

### Initiative Proposal

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**Initiative: International Engineering Buddies**

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**Initiative Description:**

- This initiative aims to foster a closer relationship between domestic and international students within the College of Engineering, through a buddy program and an amendment of freshman orientation so that the communication of both parties can better be facilitated.

**Current state of issue & current solution:**

- International and domestic students have little interaction due to the the huge size of the college of engineering, a language barrier, and a lack of a channel for both parties to come to know each other. Very often, international students would get into their own groups of friends speaking same native language soon after the arrival of campus because international students have priority to move in to dormitory first, and there are not programs or orientation targeted to international students.
- International students are the last group of student registering for ENG 100, thus high number of local students, or high number of international students within a class is commonly found.
- Local students are not very comfortable to make friends with international students due to language barrier and cultural differences.

**Proposed solution:**

- Our first step is to set up a buddy program:
  - International freshman would be paired up with local freshman student
  - Local and international junior students would be advisor
  - If resources allow, the matches will be made according to their departments.
- Made changes to the ENG 100 roster to avoid the imbalanced ratio of international and local student.

**Resolution:**

- The buddy program and changes to ENG 100 roster provides students with a clearly defined initial opportunity to make friends with people from various backgrounds.

**Associated costs and expenses for implementation:**

- Buddy program
  - Training of advisors and orientation requires a one-time financial input each year.
  - The cost associated to the setting up and maintaining of web site for application and promotion of the program.
  - Possible costs associated to social events.
- Changes to ENG 100 roster sign-up
  - No financial cost would be associated.

**Plan for Sustainability**

- A RSO could be set up to represent the international engineering students, run and maintain the program.

**Estimated Timeline:**

- February - March
  - Set up meeting with the Deans and discuss about the proposal
  - Seek help from ISSS for their advice and support.
  - Contact the heads of ENG 100 and express the current situation and concern.
  - Continue on the research of similar programs in other local universities and seek for their help.
  - Set up the structure of buddy program
- April
  - Contact the person-in-charge of ENG 100 and keep track on the progress of amendment to the roster system
- May
  - Depending on the progress, the buddy program could start for Fall 2009 if we have sufficient resources.
- Fall 2009
  - Evaluate the effect of changing the ENG 100 roster to the communication between students.