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Danielle Valles
SIT Graduate Institute

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TRANSITIONS: THE FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATES AT YALE COLLEGE

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The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze what resources Yale College provides to support first year international students through their cultural, social, emotional, and academic transitions from international high school student to Yale College undergraduate. The college provides a number of resources that are classified as programmatic, structural, and personnel support services. The only programmatic service offered by Yale College for first year international students is the Orientation for International Students, run by older international students and supported by staff members of the Office of International Students and Scholars. The number one resource used without hesitation by first year students are older international upperclassmen. It is more comfortable to ask for assistance from another international student, especially from one's own home country. Advice received from these students tend to be more precise, culturally relevant, and often provide multiple perspectives on the issue at hand. Other academic, structural, and personnel resources, while useful, also vary in quality and ease of access. Overall, Yale College does an excellent job in supporting first year international students and helping them to create an identity as a "Yalie". One way in which the college can ease the transition from international high school student to Yale College undergraduate would be in creating a pre-arrival orientation for all new students, which focuses on the cultural, social, emotional, and academic challenges that new students will encounter. A pre-arrival orientation would allow new students to understand the differences between the United States and their home country, while gaining time to prepare for the rigorous academic adjustments they will need to make. After their arrival on campus, the orientation programs could then focus on creating social support networks, as well as helping new students forge identities as "Yalies".