Getting Back to Basics:
Writing for an International Audience

- All UB communication is really international communication
  o 17% of the student body is international (that means 17% of alumni too!)
  o International faculty and staff are a large part of our community
  o Any prospect, student, international community member can land on any UB page

- Keep it simple
  o Make sentences direct and to the point
  o Overusing descriptors muddies your message
  o The more important the information, (especially technical/how to) the more plain the language should be
  o The harder they have to work to digest your content, the less likely they are to read it

- Check your assumptions
  o Avoid internal jargon
  o They are not just learning about your unit but also about higher ed in the US overall
  o Teach them about norms without talking down to them (What is a pep rally?)

- Consider the literal translation
  o Avoid idioms and too much cleverness
  o “UB is as much a way as it is a place” → “UB represents a unique way of doing things”
  o Bottom line: Say what you mean!

- Remember the influencers
  o Students may be English proficient but their parents may not be
  o If you think it will be shared make it easy to understand

- Pictures can speak volumes
  o Use imagery and info graphics to support your messages
  o If you aren’t sure how to tell them, show them!

- Avoid taboos
  o Get to know the basic cultural norms of your primary international audiences
  o “Command respect and take the lead” → “Reach your goals and achieve distinction”
  o Especially important with imagery (What does a thumbs up mean? Should men and women be photographed in a dorm room together?)

- A different kind of diversity
  o Be representative of your key international demographics, let them see themselves in your communications
  o The largest UB populations are: Indian, Chinese, Korean, Iranian, Turkish, Saudi Arabian & Southeast Asian