new students into its program. It is essential that they be taught not only the history of the institution, but the ideals and goals set up by its founders. Such a background will enable them to comprehend more clearly not only the academic program, but also the spiritual and social phases of the university. Most students come with widely differing ideas about university life. If they are freshmen, patterns of high school life are dominant. If students enter with previous university experience, they bring with them established habits and concepts of that university. There is a need, therefore, to orient new students not only to patterns on the ICU campus, but to help them become active in establishing ever new patterns which will strengthen the goals and purposes of ICU. Let us now consider some of the factors which need to be included in an effective orientation program.

Students have organized a "Big Brother and Big Sister" or tomodachi program to assist in the orientation program. These student advisers should be organized early enough so that they can be trained in carrying out the functions of their rôle. Both upper classmen as well as sophomores can be used, carefully assigning the older entering student to an upperclass tomodachi. For the fall orientation program, mature freshmen who have shown leadership

possibilities during the Spring term, can be used. They have so recently gone through the adjustment process that they can more easily identify themselves emotionally with the situations which the new students face. Regular, informal discussion groups will prove helpful with the tomodachi. These students can review the student handbook data and give suggestions for improvement. Friendly letters are usually written by the tomodachi to their assigned "brother" or "sister". It is imperative that a careful check be made to see that no new student's name has been omitted. The tomodachi, wearing identification name cards, should be on hand to greet the newcomers at the time of their arrival. The new student will be introduced to his faculty adviser by his tomodachi and can make an appointment for counseling sometime later.

The faculty adviser is the key person to whom the new student is assigned for academic counseling, as well as counseling in many other areas in which the student needs guidance. Adequate opportunity should be given to the faculty adviser to read the application form giving data on family background, letters of recommendation, the high school or college academic record, a health record, the choice of his academic major, his spiritual and extracurricular activities and interests. It is well for the adviser to know whether or not the student has been granted a scholarship, the kind of scholarship it is, and if he needs further financial assistance which may be secured through arbeit. With all of this information at hand, the adviser is then ready to meet the new advisee for the first time. Too often this meeting takes place on registration day, but provision should be made in the Orientation program for advisers to meet their advisees in an informal way at an earlier time. If several days were given to the orientation program, there would be ample time for such an important meeting with advisers. Questions answered at this time can forestall later problems, and will help to make the student feel at home.

A time should be set aside during which the new students can meet the important leaders in the university administration, faculty and student government association officers. Many freshmen students, as well as JYA students, seldom have an opportunity to personally meet the administrative officers and university division chairmen. An informal tea or a luncheon would provide an opportunity to meet and get acquainted. A tape recording of parts of the Tenth Anniversary program would prove inspirational. Copies of Dr. Kleinjans' address on "The Second Decade" could be presented to each new student and be used for a series of group discussions.

The wide scope of the religious life program at ICU will stimulate many who chose to come to a Christian university. Opportunities for participation in the following activities are :

1. The weekly chapel service on Wednesdays at 11 : 00 a. m.
2. The weekly church services, Sundays at 10 : 30 a. m. Church School classes 9 : 30 a. m.
3. The Church choir
4. The Youth Fellowship group
5. Bible cells
6. Prayer groups
7. Spring and Summer retreats
8. Religious Emphasis week
9. Community service groups
10. Boy Scout Leadership for Scout troops

The dormitory resident faculty advisers and housemothers should meet the new dormitory students early in the program and explain their respective functions. These persons work closely with dormitory residents and should be given an opportunity to explain what is expected of them as resident students. The student handbook gives most of this information, but the data needs to be explained by the responsible heads in each area.

Among the early questions often raised, are those pertaining to procedures in case of illness. The location of the university medical

clinic should be given to resident students in regard to procedures in case of illnesses occurring at night. Nurses are available at all times on the ICU campus.

The university library staff assists in the orientation procedures with a special program of films and lectures. Library cards are issued at this time, stimulating freshmen to use the library on their own initiative. Most freshmen are pursuing a language program and have few library assignments. Each new student needs to be taught his responsibility in the open-shelf policy of the library, so that this policy can be continued.

The ICU Club program is a vital part of university life. Part of the orientation program should involve an introduction to the numerous clubs, not only to give the new students an idea of the wide scope of interests represented, but also to inform them of the correct procedures involved in becoming active members of the club of their choice. Members of the Student Government Association can assist in this presentation, thus giving new students an opportunity to become better acquainted with the chosen leaders of the student body.

Not only must the new freshmen students and the JYAs be considered in planning the orientation program, but new students in the graduate schools of Education and Public Administration should be included. Many of these graduate students enter ICU for the first time. They should be included in setting up the tomodachi program and have members on the planning committees.

In organizing the orientation program for Non-Japanese students, special attention needs to be given to matters affecting students living abroad. Included in a program for this group should be a discussion of :

1. Alien registration procedures
2. Implications of the student visa
3. Health insurance ; hospitalization
4. Cultural and social customs in Japan

5. Responsibilities of dormitory life and lodging houses
6. Procedure for securing transcript records
7. Regulations concerning Arbeit
8. Procedure for withdrawal from the university

Faculty advisers need to be given the latest information about the procedures required by the Japanese Immigration authorities in regard to the amount of employment Non-Japanese students may accept. The signature of the faculty adviser is necessary to secure employment permission.

Obviously, all the needs of new students cannot be met during the first week of orientation. It has been found helpful to take the entire group on a short week-end trip early in the term, together with their tomodachi. Here in small discussion groups, they can get acquainted with each other, with the customs in the new country and university, and have an opportunity to talk over problems which may have arisen.

At the end of the first six-week period, many have questions about their achievement record thus far. Advisers can be of significant help at this time, counseling with regard to study habits, health conditions, and general adjustment to university life. Some students will be discouraged because the intellectual standards are different from those in the high schools from which they came. Others miss the closeness of their high school homeroom groups. The leisure time of free periods during the day and evening is often not used wisely. Several such problems were revealed in a set of freshmen themes recently which it was the writer's privilege to read.

At the end of the first term for new Non-Japanese students in November, the orientation committee might plan a special lecture or two by Japanese leaders on phases of Japanese life and culture in which these students have a particular interest. Such interests could be determined through a questionnaire in mid-term.

The matriculation service is perhaps the highlight of the orientation program. At this time, in the presence of the administration, faculty and fellow students, the new student rises as his name is read, and acknowledges his admission into the new university family. He then signs the ICU pledge, promising to uphold the principle of universal human rights, respect the Japanese laws, and abide by the university regulations and instructions, in order to realize the purpose and ideals of ICU. Many of the new students have not read the pledge previous to this service. During the orientation program, time should be given to do so.

An effective orientation program will result in giving greater emotional security to new students, as well as confidence in their chosen university. During the pre-orientation program, as well as throughout the entire orientation program, student leadership can focus attention on the goals and ideals of ICU as these are being interpreted. The purpose of the university must ever be kept before them: "to educate young people for service to God and humanity in an ever-evolving world."¹ Students who come here from other countries, give ICU its international student body. During the orientation period as they begin to live with students from many countries, both in dormitories and in classes, they must be made aware of their special opportunity to make a real contribution as they interpret their nation to others. Not only students, but faculty members who participate in the orientation program, will recognize anew their responsibilities as leaders to interpret the program of ICU, thereby strengthening the entire student body on the campus.

1. ICU Tenth Anniversary Bulletin 1963—4 p. 24.